

# **Evaluation of the California Communities Program Internship Program**

Prepared by

Karen Leventhal, Graduate Research Assistant  
Department of Human and Community Development, UC Davis

and

David Campbell, Director  
California Communities Program  
Department of Human and Community Development, UC Davis

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## *Executive Summary*

The California Communities Program (CCP) - funded by the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources - promotes community development research and outreach aimed at strengthening the leadership capacities of local citizens, fortifying community self-governance, and enhancing local and regional economies. CCP accomplishes its community development mission through community education and research, workshops and trainings, evaluation of governance initiatives, publications on important community issues, and graduate student internships.

The following report summarizes findings from an evaluation of the CCP internship program that supports graduate students working on field projects in conjunction with county Cooperative Extension advisors. The purpose of the program is to catalyze short-term projects that reflect the CCP mission, provide graduate students with professional experience and skills, and develop campus-county linkages. In its first five years (1996-2001), CCP funded 27 intern projects in 16 different county Cooperative Extension offices. Each internship award is \$4,000.

This evaluation of these internships and their outcomes is based on 25 interviews, 10 with current or former interns (out of 24 possible) and 15 with Cooperative Extension advisors (out of 20 possible). It also draws on written documentation, which includes application materials and final reports. The evaluation focuses on four areas: 1) community impacts, 2) learning outcomes for students, 3) lessons learned about creating successful internships, and 4) recommendations for improving the program.

## **Community Impacts**

A high percentage of CCP intern projects were successful in creating positive community outcomes and in improving Cooperative Extension's visibility and influence in the community. Examples include:

- In Stanislaus County Advisor Ken Wilmarth, along with interns Lucinda Smith and Marianne Jacobson, worked with a neighborhood association in a low income neighborhood to recreate a community garden that had been abandoned. Oversight of the garden was transferred to a local non-profit and after a few years the garden is still active, providing an attractive community gathering location.
- Tuolumne County, fearing that revenue was leaking from the region, asked Advisor Nancy Feldman, Specialist Joan Wright, and intern Andrew Murray to conduct a survey that would measure local business and consumer attitudes and actions. The findings, presented to local organizations and governing bodies, resulted in a number of local measures designed to improve business practices and keep revenue inside the county.
- In Tulare County intern Frances Ferreira and Advisor Manuel Jimenez worked with local organizations, government officials, and youth groups to create a demonstration garden featuring over 700 plant varieties grown in California. The garden, featured in *Sunset* magazine, became a site for educational school visits and a source of community pride.

- In Sacramento and Alameda Counties, Advisors Marianne Bird and Charles Go along with interns Dave Davis, Jennifer Mayer, Erin Dann, and Rose Wong worked in collaboration with community partners to provide after school programs with educational and research benefits, including a publication on best practices for outreach to Southeast Asian youth.
- Fearing the loss of culture and community cohesion, Wiyot tribe leadership in Humboldt County - in partnership with then-CE Advisor Kim Rodrigues and intern Christine Ambrose - cultivated a garden for reaping traditional basket weaving materials.
- Advisors Diane Metz and Larry Clement and intern Jill Kopel worked with Solano County organizations to develop local strategy and collaborative networks designed to fill gaps in food security programs and policy. They organized a community garden, a county food directory, an on-going Food Security Fair, and a Food Security Coalition.
- Lake County leaders asked Advisor Rachel Elkins, Specialist Al Sokolow, and intern Matt Whacker to help them understand the benefits and disadvantages of enacting a Right-to-Farm ordinance in their county. The team developed a research report that informed local discussion and decision-making on the issue.
- Solano County Advisor Carole Paterson and intern Rebecca Stark worked with the Vallejo Leadership team to improve the quality of public dialogue. They conducted and analyzed a community survey on leadership issues, which was then used to help the team create a discussion guide for local issue forums.

## **Intern Learning Experiences**

All interns interviewed reported that the internship was a good learning experience. Seven of the 10 interns interviewed stated that the internship influenced their career outlook, including their work preferences in terms of kinds of work, populations, and geographic areas. About half of the interviewed interns viewed their supervisor as a mentor and most said they benefited from the relationship. Among the chief benefits interns reported are:

- Acquiring job experience;
- Gaining or honing skills in interviewing, surveying, applied research, gardening, teaching, and media relations; and
- Practicing skills in a new language.

Two interns either published a professional or academic paper or are in the process of doing so.<sup>1</sup> Many interns reported that they were fulfilled by the chance to get to know and be inspired by a community. They also were enriched by the ability to better understand the particular issues they were working on.

