Ag Ed Students Gain Experience Through Internships

Ag Ed students will be completing professional internships over the summer. These students will be gaining valuable real-world experience and taking home a paycheck. Some of the students are completing internships as part of a required component for the Agricultural Leadership Education concentration. Ag Leadership Education (ALE) students are required to complete 400 hours of relevant, professional work experience in order to graduate. Students typically complete the ALE internship between their junior and senior year.

- **Danielle Brown** - Illinois Corn Marketing Board
  Ag in the Classroom Intern

- **Shelby Cooper** - Precision Soya, Field Service Intern

- **Clayton Carley** - Eurofins, Research Technician

- **Caitlin Chrzanowski** -
  University of Illinois Extension
  Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall, and Putnam Counties
  Youth Development Intern

- **Dan Czyz** - Z2 Systems Nonprofit Consulting

- **Ashley Davis** -
  University of Illinois Extension, Cook County

- **Jacob Dickey** - University of Illinois
  Food Science & Human Nutrition Department

- **Jacob Ekstrand** - Monsanto, Crop Protection Intern

- **David Fulton** - AIRS, Inc.,
  Field Scout and Marketing Intern

- **Trent Hawker** -
  University of Illinois Extension
  Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, Vermilion Counties
  Youth Development Intern

- **Caroline Hoff** -
  College of
  ACES / Chicago Public Schools,
  ACES Summer Research Intern

- **Kiersten Kasey** -
  Syngenta, Crop Genetics Intern

- **Mark McKown** -
  Cargill, Farm Marketing Intern

- **Joseph Melisi** - Champaign County Humane Society
  Social Media & Humane Education Intern

- **Austin O’Neall** - AIRS, Inc., Field Scout & Marketing

- **Brandon Smith** - University of Illinois Extension
  Logan, Menard, and Sangamon Counties
  Youth Development Intern

- **Chelsea Verbeck** - University of Illinois Extension
  Henry, Mercer, Rock Island and Stark Counties
  Youth Development Intern

- **Gina Kun Yuan** -
  Bank of Communications, New York City, and
  Champaign Co. Regional Planning Commission

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**Honorary State Degrees**

Congratulations to Dr. Richard Clark, Ag Ed Program Associate Director, and Mrs. Brandy Krapf, Teaching Associate, who will receive their Honorary State FFA Degrees at the State FFA Convention in June!
Eight members of the University of Illinois Ag Ed Club and two Agricultural Education Program faculty participated in the club’s professional development trip on April 18-19, 2013. This student-led, student-organized event included tours of agricultural businesses and agricultural education programs in northern Illinois and the Chicago area.

Members had the opportunity to tour the Central-Clifton and the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences (CHSAS) high school programs. Mr. Bill Bretzman and Mr. Brett Sorensen at Central-Clifton talked to students about the various activities the FFA chapter is involved in throughout the year, and discussed the sequence of their courses and curriculum. Students also toured the FFA chapter’s greenhouse and cooperative feed store operation.

During their visit at CHSAS, students were educated about the vast opportunities available in the program by Mrs. Sheila Fowler and Ms. Dara Robertson, junior class FFA Treasurer and student in the Ag Finance Pathway. Ag Ed Club members toured the animal science, hydroponics, aquaculture, horticulture, mechanics, and land laboratories.

In addition to visiting agricultural education programs, the group also toured several agricultural businesses. Doug Hanson and Randy Wilken provided a tour of Pro Harvest Seeds in Ashkum, Illinois. As a former secondary agriculture teacher, Mr. Hanson provided insight into ways to apply content knowledge into curriculum. Club members also toured The Plant in Chicago. This sustainable food production facility focused on promoting a unique and innovative alternative approach to traditional farming practices.

On Friday, the Ag Ed Club members participated in a tour at the Chicago Board of Trade. Members learned more about the CME Group and their impact on agriculture and the economy. The group was privileged to also visit Eli’s Cheesecake Company and meet with Marc S. Schulman, President of Eli’s Cheesecake, and Mr. Jeff Anderson, Vice President of Purchasing and Operations. UIUC students discussed the impact the world economy has on the business, and learned about various public relation strategies they use to improve the company. The company puts a great deal of emphasis on maintaining high standards for food safety and quality. After the visit, Mr. Schulman provided a delicious lunch that featured some of the many food and dessert items offered at Eli’s Cheesecake Company.

The final stop on the professional development trip was to the Department of Homeland Security at Chicago O’Hare Airport. Mark Grzeszkiwiaik, Chief Agriculture Specialist with the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and Marcella Lyles, CBP Passenger Service Manager, educated members on the various forms of protection provided by this important organization and the regulations enforced to protect agricultural communities and resources.

