Intern Program Highlights

- Number of applicants: 10
- Number of applicants interviewed: 8
- Number of County host site applications: 8
- Number of interns assigned: 4
- Universities/Departments represented:
  2 — Ferguson College of Agriculture, OSU
  1 — Human Sciences, OSU
  1 — Family & Consumer Sciences, ECU
- Host Counties: Hughes/Seminole, McClain Oklahoma, and Pittsburg
- To access the highlight videos submitted by the interns, go to: [http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development/internships](http://intranet.okstate.edu/staff_development/internships)

Interns were matched with county offices and worked May 26 - July 31. There were many challenges with COVID-19 with regard to conducting face-to-face programming. Interns and their supervisors had to be creative in developing opportunities for the interns to learn about all aspects of the Extension program and how to develop a project in a virtual world.

A new addition to the internship program was the “Check In and Check Up” webinars hosted by the Program & Personnel Development Specialist. These webinars were held bi-weekly and provided an opportunity for interns to share progress on their projects and what they had been learning about Extension. They also engaged in discussions on topics presented by the host and each other.

Evaluation for the internship program was also redesigned to more accurately reflect what an educator experiences. Interns completed a self-appraisal which included a series of retrospective-post questions and open-ended questions. County supervisors also completed an intern performance appraisal and met with the intern to go over their review. This document provides a summary of both evaluation methods.
**Intern Self-Appraisal**

The intern self-appraisal provided a series of 10 statements in a retrospective-post format. Interns noted improvement in their knowledge and/or skills in all areas. Statements evaluated included:

- Understanding of OSU Extension policy and procedure
- Knowledge of responsibilities of:
  - an Ag/NR Educator and types of programming they provide.
  - an FCS Educator and types of programming they provide.
  - a 4-H Educator and types of programming they provide.
- Understanding of how county staff addresses rural development in the county.
- Understanding of the importance of providing equity, access and opportunity in Extension programming (ADA, Civil Rights, Affirmative Action, etc.)
- Effectiveness in handling customer service with clientele.
- Effectiveness of exhibiting positive work habits such as cooperation, positive attitude and timeliness.
- Effectiveness of communication skills.
- Effectiveness in participating as a team member.
- Ability to take initiative to work on projects.
- Ability to manage travel and programming budget.

Interns responded to open-ended questions and provided some valuable feedback. Here are some highlights from their responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you feel was the most valuable experience in your internship?</td>
<td>Observing Co-Parenting and Active Parenting classes — this gave me better perspective of what an FCS educator does compared to 4-H.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning how to build a program and not just assist with what someone else has planned.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning more about the Ag/NR educator role</td>
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<td>What were you most proud of with regard to your special project?</td>
<td>I was proud of my ability to pull the whole thing together mostly by myself.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am proud that the OSU faculty in my department found my video series valuable for young leaders.</td>
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<td>The amount of participation I got from the kids for my workshop.</td>
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<td>What could you have improved in your special project?</td>
<td>Slowing down when presenting my workshop.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I would have created more than j4 videos and sought input from more sources to improve content.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I would have made my workshop more interactive.</td>
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<td>I would have taught more over Zoom instead of just posting videos.</td>
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**Performance Appraisal Highlights**

Educators who served as supervisors of the interns conducted a performance appraisal at the end of the summer. They received the intern’s self-appraisal and used that information and their own observation to complete the evaluation.

Overall, educators felt the interns excelled in these areas:

- Following policy and procedures for county office management and activities.
- Effectively used technology in day-to-day activities of the internship and/or programming.
- Demonstrated positive work habits such as cooperative attitude and completing assignments in a timely manner.
- Demonstrated financial stewardship in managing funds for travel and program supplies.
- Participated in online group with internship cohort and Program and Personnel Development Specialist.

Supervisors reported there were a few areas for improvement: customer service, communication skills with county staff and clientele and working as a team with county staff and assisting with local programs. These topics could be addressed with specific training with interns during orientation and with their county supervisors. These areas also may have been influenced by the challenges with COVID-19 and offices having restrictions on customer visits and the lack of local programming being conducted.

**Summary**

Despite the challenges of working within the restrictions of COVID-19, interns and county supervisors successfully navigated these uncharted waters. Interns expressed that they have a better understanding of what OSU Extension does and the impact Extension can have in a community.

**For more information, contact:**

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