## **Lessons Learned About Creating Effective Internship Projects**

Patterns found in the responses of advisors and interns pointed to several factors that are important in creating effective internships. Most advisors said that the simple fact of having another person available to do work was crucial in allowing them to attempt more complex projects or to finish endeavors that had been laid by the wayside for lack of time. Effective internships require an open, well-managed and transparent relationship

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<sup>1</sup> Matt Whacker, Al Sokolow, and Rachel Elkins published a research report through the UC Agricultural Issues Center titled "County Right-to-Farm Ordinances in California: An Assessment of Impacts and Effectiveness." *AIC Issues Brief*, Number 15, May 2001. Melissa Graboyes and Carole Paterson are working on a paper for publication.

between the intern, the advisor, and the community. Among the important lessons learned about creating effective internships are:

- Communities should be informed about the resources *and* limitations of the University/and or collaborating organizations to avoid unrealistic expectations about what the internships can and cannot deliver;
- Advisors must be clear in instructing interns about their duties to avoid conflicting expectations;
- Partner organizations often provide less assistance than originally assumed. It is important to communicate what specific contributions will be expected from them, e.g., how much support and guidance they are responsible for offering to interns, what kind of meeting space they will be expected to provide;
- Advisors need to do their homework in advance to insure that the short time allotted to the internship is used efficiently. For example, become alert to the possibility of conflicting community priorities or to the overlap between the intern project and the work of other community organizations;
- Effective internships need to be narrowly focused to allow the intern to realistically obtain positive impacts. Vague or overly broad projects often lead to disappointment for all parties;
- The most successful projects were in collaboration with existing community groups that could entice local citizens, organizations and institutions to participate and take control of the project after the internship;
- Effective projects delivered something tangible to communities, such as gardens, education courses, resource directories, research reports, or publicity;
- Hiring interns who have the requisite skills and little need for training was a key to the success of the internships.

## Recommendations of CCP

CCP is doing an effective job of managing their internship program. However, a few changes might increase the program's impact. Advisors generally had high praise for the intern program, especially for the ease of applying, and the flexible manner by which the program is managed. Among the recommended changes are:

1. The CCP should work with the regional office staff to develop a set of effective and consistent procedures (perhaps in writing) relating to the funding of internships, so that it is easier for advisors and staff to navigate hiring and payment issues.
2. The application deadline should be timed to give advisors the highest possibility of obtaining qualified interns. Advisors should be able to apply, receive notice, and complete paperwork and hiring processes by the beginning of the quarter/semester in which the project will be launched as interns are much harder to find later in the quarter/semester.
3. The CCP should send advisors an introductory packet of best practice tips and recommendations when an internship is funded.
4. Advisors should be required to inform CCP of their intern choice when they make their selection. CCP could then send an introductory packet to interns informing them of what CCP is and providing them with a support liaison that is not associated with advisors or can provide confidential assistance if problems arise.
5. CCP might consider creating a newsletter or meeting(s) that would allow advisors and interns to know one another, exchange information, and develop relationships.
6. Finally, brief exit interviews with advisors and interns might yield useful information that could influence future decision-making.

# Evaluation of the California Communities Program Internship Program

## Summary of Interview Data

### Methods

Data for this report were obtained primarily by phone interviews with ten former or current interns and fifteen Cooperative Extension project advisors. Written reports and documentation were also used. Protocols for the interviews are located in Appendices 1 and 2.

We attempted to interview all twenty of the advisors who had supervised interns, a number of whom have had more than one internship project. We successfully interviewed fifteen. Those whom we missed included two advisors who are now retired and three who were unavailable during the period the evaluation was conducted. We also attempted to contact all twenty-four of the student interns for whom we had some contact information, successfully reaching ten. Many of the interns from projects in earlier years of the program could not be located. Nine out of ten interns interviewed were female: six were graduate students, two were undergraduates, and two were non-students. Both non-students worked for the same advisor.<sup>2</sup>

This report provides information on the experiences, both personal and professional, of advisors and interns. It also examines community outcomes associated with the internships and the role of the California Communities Program (CCP) in facilitating effective internships.

### Finding out about the internship program

#### *Advisors*

Most advisors discovered the internship program through one of two main avenues: email announcements and personal contacts. CCP associates Dave Campbell, Joan Wright, Jim Grieshop, and Al Sokolow encouraged many advisors to apply. Sometimes encouragement came before the email announcements, thereby priming advisors to the opportunity. Sometimes persuasion came on the heels of announcements, promoting the internship program as a good way to meet current project needs. Three advisors applied based simply on announcements. Three had previous exposure through workgroups and graduate work. One advisor heard about it from another advisor. The majority, eight out of fifteen, was personally encouraged by CCP associates.

#### *Interns*

Most interns located the opportunity through the same two ways: email notice or personal contact from their eventual advisor or someone associated with the advisor. Five out of ten interns interviewed heard about the opening from an email announcement. Three interns were already either working with participating advisors or were associated with them. One intern was informed about the position from an academic mentor who had been contacted by an advisor. Another intern was considering a position at another organization and the folks at that organization told her about the internship.

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<sup>2</sup> Although the program is primarily intended for graduate students, exceptions in particular cases are granted when the remote location of the project makes it difficult to secure an intern.

