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NCTA Dean's Message
By Ron Rosati, Ph.D.

Investing in an Aggie internship

CURTIS, Neb. - A summer internship can be an important part of a college student's education.

Faculty supervising student internships report that the job experience provides many benefits. By applying skills in a real-life setting, students develop a greater appreciation and understanding of what they've learned on campus.

Students receive more than just learning opportunities, says one professor.

"Valuable career experience aids the student in discovering whether or not their chosen field is an ideal fit," says Mary Rittenhouse, chair of the Agribusiness Management Systems division at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis.

Mariah Mulvey of Loveland, Colorado is working at 21st Century Equipment in Scottsbluff.

Jarrod Tuttle of Eltopia, Washington is a double major in Ag Business and Ag Mechanics. His internship is at Carlson Irrigation, Inc., in Shickley.

Going into the AMS placement, the Aggie students know one of their internship requirements is a skills list the student creates identifying what professional and career skills they wish to develop.

This list is shared with Professor Rittenhouse and the employer. In their report, the student might share photographs, describe experiences, and address activities that aided in developing specific skills.

Mariah Mulvey, 21st Century Equipment, Scottsbluff:

Mariah's internship involves working with an equipment company to help address customers agricultural power needs. She describes her experience this way:

"During my second week of interning I was able to travel for three days in a row to Burlington, Yuma, Wray, and Fort Morgan, all in Colorado. I got hands-on experience with farm equipment and met many new people.

"I also participated in "Manitou" training since 21st Century Equipment is now selling Manitou compact utility tractors. I was able to listen in on why Manitou is favored over competing brands. Factors include



Jarrod Tuttle applies irrigation technology skills in replacing a center pivot tower leg at his summer internship. (Courtesy photo)

the weight capacity that can be lifted, how high it can lift, and driving ability. I was also able to test drive all of the tractors and play with all of the controls to figure out how those work.

“It was a fun experience while I learned a lot about the products. At a farm outside of Burlington I watched the testing of new tillage equipment. I saw a John Deere 2660VT in action and learned why it would be preferred over a regular disk. This new tillage technology will be available in the fall of 2019.”

Jarrold Tuttle, Carlson Irrigation, Inc., Shickley:

Jared works as an intern with a center pivot irrigation company. His internship involved repairing pivots and addressing the irrigation needs of farmers in the region. This is his description of some of his experiences:

“What a great week. Finally, it didn’t just rain all week and we were able to get out in the fields and actually get some work done. I got to do quite a bit of structural work (on pivots) and learned how to use the crane. It was a pretty fun week, actually. I had a great time since it was really warm and good working conditions. Over the week I had to do a few different structural projects where I had to weld in pieces at the center point because the old parts were completely rusted through. I’m enjoying those projects because I get to practice my welding skills in the fields. I also got to change out a bent tower leg which ended up being a pretty good project. It took a while. Then later in the week I got to replace an end boom because the old one hit some trees and broke off.

“There weren’t really any challenges this week. There were some tasks within projects that were difficult but by sharing ideas with my coworkers on different strategies it was pretty easy to accomplish our goal. My coworkers and I have been getting along really well and having a pretty good time throughout the day. The two older guys are teaching me a ton about all sorts of things and I love it because I learn and learn nonstop. The more I learn the more willing my bosses are to have me do new things and put what I learn into play and I enjoy that. I’m learning all sorts of different things about different aspects of a pivot dealership. It’s a great time I just hope it stays somewhat dry and doesn’t rain too much. Overall great week.”

I look forward to sharing other reports this summer from student internships. Our focus at NCTA is workforce development and teaching the skills on campus in the classrooms, and at the NCTA farm which can be immediately applied on the job.

Mariah and Jarrod are summer success stories for the ag business department. NCTA also has students interning in veterinary technology, agronomy, equine management, animal science and livestock management, and agricultural mechanics such as irrigation technology.

In just two weeks, NCTA hosts its third New Student Enrollment for students who begin their fall classes on August 26. For details, give us a call at 1-800-3-CURTIS, or apply for college at ncta.unl.edu/apply

NCTA Mission: *The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, and other credentials.*

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