

| TEACHING & LEARNING

# Learning From the Top: D-School Launches Executive-Led Internship Program

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| Partner companies join the College of Design and Innovation (Stanley Wang D-School), National Taiwan University to nurture innovative, interdisciplinary talents at NTU.

The College of Design and Innovation (Stanley Wang D-School), National Taiwan University (NTU) has initiated a new kind of internship—one that brings students face to face not just with company organizations, but with the people who lead them.

Launched on March 6, 2026, the program—“Learn from CEOs & Chairpersons | NTU Elite Mentorship Internship Program”—matches selected students with senior executives, offering them rare access to real-world decision-making at the highest corporate level. For university leadership, this initiative reflects a new, broader vision of education: one that extends beyond humanistic, scientific and technological training to include endurance, resilience, global awareness, and a commitment to the public good.

“NTU students must develop more than professional expertise,” declared President Wen-Chang Chen, at the launch event. “They must also cultivate the ability to



| President Wen-Chang Chen expressing his gratitude to participating companies and encouraging students to face challenges with courage.

endure setbacks and make difficult decisions. This program provides exactly that opportunity—learning in real, high-stakes environments.”

## A Highly Contested Opportunity

In its inaugural year, the program attracted significant interest. Nineteen companies participated, drawing 186 applicants. Because each student could apply for up to five placements, the program received a total of 466 applications. After a rigorous selection process led by the participating companies, only 30 internship positions were offered—an acceptance rate of just six percent.

The demand, organizers said, reflects a growing appetite among students for experiential learning that goes beyond traditional internships.

## From Idea to Initiative

The program was the brain child of Prof. Chung-Jen Chen, Dean of the College of Design and Innovation (Stanley Wang D-School), NTU, who assumed office in October 2025. Encouraged by President Chen to advance both social innovation and industrial innovation, he began reconsidering how students could engage more meaningfully with industry.

The idea was sparked by a moment of missed connection.

Years earlier, one of his students had interned at Hewlett-Packard but never had the opportunity to meet—and learn from—the company’s chair, an NTU alumna. For Chen, the gap was revealing. If students could be brought closer to leadership, he hypothesized, their understanding of organizations—and their own potential roles within them—could be transformed and deepened.

He reached out to former students who had since become CEOs, chairpersons, or senior executives. Many agreed to participate, helping to bring the concept to reality.

## Becoming “Corporate Doctors”

For students, the program represents both a challenge-- and the opportunity to realign their skill sets according to real-life experiences.

Wen-Rui Qiu, a student in the Trans-disciplinary Bachelor Degree Program at NTU, observed that he does not come from a traditional business school background. Instead, he has also drawn on past experiences in helping others, translating insights from those experiences into an enhanced ability to understand and cope with organizational challenges.

“I hope to become a kind of ‘corporate doctor,’” he said—someone who can diagnose problems and help companies find solutions.



Prof. Chung-Jen Chen, Dean of the College of Design and Innovation (Stanley Wang D-School), thanking partner companies for actively advancing CSR and ESG commitments through concrete support for NTU.



Interns and business leaders pause for a group photo while engaging in lively exchanges.



“Learn from CEOs & Chairpersons | NTU Elite Mentorship Internship Program” webpage.

## Bridging Campus and Industry

Following the launch ceremony, students and executives gathered for extended conversations, marking the beginning of what organizers hope will blossom in sustained multiple mentorships and collaborations.

For Dean Chen, the program's purpose is clear: bring students into direct contact with the realities of leadership while helping companies connect and work with emerging talents.

“We want students to step outside the classroom and witness how decisions are made in industry,” he said. “At the same time, this will allow organizations to engage more closely with the kind of talents they need.”

He also framed the initiative as part of a broader commitment by participating companies to social responsibility—an expression, he said, of both corporate social responsibility and environmental, social and governance principles in action.

In an era when the boundaries between education and industry are increasingly porous and fluid, NTU's new program suggests a simple but powerful idea: the most valuable lessons may come not only from what students' study at school, but from whom they learn alongside.

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