## Getting Started

### *Advisors: Attracting and Hiring Interns*

While attracting interns was easy for most advisors, three advisors found it difficult to find interns, and three found it difficult to retain interns. Most located interns by advertising at local universities, often through specific departments or faculty contacts. Many advisors had worked with interns in other capacities. Some interns were suggested by other faculty, staff, or people in the community.

Most interns completed the entire project. However, six left prematurely, usually due to personal and academic burdens, and had to be replaced. Replacement of interns mid-project was often a barrier to success. Also, deadlines made hiring difficult in some cases. Advisors reported that the application process was often not totally completed until after the start of the quarter/semester, making it difficult to locate interns who had already been lured to other campus jobs. Even if projects were informed of their acceptance before the quarter/semester start date, the hiring procedures were often time consuming.

Some advisors reported difficulty with hiring and payment procedures. Regional offices were sometimes slow and uninformed regarding payment to interns. Hiring also was a laborious process of creating a job classification and receiving approval. Many advisors were unaware of this hurdle before they began the program. To remedy this problem, one advisor suggested creating an intern classification that can be used repeatedly. Another felt it was important for advisors to communicate with their regional offices on this issue. Training is sometimes given on hiring procedures and this has been very helpful for some advisors.

### *Interns: Initial Hopes and Expectations*

Interns hoped for three main outcomes: 1) money and part-time work; 2) experience that would improve their skills and enhance their résumés; and 3) the opportunity to work with communities and in specific fields of interest. The need for money, which some but not all interns communicated, is self-explanatory. Interns had varied reasons for wanting experience. One intern had been a stay-at-home mother for a while and was looking for job experience to make her more marketable. Another wanted applied experience that would complement previous research and round out her résumé. Another was an undergraduate who was looking for an experience that would allow her to take on more responsibility.

In addition, interns were almost always interested in topics they worked on and the communities they worked with. One community development graduate student wanted experience in bilingual organizing and was attracted to the particular community targeted by the internship project. A social work graduate student was looking to work with a Southeast Asian population and was given the chance in her internship. An International Agricultural Development student was interested in increasing environmental awareness through education and her project encompassed that topic. Carole Paterson tailored her internship proposal specifically to her intern's interest.

All interns were informed about expectations for their job duties and project goals ahead of time. However, these expectations varied in their level of detail, accuracy, and intern contribution. Eight out of ten interns felt clear about expectations and found that those expectations were borne out. The expectations were developed in one of two ways, unilaterally by the advisor or collaboratively with the intern. Some interns related that expectations came from a joint planning process between them and their advisors. Other interns reported that the expectations were already clearly defined by the advisor with little input from the interns. These interns were still satisfied with the process and the direction of their job.

Of these eight interns, one reported that there was a small part of her job description that was unclear. A second one related that while the description was plain, she was unclear about how to fulfill some of the expectations. For instance, she was told that she was to develop a curriculum but was unsure how to do so.

Two interns felt initial expectations were vastly different from what occurred. One intern found that expectations shifted as the project progressed. Sometimes these shifts reflected natural trends in the target community. However, the intern was inhibited from doing the kind of work she initially wanted. A second intern was under the impression that the project was much further along. She thought that her role would be to implement and evaluate a functioning program but discovered that the program did not yet exist and was in a very early stage of development. She found the goals and the advisor to be vague. The working relationship with her supervisor also turned out not to be as helpful as she had expected.

### Project Types

Most internship projects were part of a larger initiative that existed before the intern arrived. For example, Dr. Charles Go of UCCE in Alameda, along with various community groups, had been developing a pilot program designed to support Cambodian youth and their families, for two years before the intern opportunity became available. Dr. Rachel Elkins was approached by the county Farm Bureau who requested her assistance on investigating Right-to-Farm ordinances. Interns provided human capital to further these incipient projects. Projects spanned a range of issues and geographic regions. Youth development, community gardens, agriculture, watershed management and education, business and commerce evaluation and development, and citizenship development were main areas of project interest (See Appendix 3).

Projects were also divided along three general methods. Most projects focused on community development. These projects sought to tap latent community resources, bring community members together, or create community infrastructure. For example, advisors Diane Metz and Larry Clement sought to develop a self-governing coalition dedicated to local food security, create a food source resource directory, and start a community garden. Service provision projects are the second category. These initiatives delivered services to different populations. Advisor Marianne Bird's Science Literacy Project exemplifies this as it had interns deliver environmental education programs to youth. The third type of endeavor is the research project. These projects developed databases or compiled information. In most cases, the data were used to begin community outreach or applied research projects. Advisor Rebecca Carver employed this type of method when she hired an intern to compile research about youth transitioning out of foster care, and about the community resources available to support them.

### Intern Duties

Most advisors reported that the intern was crucial in the project's undertaking. Many said that the project would not have happened without the intern's contribution. For others, the project might have happened but at a much slower pace and with much less depth and attention. Some explained that the intern helped them expand on-going projects or add vital components. Finally, some said that projects would have happened regardless of an intern's appointment but that the intern was helpful in moving the project along. Advisors revealed that the most important thing interns brought with them were technical skills, language skills, and access to campus resources.