Ag Ed Club members who attended the trip were: Kirsten Blackford, Shelby Cooper, Claire Geiger, Trent Hawker, Kiersten Kasey, Jacob Meisner, Mark McKown, and Brandon Smith.
The Ag Ed Program congratulated eight seniors as they participated in commencement ceremonies on May 11th. Those students were:

- Amanda Corban
- Jacob Firkins
- Sarah Fritz
- Dillon Garver
- Jacob Ralph
- JC Walker
- Carly Wesner
- Leah Wilkening

2013 Ag Ed Graduates

The Ag Ed Program congratulated eight seniors as they participated in commencement ceremonies on May 11th. Those students were:

- Amanda Corban, employed as a Product Support Marketing Representative and Technical Instructor with John Deere in Davenport, IA
- Jacob Firkins
- Sarah Fritz
- Dillon Garver
- Jacob Ralph, employed as a Product and Sales Support Specialist with Beck’s Hybrids in El Paso, IL
- JC Walker, employed as Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor at Cerro Gordo High School
- Carly Wesner
- Leah Wilkening, employed as a Member Development Representative with IAA Credit Union in Bloomington, IL

University of Illinois students majoring in Agricultural Leadership and Science Education are putting into practice the principle of ‘learning by doing’. Students have the opportunity to participate in on-the-job training for two or more days with an agribusiness to learn valuable content area knowledge about various areas of the agriculture industry. The program is designed to help students learn skills from agribusiness professionals that can be applied in the classroom to teach future students. The project is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Growing Agricultural Science Teachers (GAST) grant.

Clayton Carley, a sophomore student in the Parkland Pathways program, completed his experience with Blossom Basket Florist in Urbana, Illinois. “As a future agriculture teacher, I can only teach students what I know. What better way to learn about the industry in order to teach it to the next generation than to be a part of it and experience the work firsthand! The GAST grant has allowed me to do just that --

Carley’s experiences at the Blossom Basket helped him learn more about the floriculture industry. “While I am not an expert in the area, I am now much more equipped to teach it to my future students.”

Thanks to funding from the GAST grant, ten different Agricultural Education students will participate in this opportunity.

Ag Ed Students and Faculty Earn Awards

The College of ACES Student Awards Banquet was held Saturday, April 13th. The awards ceremony recognizes students and faculty for their achievements in academic programs and registered student organizations. Those individuals receiving awards from the Ag Ed Program include:

- Amanda Corban - Outstanding Senior in Agricultural Science Education
- Carly Wesner - Outstanding Senior in Agricultural Leadership Education
- Danielle Brown - Finalist for Robert M. Harrison Leadership Award
- Mrs. Brandy Krapf - Outstanding Club Advisor

GAST Funding Allows Students to Learn by Doing

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Thanks to funding from the GAST grant, ten different Agricultural Education students will participate in this opportunity.
Congratulations to all agriculture teachers who will receive IAVAT Service Awards for their years of service!

Special congratulations also goes to teachers who earned awards from the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE):

- Outstanding Ag Ed Teacher – Charles Sappington, Cumberland High School
- Outstanding Young Member – Lisa Oellerich, Scales Mound High School
- Outstanding Ag Ed Program – Howard Heavner, Valmeyer High School
- Teachers Turn the Key – Corinne Wengelewski, Indian Creek High School

NAAE & IAVAT AWARDS

Sixteen teams of students partnered with more than 55 organizations across campus and around Illinois to assemble more than 250 kits for military families to help them reintegrate after deployment. The kits, valued at more than $12,000, will be distributed at the yellow ribbon events around Illinois later this summer.

According to Dr. Kari Keating, one of the instructors for the course, students were also able to “put leadership theories into practice and learned how to inspire a common vision that can be communicated across organizations.” Students also created videos to summarize the logistical details of the project, and communicate the overall impact it had on them and the military families who will be receiving the kits.

For more information about Operation Military Kids, contact Linda Kupferschmid, Project Coordinator, at the University of Illinois State 4-H Office, or visit the website at http://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/statePOCHome.aspx?state=Illinois.

Real-World Leadership: Operation Military Kids

Approximately 80 students from across campus completed their service learning projects at the end of the Spring 2013 semester for Operation Military Kids, an initiative administered through the University of Illinois Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. The group project was a major component for the Agricultural Education Program’s Collaborative Leadership course, co-taught by Dr. Richard Clark and Dr. Kari Keating.

ATA Induction Ceremony

Three Agricultural Education students were inducted into the University of Illinois Alpha Tau Alpha (ATA) Chapter on April 16, 2013. Alpha Tau Alpha is a National Professional Honorary Agricultural Education Organization that plays a vital role in the preparation of those who have chosen a major in agricultural education or extension education. The three aims of ATA are Physical, Intellectual, and Spiritual.

Mr. Don Bergfield, Agriculture Instructor at Parkland College and UIUC Alum, was the guest speaker for the event.