

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Summer internships position U of I CALS students for future employment

AT A GLANCE

On-campus College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) and UI Extension faculty collaborate to bring on-farm and other service-learning opportunities to University of Idaho students.

The Situation

University of Idaho students need opportunities for relevant work experience prior to graduation. Students who graduate without work experience have a more difficult time finding employment. Summer internships have the potential to provide students with meaningful experiences that will help them develop skills and understanding they cannot learn in the classroom. Internships also help them begin careers in their chosen field once they have completed their current degree program. Idaho communities need the intellectual skills and efforts from college-educated citizens to work in Idaho industries, especially in agriculture.

Extension educators around the state can benefit from hosting interns by being able to accomplish additional work as well as gain new ideas from students who are in or have recently completed their college education.

Our Response

UI Extension faculty members Ariel Agenbroad and Iris Mayes received internal and other funding to host summer interns in 2018, 2019 and 2020 in Boise and Moscow. CALS faculty based on campus collaborated to connect high-achieving students and to provide



Summer intern Babita Budathoki examines squash plants in July 2020 at the Soil Stewards Student Farm on the U of I campus.

access to the Soil Stewards Student Farm, adjacent to the Moscow U of I campus, for on-farm education.

At the farm, student interns participated in farm management, farmers market administration, educational programming, teaching sessions, volunteer training and hands-on vegetable and flower farming experiences.

UI Extension, Ada County interns focused on local food production and marketing, food access and youth enrichment in underserved communities. At least one intern each summer worked with the Boise Farmers Mobile Market. In 2019 they also delivered multiweek, multisite STEM summer enrichment for over 1,000 youth from schools in Ada and Canyon counties with

the highest level of summer learning loss, through the RISE Book and a Bite program.

Program Outcomes

A summer intern from 2018 initiated a needs assessment to see if Idaho residents and veteran organizations wanted a beginning farmer rancher program in Idaho. This work led to development of the Harvest Heroes program, a non-academic, UI Extension beginning farmer program for U.S. military veterans, now funded by USDA-NIFA (#2019-49400-30034).

Interns managed the Tuesday Community Market in Moscow which facilitated over \$5,000 in sales in 2018 and over \$17,000 in sales in 2019 and provided an outlet for local beginning farmers. The market was also a connection point for non-profit organizations such as the Moscow Food Cooperative and the Backyard Harvest as well as community members.

Interns working with the Boise Farmers Mobile Market were integral to the goal of supplying locally produced agricultural products to neighborhoods in Boise and contributing technical expertise to improve market operations. In 2020, the mobile market delivered 10,867 pounds of locally produced food, generating \$22,537 in income to local family farms. Interns have also assisted in conducting over six Rapid Market Assessments in the Treasure Valley, providing farmers markets with needed data on consumer trends and behaviors that help shape the future of these markets and decision making.

The Soil Stewards Student Farm intern helped the Soil Stewards student club harvest over 1,500 pounds of mixed vegetables and contributed towards the season's gross income of over \$5,200 in 2019. The farm could not have produced or gotten the harvest to market without the interns' efforts. Students who work on the farm not only learn how to grow food, but they learn how to market, communicate with the public, prioritize overlapping deadlines and manage a complex

system. These transferable skills are crucial for our U of I students. The Soil Stewards help educate the public about diversified farming systems at the various markets.

One intern stated, "I learned the basics of organic management including fertilizing, organic record keeping, and the ins and outs of organic certification." Interns were expected to interface with the public representing U of I as professionals. They learned communication and leadership skills that they will be able to apply to their future professions.

During summer 2020 the Tuesday Community Market was canceled due to COVID-19. The Soil Stewards intern and faculty offered an on-farm produce stand instead. This brought visibility to the farm and provided an outing for community members during a summer when many other events were canceled. Community members valued access to local produce with a total of \$2,700 in sales over nine weeks as well as the CSA Farm Membership for \$2,650 for a total of \$5,350 in summer of 2020.

Financial Impact from Student Interns Work

Program	Year	Income
Tuesday Community Market, Moscow	2018	\$5,000 to farmers
	2019	\$17,000 to farmers
Soil Stewards Student Farm, Moscow	2019	\$5,200
	2020	\$5,350
Boise Farmers Mobile Market	2020	\$22,537 to farmers

The Future

All future interns in Boise, Moscow and other UI Extension offices around the state are expected to continue to develop and implement Extension projects that serve their communities as well as help support their education.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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