Interns found themselves engaged in direct service work, indirect service work, research, or a combination thereof. Two interns leaned more toward direct service as their main roles were as garden planters/managers and school-based learning instructors, respectively. Three other interns performed indirect service work. One coordinated the launch and implementation of an after-school program. She organized meetings, communicated with partners, and worked with site staff. Another intern, in her goal of helping farmers and producers coordi-

nate with each other and market their products, worked closely with a partner organization. She planned meetings, coordinated public relations and advertising efforts, and managed project affairs. The third worked with a neighborhood association to re-institute a community garden. She built relationships and gathered donated materials. She contributed concrete data in the form of site research and a site map.

The remainder of the interns conducted research and evaluation work. One intern engaged in exploratory research of after school programs and their retention rates. Another surveyed thrift store staff about their practices and clothing stock. A third intern researched right-to-farm issues statewide. A fourth intern developed a list of stakeholders impacted by invasive plants. The database was then used to begin outreach to a brand new client population.

Two of the ten interns interviewed felt that their work duties were not appropriate because they were relegated to “menial secretarial” work.

### *Interns: Work Schedules*

Intern work schedules were mixed. Some interns worked 25% for six months and others 50% for three months, ten and twenty hours per week respectively. Many advisors reported that interns worked flexible schedules, fulfilling the total hours, but varying week-to-week depending on workload.

Five of the ten interns interviewed found that there were no conflicts with their work schedules. They thought their positions were flexible and workable. One noted that while nothing was obviously conflicting, juggling the internship, coursework, and research was difficult. Two reported that family obligations or academic pressure interfered with their work schedules and were reasons to leave the internship prematurely. Two interns mentioned that it was difficult to be motivated when the supervisor was critical and condescending. One of these interns also complained that the project was too short to make the kind of difference she wanted.

### Working Relationships: Supervision and Support

#### *Supervision*

Most advisors reported that their interns were very independent and able to work autonomously. In fact, most believed that was a necessity. Not surprisingly, many interns described themselves as independent workers. In terms of supervision, the range of time a supervisor would devote was between 1-5 hours per week. The most recurrent pattern was advisors who met once a week with interns to discuss planning and exchange feedback. Many advisors had informal supervision where interns contacted them when questions or barriers arose, and vice versa.

When interns and advisors worked in the same office space, interaction was much more frequent. When interns worked off-site or out of town, supervision was much more infrequent and often took the form of email messages and phone conversations. Most advisors found that their expectations for supervision were met. They did not usually feel overburdened by the training needs of their interns. Most suggested that internships decrease in value the more time is spent on training and supervision. Hiring interns that were already independent and skilled was an important factor in having a successful internship.

In the same vein, eight out of ten interns interviewed reported positive, supportive relationships with their supervisors. There was a continuum of interaction between interns and supervisors from very involved to loosely involved. Advisor Manuel Jimenez was very hands-on teaching his intern the basics of planting. They worked side by side for weeks and months to plant and prepare a community garden. Ken Wilmarth introduced

his intern to all of the important people connected with the project. Carole Paterson worked collaboratively with her intern, alternating brainstorming and planning meetings with independent work. Other interns communicated with their supervisors mainly by email or phone contact, meeting occasionally. They still felt appropriately supported by their supervisors.

Five out of ten interns interviewed viewed their supervisor as a mentor, in some capacity. Some viewed their supervisor as a friend as well. The other half did not report that mentoring had occurred. Many said they had no expectations of mentoring. Some replied that they did not spend enough time together to develop that sort of relationship and one said that she already had a mentor.

Two of the ten interns had negative experiences with their supervisor. They saw their supervisor as condescending, critical, demanding, unsupportive, unclear, and unresponsive. As the internships progressed, contact became even more minimal and strained. These interns did not feel supervision was adequate.

Six out of ten interviewed interns reported that they had very little or no support from other people including faculty or community members. Of those who did report outside assistance, they mentioned people like administrative staff, Patsy Eubanks Owens, Dave Campbell, Carol Hillhouse, Barbara Goldman, Robin Kozloff, Paul Marcotte, project partners, and friends and classmates.

### Project Impacts and Results: Intern Perspectives

Five interns saw obvious positive impacts on their host communities. Two (one of whom had worked on two projects) mentioned that it was too soon to evaluate project impacts. Two others said that they did not know if there were any positive impacts on the broader community. Two reported that they did not see any changes. One of these interns speculated that short-term projects might have a negative effect on communities who begin to trust a particular intern and when that intern leaves, the community feels betrayed. She suspects that narrower projects would help alleviate this problem.

### Project Results and Impacts: Advisor Perspectives

Most advisors saw some kind of community impact, or foresaw it in the future. However, projects did vary in their degree of impact. Three major elements appear to promote project success. This section examines those three factors.

