Modernizing the Extension Internship Experience

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Where it started

- Timeline and due dates left Extension with limited options
- Students who were not selected had no opportunities to look for other employment
- No cohort experience
How it’s going

- Increased number of competitive applicants
- Increased number of available internships
- Increased awareness of program among students
- Cohort experience
- Building knowledge and relationships starts in January (not June)
It Takes a Village

- Academic Programs Office
- Extension Dean’s Office
- Agricultural Education and Communication Department (houses Extension minor)
- County Extension offices
- Departmental representatives
Vision

To grow the talent pipeline for UF/IFAS Extension
Goals

• Benefit interns through a unique service-learning opportunity
• Provide support to Extension faculty and the communities they serve
• Expose students to a variety of Extension careers
• Connect students to academic programs in CALS that will prepare them for careers in Extension
• Give students a basic understanding of Extension and its functions as an educational agency
• Students develop and implement at least one Extension educational program
Established a Website

- General Information
- FAQ's
- Application portal and deadlines
- [www.cals.ufl.edu/getinvolved/extension_internships](http://www.cals.ufl.edu/getinvolved/extension_internships)
2020

- 50 applicants
- 12 interns representing 8 majors
- Academic credit available
- 320 hours max total
- $14/hour
- Flexible hours
2021

- 71 applicants
- 22 interns representing 13 majors
  - USDA Higher Education Challenge grant funded 9 interns from Family, Youth and Community Sciences
  - CALS Dean’s Office (academic programs) funded two interns
AEC4932 Building a Foundation for Extension Internship Success

• Hiring paperwork, youth protection training, background checks, etc.
• Land-grant system
• Job application materials and process
• Networking with Extension leaders
• Project proposals and presentations
Life doesn’t come with a RUBRIC
• 3 of the 12 Summer 2020 Interns have entered an education/extension master’s program?
Donor & alumni engagement

- Donors attended intern project presentations
- Many agents are also CALS alumni
- County Extension agents have access to a valuable commodity ... prospective students!
One intern said,

“I accepted a position at the Citrus County Mosquito Control District as a Public Education Specialist ... I know I got the job because of my Extension experience. The internship taught me so much about public outreach! I regularly keep in contact with my mentor, a valuable professional contact and friend ... Virtual or in person, the experience was not one to miss out on!”
Project examples

- Florida Handbook for Local Government Climate Action
- Equine Publication and Presentation Development
What we’ve learned

• Students are uncomfortable with ambiguity
• Creating a cohort experience has been helpful for both interns and agents
• Full-time hiring decision-makers need to be more involved
Questions?
Contact Us

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