



## ***Science Influencers* Internship Program GUIDELINES**

The *Science Influencers* program integrates research, education, and extension (REE) experiences for undergraduates to become effective, influential communicators of science in the public domain. Students with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) knowledge and communications experience are needed in the Food, Agriculture, Natural resources, and Human (FANH) sciences.

A paid summer internship program, including scientific and technical communications training and social media experiences, is provided for each student in *Science Influencers*. Participants gain invaluable knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) with cooperating internship agencies such as public/private scientific research laboratories, communications firms, and/or extension programs. *Science Influencers*' internships are experiential learning opportunities that integrate classroom concepts into real world science communications workplace settings.

The summer internship program requires contractual agreement between Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) institutions and approved internship partners that furnish facilities, instruction, and professional experiences to improve students' KSAs. Interns will work with supervising agencies to complete regular and special projects relevant to the *Science Influencers* program.

### **Objectives**

- To provide students with experiential learning opportunities related to studies of science communications in STEM- or FANH-related sciences.
- To facilitate students' independent exploration of career interests that incorporate communicating science with the public.
- To increase students' motivations for careers involving science communications by integrating classroom instruction with planned and supervised practical experiences.
- To strengthen students' science communication effectiveness and influence.
- To prepare students for employment through field training and professional experiences.

### **Eligibility**

- Active student members in the *Science Influencers* program.
- Students must be enrolled in summer internship credits in one TAMUS institution.

### **Operational Principles**

*Science Influencers*' internships are based on operational and philosophical principles, including:

- Each internship requires S.M.A.R.T. learning objectives that are relevant to the intern's professional development.
- Program directors, cooperating internship field supervisor, and student intern will review the learning objectives periodically to ensure that students derive maximum benefits.
- Student interns will have well-defined work activities that are agreed upon by the cooperating internship sponsor, student interns, and the program directors.
- Student interns are regarded as independent agents who perform work activities and pursue learning objectives with their cooperating agencies.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

Students must complete an internship application before approval for enrolling in *Science Influencers*' internship credits. Student should ensure that their interests and academic



preparation meet the requirements of the cooperating internship agency. Upon approval from the *Science Influencers* program directors and the cooperating internship supervisor, the student will register for summer internship credit at their TAMUS institution.

## **Responsibilities of the Principal Participants**

### *Students:*

Assisted by the *Science Influencers* program directors, each student will seek potential opportunities for the summer internship program. The student should have an updated resume, and cover letter (if necessary) before applying to internship programs and/or interviewing with prospective internship agencies. While participating in the internship program, student interns are expected to:

- Comply with all university Student Rules and Regulations and internship sponsor's rules and regulations; failure to comply with these standards are grounds for dismissal.
- Complete 400 hours of work (i.e., suitable for three academic credits).
- Complete internship tasks and activities, as agreed upon by all parties.
- Work with the internship sponsor to gain technical and/or scientific knowledge.
- Produce blog posts about the internship experience.
- Practice reflective writing for professional development.
- Conduct self-assessments of work performance during and after the internship.
- Develop and present oral reports for the *Science Influencers* program.
- Produce written materials for publication through the *Science Influencers* program.
- Present a scientific poster or an oral presentation about the internship experience at the *Science Influencers* annual fall research symposium.

### *Internship Sponsor and Field Supervisors:*

Cooperating internship sponsors are expected to provide a variety of educational experiences for and involve the student intern in specific projects. The cooperating sponsor assigns an internship field supervisor who guides the daily or weekly work activities and evaluates the intern's work performance during and after the internship. Field supervisor's evaluations contribute to the overall appraisal of the internship experience. Additionally, supervisors' evaluations help verify the *Science Influencers* internship as a credit-bearing experience. All evaluations and program forms are online.

### *Faculty Internship Directors:*

Faculty associated with the *Science Influencers* may serve as academic directors for students in summer internships. Academic directors review internship plans to verify they:

- Are academically relevant to the learning process (e.g., related to the *Science Influencers*) and are appropriate for TAMUS institutional credit.
- Involve initiative, creative opportunities, meaningful responsibilities, and assignments – in contrast to routine or continuously repetitive work activities.
- Provide the student with practical experiences to refine their KSAs in science, etc.
- Include appropriate supervision and direction by qualified and interested persons.

Questions about the *Science Influencers* internship experience should be addressed to:

- Dr. Holli Leggette ([holli.leggette@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:holli.leggette@ag.tamu.edu))
- Dr. Gary Wingenbach ([gary.wingenbach@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:gary.wingenbach@ag.tamu.edu))
- Dr. Barbara Gastel ([bgastel@cvm.tamu.edu](mailto:bgastel@cvm.tamu.edu))



## Science Influencers Internship Program (Example of Online Application)

Please complete all fields.

Your full name: \_\_\_\_\_

School ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Host Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Internship Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Supervisor's Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Supervisor's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the Internship Plan** (General overview of the student intern's daily or weekly work activities):

**Describe S.M.A.R.T. Learning Objectives** for the internship (S.M.A.R.T. objectives focus on knowledge, skills, and abilities to be gained from the internship):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the Special Project** (each student intern will develop or guide and evaluate one project beyond regular daily activities; student, internship field supervisor, and program directors will review and agree to the Special Project).

I agree to the *Science Influencers* Summer Internship Program rules and expectations as described in the Internship Program Guidelines. I understand this internship includes specified hours of work activities with a cooperating internship sponsor, and that I will produce blog posts, reflective writing, and self-assessments as internship products. I understand also that I will develop and submit a scientific poster or an oral presentation about the internship at the *Science Influencers* annual fall research symposium. If I enroll in additional credits (Directed Studies or Research), I will prepare materials suitable for publication and dissemination through the *Science Influencers* program.

Student Signature

Date

The cooperating internship sponsor agrees to provide the student with opportunities for practical experiences outlined in the Plan for Internship Program and to participate in formative and summative evaluations of the intern's work activities.

Internship Field Supervisor

Date

Faculty / Program Director

Date