#### *Success Element #1: Building Relationships*

One practically universal impact of projects was the development of new and expanded relationships within the community. Some projects deliberately sought to build collaborative partnerships among community stakeholders. The following case study provides a concrete example of successful relationship building.

#### Case Study 1

Advisor Kenneth Willmarth and intern Marianne Jacobson worked with Airport Neighbors United (ANU), a neighborhood association, to replace a community garden that had lost its site. By the end of the project, the garden had been relocated and relationships had been ignited and/or cemented with the neighborhood association, schools, faculty, the county, the city, local non-profits, youth groups, and community folks. One of these non-profits agreed to oversee the garden after the initial Cooperative Extension project was over. The agency currently works with a neighborhood youth council to maintain the garden. Years later the garden is still active, nurtured and free from vandalism. The lack of vandal-

ism, in Wilmarth's opinion, is due the level of community buy-in cultivated early on.

Other projects were successful at strengthening ties between Cooperative Extension/the University and the community. Some advisors reported that as a result of the project, Cooperative Extension has been invited to the decision making table. This occurred in the Strengthening Food Security Project where advisor Diane Metz reported that Cooperative Extension is now asked to be a part of other food security projects and decisions. Marianne Bird, advisor of the Science Literacy Project revealed that as a result of the project she was asked to be an advisor to members of the SAC Start Board, putting her in touch with major decision makers.

### *Success Element #2: Tangible Outcomes*

Beyond establishing relationships, many projects had tangible products and services produced from interns' contributions. Evaluation and survey instruments, community gardens, coalitions, resource directories, journal publications and educational workshops are a few of the products or services that were mentioned. A few projects affected broader reaching decisions. Case Study Number 2 shows a concrete product that influenced at least one decision at the county level.

#### Case Study 2

Advisors Nancy Feldman and Joan Wright, along with intern Andrew Murray, were able to shape county perspectives on consumer behavior. Fearing that dollars spent on goods and services were leaking out of the region, Tuolumne County approached Feldman and Wright asking them to repeat a survey conducted 10 years earlier. This original instrument, developed by Feldman and Wright, measured business and consumer attitudes and actions. After the surveys were distributed among a sample group, intern Andrew Murray analyzed incoming data and with Feldman presented findings to the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and media. Results showed that business was better than expected and consumers were more likely to shop in the county than was believed at first. It was discovered, however, that county auto dealers were charging higher prices than those in neighboring areas, pushing car purchasers to outside dealers. The Chamber of Commerce, upon hearing this information, approached local dealers about lowering prices. They also instituted a series of customer service workshops for local businesses.

This intern project was able to influence county attitudes and promote corrective actions to improve those areas where business was flagging.

### *Successful Element #3: Sustainability and Long-Term Change*

Many projects faced a challenge in sustaining the fruits of their projects. Many found it difficult to continue volunteer driven programs, like community gardens, after the intern left. Some discovered hurdles to original plans and had to change course, usually for the better but sometimes for the worse. Some ran into barriers from government offices that made it difficult to achieve project goals. The projects that were sustained usually cultivated community buy-in, developed relationships with other groups that could take over responsibility, and/or generated enough good publicity to receive other grants that allowed continued or expanded work. Case Study 3 is an example of a project that was very adept at catalyzing long-term and far-reaching change.

#### Case Study 3

Advisor Manuel Jimenez and intern Francis Ferreira worked with the Woodlake Pride community group to launch a demonstration garden. Woodlake Pride, a progressive community coalition, had been active for 10 years and was interested in garnering the support of Woodlake and neighboring communities. To advance the garden project, Francis organized local youth to undertake 70 separate plantings along with

irrigation work. Upon the completion of the garden, the group held a major event for the community which drew close to 500 people. Jimenez, Ferreira and the group had developed relationships with the Farm Bureau, Tulare County, city planners and staff, and the United Farm Workers in order to raise funds, generate publicity, and develop supportive facilitative relationships. The garden was a major success. The town looks better. *Sunset* magazine, attracted by the stories about the garden, did an extensive photo shoot. As a result of the success of the garden and the accompanying events, the Chamber of Commerce gave the project office space and staff time. The city of Woodlake, that once turned their back to the group and the project, was now rallying behind it. The Woodlake Pride group received another major grant for their next project, an extensive botanical garden. Jimenez believes that community attitudes, in general, became more progressive as an effect of this initiative. The community is more accepting and supporting of progressive attitudes and has even decided to pass a number of school bonds which have traditionally been tough to fund.

This case study highlights a number of key elements necessary for achieving sustainability and far reaching impact. First, the attempt begins by working with an established community group. Second, it develops productive relationships with decision makers. Third, it generates community buy-in through involvement of youth groups and by the production of spirited events. Finally, publicity is used to draw large crowds and media attention. In the end, the group has gained funds to do larger projects and has cemented on-going relationships with important players.

