“In industry you have to operate under certain constraints,” Papin says. “Not just what’s the right answer, but what’s the right answer by tomorrow morning. Being able to understand and appreciate those kinds of constraints, being able to work with a variety of different kinds of people—that’s the value that an internship brings and was a really consistent theme in our surveys.”

Since 2010, biomedical engineering doctoral students at U.Va. have been funded by research grants and fellowships, providing departmental funding was key to making industry internships practicable. In addition to covering each student’s stipend during the internship period, the department will provide a housing bonus to address the challenge of paying rent in two places.

GoingPro also includes a one-credit course open to all students that covers industry fundamentals: understanding the FDA and regulatory agencies, patenting, project management, and communication skills.

Finally, GoingPro includes a mentoring component. In order to foster relationships that can help shape their future careers, students self-identify a mentor from the field, whom they meet with face-to-face at least once a month.

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