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BU launches internship program with nonprofits

By **Matt Rocheleau**

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Boston University, backed by a \$10 million endowment from the Yawkey Foundations, is launching a paid internship program that will provide jobs for students at local nonprofits.

The program, being announced Thursday, will offer internships to between 80 and 100 sophomores and juniors per year, starting in 2016. It will provide students with work experience and give budget-conscious organizations extra help.

The students will be called Yawkey Interns, and BU will name the building the program will be run from — a large student center the university opened last year in Kenmore Square — the Yawkey Center.

“It’s really a farsighted investment by the Yawkey Foundation that will reap wonderful benefits for students and for the not-

for-profit community,” BU President Robert A. Brown said.

Maureen Bleday, executive vice president of programs and operations and general counsel for the Yawkey Foundations, said the internship program will help address two key issues.

Many nonprofits “don’t have the financial resources to bring on an extra person or an intern, especially students of the caliber of BU,” she said.

Meanwhile, “For a lot of disadvantaged students, they don’t have the opportunity to do an internship for free,” Bleday said. “This will give them the opportunity to work for a nonprofit that they have a real passion for.”

BU junior Allie Gressler said that this past summer she ideally wanted to intern at one of two arts-related nonprofits in Boston, but neither offered pay so she didn’t bother to apply.

Instead, Gressler, who is majoring in art history and international relations, took a marketing internship at a tech start-up in California, which paid well and provided a housing stipend.

Gressler is scheduled to graduate before BU starts the new internship program, but she said she is glad future students will have the opportunity.

“It opens up a lot of doors for people who wouldn’t necessarily have a chance otherwise,” she said

The program will include summertime and mid-school year internships. Officials said they hope to expand the number of openings in the program over time.

“To our knowledge, very few colleges in the country offer such a comprehensive paid nonprofit internship program, so the idea rang a bell with us,” said James Healey, president of the Yawkey Foundations.

Yawkey Foundations was started by Tom and Jean Yawkey, former owners of the Boston Red Sox, which has had ties with BU dating back to the 1950s.

“The Yawkeys were big believers in education, which is one of the foundations’ top priorities,” Healey said.

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