In evaluating project outcomes, a number of important criteria for success emerged. Internships working on community gardens tended to exhibit many of the criteria though this does not mean that all projects should be community gardens. These characteristics are the markers that tend to increase success: 1) Gardens are tangible projects, which the community can rally around. 2) They have relatively defined objectives and are doable within the time limitations of an internship 3) They lend themselves to community involvement and, as such, fulfill the community development aims of the internship program. 4) Success and failure are usually clear and easily measured.

Projects that are service oriented are less able to generate community development. Projects that are too broad are often not able to demonstrate measurable outcomes or are unable to be sustained by the time the intern departs. These insights suggest that narrowly defined, community-oriented projects are most appropriate for limited CCP internships.

## Learning & Accomplishments

### *Advisors: Learning to Work with Interns*

All advisors interviewed felt that their interns were valuable. They explained that interns brought enthusiasm, energy, technical expertise, and an ability to work. Most advisors said that simple fact of having another person available to do work was crucial in allowing them to attempt more complex projects or to finish endeavors that had been laid by the wayside for lack of time. Some advisors said that having an intern helped them stay focused on the project. Some stated that interns brought a sense of fun and an avenue for keeping in touch with students. Almost all advisors said they would be interested in working with interns again.

For most, the benefits of having an intern far outweighed the disadvantages. Advisors mentioned that the quality of the intern significantly affects the success of the project. Independent and motivated interns are vital. Some advised to pick interns based not only on skills but also on personality traits. Skills can be taught, they postulated, personality cannot. It's also important, many said, to know your needs up front. You must clearly know what you need from an intern and be able to articulate that to potential candidates. Intern candidates may

show wonderful enthusiasm, but it's imperative to choose a candidate who can truly deliver. Enthusiasm does not always equal ability to follow through. One of the oft-mentioned drawbacks of having an intern is the erratic schedule of students. Academic work tends to take priority for most students which means that the internship projects often get less attention. Office space and time in training and supervision were other costs of having an intern.

Advisors gained valuable information about working with interns. Insights mentioned above center around having clear expectations and hiring the right intern. Realistic goals and objectives help prevent disappointment on the part of the advisor, the intern, and the community. The importance of regular communication was also emphasized. Interestingly, while a few advisors deliberately took steps to mentor their interns such as lunch dates, time for talking, etc. - most did not mention mentoring as part of their interactions with interns.

### *Advisors: Reflections on Professional Roles*

When considering the impact of the internship on their professional perspectives, many advisors said it was simply an expected part of their positions. These advisors had often previously worked with interns or were already comfortable with community development methods. Advisors who had not forayed into community development work before, saw the program as a catalyst for gaining confidence and skills and a means for expanding their repertoire.

### *Interns: Accomplishments*

When asked about accomplishments, many interns sorted their response into two categories: personal goals and project goals. Personally, many interns reported that they were fulfilled by the chance to get know and be inspired by a community. They also said that they had acquired important skills, such as learning about community development, learning a new language, and learning technical skills like gardening and media relations. One mentioned that she learned about her limitations and how to overcome them.

On the project level, interns reported that they were able to educate communities on particular issues, create tangible products like gardens and greatly improved basketball courts, foster alliances between community participants, generate positive publicity, and publish research papers.

Some goals were not accomplished. Two interns reported that they did not accomplish what they expected and that the programs they worked on failed to be viable or sustainable. One of these interns said that she felt less competent after being criticized. Another intern was disappointed that the Cooperative Extension Office was unable to get further funding for her position. She felt that her departure had a damaging effect on the project and ultimately diminished its sustainability. One intern wanted to contribute lesson plans to the project for future use but couldn't find the time. Seven other interns reported all major goals were accomplished.

### *Interns: The Value of the Internship as a Learning Experience*

All of interns said the internship was a good learning experience. Many mentioned that they were able to gain or hone skills in interviewing, surveying, applied research, and community interaction. Even the two interns with difficult experiences said that they learned about themselves, their boundaries, dealing with difficult people, and grappling with tough community development questions.

In terms of community development wisdom gained, some interns mentioned that they learned the importance of listening to the community and getting acquainted with its needs as well as its dynamics. At least one third of the interns reported that they learned more about the particular subject area they were working on. Two interns were more explicit about the community development lessons they learned. One believed it was impor-

tant to 1) narrow the scope of the work as much as possible, 2) discover who the other major players are, 3) spend more time in the beginning working out arrangements about vision, communication and collaboration with those other players, 4) spend more time with your supervisor to hammer out expectations of your work, including a proposed departure date, and share these with the community, 5) build in the possibility of continuing and renewing the internship after CCP funding ends, 6) work out a plan ahead of time between intern and advisor about what to do when relations break down. The other intern learned that change happens slowly. In observing the social dynamics in a partner foundation, she came to the conclusion that there is a difference between theory and practice.

Seven interns reported that the internship had influenced their ideas about their careers. Some said the internship increased their excitement about a particular field. One intern changed her major as a result of the internship. Another intern started taking complementary economics classes after she saw the importance of economics in her fieldwork. Some interns stated that the internships made them think more closely about the kind of work they wanted to do, where they wanted to do it, in what capacity, and with whom. Some interns learned what they did not want to do. Eight interns said that they had considered working for Cooperative Extension, either before the internship or as a result of it. However, most did not rate it as a highly likely occurrence.

