Ask For It! ~ Internship Pay Negotiation

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As May finals ended, two companies offered me summer internships. I was ecstatic, but I needed to make a careful decision prior to spending three months at a company and wanting the best experience. Like many low-income students, I knew that finding the right “fit” wasn’t going to be the determining factor in a job search. I needed the best salary even if it meant passing on the job I really wanted. I had to replace a failing car and pay fall tuition. I needed the extra dollars that Company A offered, but my heart was with company B. So what do you do when the company you want is offering you less money than another place that might not be the right fit? You negotiate. I wasn’t going to pass up my preferred internship without trying, so I called the recruiter and asked if they could match the higher offer. I was disappointed to hear that they didn’t think it fair to pay some interns a higher hourly wage than others. I respected their desire to treat each intern equally and decided to go with the higher wage - until they offered an option. Recognizing my qualifications and knowing how much I wanted the job but needed the extra money, the company offered me a signing bonus to make up for the difference in hourly wage. They offered to give me, upfront, the extra money I would have been making hourly at the other company. I didn’t know that a signing bonus was an option. It was rewarding to know that I would be working at a company that recognized my talent and was willing to negotiate. During my internship, I learned new web design skills, assisted the sales team in promoting products and interviewed clients and employees for feature stories – all skills relevant to my career goals. Who knows how different my summer would have been if I hadn’t asked for higher pay. Now I know that there is always a solution when it comes to pay negotiation, you just have to be willing to ask for it!