When asked whether they would do anything different if they could do it over, five interns said they would not. They were generally pleased with the internship experience. Most of the other interns were also pleased but mentioned factors that could have facilitated their work, such as doing more research and field work, asking for help earlier, and having more time. One intern said that she would not have taken the internship if she knew then what she knows now.

### CCP's Role: Praise and Suggestions

#### *Advisors Perspective*

When asked for suggestions on how to improve the CCP intern program, many advisors had high praise. They appreciated the easy application and Dave's flexible, hands-off style. Some liked the reflection requirement at the completion of the project. This required them to review their work. Most found the award to be adequate, although some advisors said they could have used even more funds. The majority of advisors didn't see the need for any additional training or support. Some, however, mentioned training need for: evaluation and survey design, funding, payment and hiring issues, web site design, and grant writing. They also thought it might be nice to have a list of specialists who could offer topical consultations.

The process of transfer of funds and paying intern salaries was often mentioned as something that could be improved. Many had trouble working with their regional offices and found the process onerous. Advance tips from CCP might be useful. Some also mentioned that funding deadline was too fast, as well as being awkwardly timed, making it difficult to hire interns. Some advisors thought it would be nice to meet with other advisors and interns during the course of year to share feedback and advice. Some suggested a conference. Some thought a newsletter would be sufficient. One even suggested that advisors could work on mutually decided policy issues. Some advisors thought a periodic check-in by CCP associates would be beneficial. They also wanted advice on community development issues, when needed. Finally, some advisors mentioned that tips on additional funding could be useful.

## *Interns Perspectives*

When asked whether they knew that their internship was funded by CCP, seven out of ten interns interviewed said yes. However, most of those who said yes still had little knowledge of what CCP is or what it does.

Five interviewed interns could not think of any ways that CCP could improve the program because their internships went smoothly. One mentioned that she would have liked a longer internship. A couple other interns stated that they might like to know about the other internship projects and connect with them. This could possibly lead to opportunities for networking, collaboration, publishing, and troubleshooting. The two interns with negative experiences offered some suggestions for change: 1) Have a CCP designate someone that interns have access to and who is not associated with advisors. 2) Perhaps have a CCP person in a placement capacity that could let potential interns know what they might be walking into. 3) A mentor who could help with realistic time management. 4) More money. 5) Better screening of advisors in terms of their supervisory skills, perhaps talking to other people they have supervised. 6) Emphasize the mentoring aspects of the intern/advisor relationship.

Many interns expressed how much they enjoyed and learned from the opportunity. They emphasized the importance of having these types of opportunities available.

## Appendix 1. Interview Schedule: Interns

- 1) How did you find out about the position and why did you apply?
- 2) Did you know that the position was funded by CCP?
- 3) What did you hope to gain from the internship?
- 4) Tell me about the project and what kind of work you did? How difficult or easy was it?
- 5) Do you think the project reached its goals? Were you able to accomplish your piece of the project? If not, why not?
- 6) Can you tell me about your relationship with the advisor/supervisor?
  - Was it very interactive or hands-off? (Supportive, neglectful , or in-between)
  - How much time did you spend in supervision? Was that adequate?
  - Did you consider your supervisor a mentor? If so, tell about the kind of mentoring that took place and what you learned. If not, was this your choice or would you have liked your supervisor to provide more mentoring?
- 7) Did you have relationships with anyone else on campus (especially faculty) that gave you support or advice about your work duties, etc.?
- 8) What did you gain from the internship? What did you learn, if anything?
  - New skills?
  - Wisdom about community development?
  - Influencing ideas about career goals? Have you thought about working for Cooperative Extension?
  - Have you learned any personal/professional skills and acquired knowledge that has been incorporated into your life?
- 9) Is there anything that you would have done differently?
- 10) Can you offer any suggestions about how the program might be improved? Were there any difficulties you encountered that could be handled in a better manner?
- 11) Anything else?

Thank you

## **Appendix 2. Interview Schedule: Advisors**

### *Background Section*

- 1) How did you hear about CCP and the internship program? How did the idea for the project come about?

### *Student Section*

- 2) Who was your intern and how were they chosen?
- 3) What work did they do?
- 4) How much time did supervising the intern require?
- 5) Did the student have access to key campus or community resources?

### *Project Section*

- 6) Did the internship impact relationships with community organizations or decision makers in the course of the project? Which ones?
  - ∑ Were there products/services produced for them, and if so, what were they?
  - ∑ Did the work impact particular community decisions or issues? How?
- 7) What were the results of the project? Successes? Failures? Unanticipated consequences?
- 8) Is there any lasting impact of the project? Are the relationships within the community still sustained? By whom?

### *Reflection Section*

- 9) The next set of questions concern your thoughts and reflections about what you learned on the project.
  - a) Did the project change the way you think about your work as an advisor? (i.e., new roles, clients, programs, interests)
  - b) Did you discover any needs you have for training and support?
  - c) Did you learn anything about managing or mentoring volunteers?
  - d) Any other ways that the internship affected your work as an Advisor?
- 10) What were your main benefits of having an intern?
- 11) Were there any drawbacks to having an intern?
- 12) Is there anything you can suggest to improve CCP's intern program?

### *Follow-up Section*

- 13) Are there any pictures or other artifacts of the intern project that we might use on our website? Anything we could see if we came for a site visit?
- 14) Can you give me contact information for your student intern? If not, can you direct me to anyone who can?
- 15) Can you suggest some community partners/institutions that you worked with during the program that we might want to talk with? Contact information?
- 16) Could I contact you for a follow-up interview if necessary?

### Appendix 3. List of CCP internship projects (alphabetically by advisor)

Advisor (Intern)*	Title	Year	Region	ANR Affiliation
Bell, Carl E. (Denness Bonds)	Invasive Plants in San Diego Watersheds: Stakeholder Identification and Outreach	2000-2001	CCS	Agriculture
Bird, Marianne (Dave Davis/Erin Dunn)	Science Literacy Expansion Project	1999-2000	CV	Human Resources
Carver, Rebecca (Jenica Huddleston)	Creating Infrastructure to Effectively Support the Development of Youth Transitioning out of the Foster Care System	2001-2002	CV	Human Resources
Carver, Rebecca (Jesikah Marie Ross)	Enhancing Youth and Adult Citizenship in an Underserved Community	1999-2000	CV	Human Resources
Cassell, Jodi	Pilarcitos County Watershed Monitoring and Education Program	1998-1999	CC	Natural Resources
Clement, Larry and Diane Metz (Jill Kopel)	Strengthening Food Security in Solano County	1998-1999	CV	Agriculture/Human Resources
De Lasaux, Michael (Jonathon London)	Integrating Resource Management and Economic Development Through Watershed Education: Creating a Strategic Plan for Plumas County.	1998-1999	NCM	Natural Resources
Elkins, Rachel (Matt Whacker)	Developing a Right-to-Farm Ordinance for Lake County	1999-2000	NCM	Agriculture
Farfan-Ramirez, Lucrecia (Maggie Mash)	Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition Program	1999-2000	CCS	Agriculture
Farfan-Ramirez, Lucrecia	West Oakland Food Security Project	2000-2001	CCS	Agriculture/Human Resources
Feldman, Nancy (Andrew Murray)	Consumer/Business Survey for Tuolumne County: Progress from 1989-1997 Toward Preventing Leakage of Goods and Services out of the County	1997-1998	CV	Human Resources
Giraud, Deborah (Molly Nealan)	Humboldt County Wholesale Food Project	1997-1998	NCM	Agriculture
Giraud, Deborah (Tong Lu/May Vang)	Welfare Reform and Self-Employment Outreach to Hmong Families in the North Coast	1998-1999	NCM	Agriculture
Go, Charles G. (Rose Wong)	A Cambodian Urban Youth Sample	2000-2001	CCS	Human Resources

Advisor (Intern)*	Title	Year	Region	ANR Affiliation
Jimenez, Manuel (Francis Ferreira)	Agriculture Education Project	1999-2000	CV	Agriculture
Moratorio, Mario	Evaluating Residents' Criteria for Selecting Pesticides for Home Use	1999-2000	CV	Agriculture
Murdock, Shelley	Improving Environmental Education Access to Underrepresented Teens	1999-2000	CCS	Human Resources
(A nonprofit sponsored the internship)	Intern for Shasta and Scott River Coordinated Watershed Management Organizations in Siskiyou County	1998-1999	NCM	Natural Resources
Paterson, Carole (Melissa Graboyes)	Strengthening Capacity to Engage California Citizens	2001-2002	CV	Human Resources
Paterson, Carole (Rebecca Stark)	Vallejo Community Leadership Project	1997-1998	CV	Human Resources
Rodrigues, Kim (Christine Klein/Ambrose)	A Tribal Community Garden for Basket Materials	1997-1998	NCM	Natural Resources
Steinbring, Yvonne (Mary Stein)	Siskiyou County Agricultural Food, Beverage and Harvested Forest Products Marketing Technical Assistance Project	2000-2001	NCM	Human Resources
Steinbring, Yvonne (Grace Justice)	Utilization of Post Consumer Clothing and Textiles	1998-1999	NCM	Human Resources
Voris, John (Houy Chan)	Citizenship Training for a Hmong Community	1997-1998	CV	Agriculture
Williams, Edwina	5 A Day Power Play! Campaign	2000-2001	CCS	Human Resources
Willmarth, Ken (Lucinda Smith/ Marianne Jacobson)	Community Garden Development	1998-1999	CV	Human Resources

\* Project intern is in parentheses.