I learned about a new field during my ECO internship

by Curtis Durham, EPA Fellow 2001-2002

My ECO internship experience was great! I interned with the USEPA Region II in Edison, NJ under the leadership of James Ferretti. I was able to utilize my science knowledge in a field that I have not experienced before. During my internship, I was also trained to use state-of-the art laboratory equipment. There were many standard procedures that I had to learn in order to maintain quality control during testing. I can truly say that I now have a greater appreciation for the environment and the scientists and technicians that perform the tedious tests to keep it clean for generations to come.

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The Forum

Environmental Protection Agency Minority Academic Institutions Undergraduate Student Fellowships Newsletter

Issue 1, 2002

In this issue

What advice does ECO alum & EPA Fellow David Forsh have for the Fellows who will be interning in 2002?

Associate Cynthia Behel and her project advisor speak out about ECO.

Discover who won the Fellow's newsletter naming contest!

Find out why Fellows program alum Curry Jones is an invaluable asset to new fellows.

"Actively and persistently use the networks that you develop over the summer to seek full-time employment opportunities."

-Curry Jones, Region 4, on what advice he would like to share with Associates

The EPA Minority Academic Institutions Undergraduate Student Fellowships (MAIUSF) program provides high-quality educational and professional training opportunities to participants

In 1982, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) National Center for Environmental Research (NCER) (formerly known as the Office of Exploratory Research (OER)) created the EPA Minority Academic Institutions Undergraduate Student Fellowships program. The goal of the program is to assist Minority Academic Institutions in providing high quality education and professional training opportunities to students interested in pursing environmental careers. The fellowship program provides up $15,200 per year of support. This amount covers a $2,700 9-month stipend, $2,500 for authorized expenses, and up to $10,000 for tuition and fees. Applicants must be citizens of the United States or its territories or possessions, or be lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. They must also attend a fully accredited four-year U.S. Minority Academic Institution and have at least a 'B' average overall.

The fellows also participate in a 12 week long Summer Internship Program between the first and second years of the program. The internship offers them the opportunity to work at an EPA research laboratory or another EPA facility to enhance their undergraduate educational experience and to gain valuable professional training. All Fellows receive a start up allowance, a relocation allowance, and a stipend of $6000 to complete the internship project. The internship program is administered by the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO). ECO is a 30 year old national, non-profit agency dedicated to the leadership training and development of environmental professionals.

A group of 2000-2001 EPA Fellows gathered in Washington, DC for ECO's annual career day event

To learn more about the EPA MAIUSF program, visit http://es.epa.gov/ncer or contact Georgette Boddie at boddie.georgette@epa.gov or call (202) 564-6926.

To learn more about ECO or the EPA Fellows Summer Intern Program, visit http://www.eco.org or contact Keri Salzillo at ksalzillo@eco.org or call (617) 426-4783 X155.

Perspectives: An EPA Fellow and her project advisor on their ECO experience

Cynthia Behel, EPA Fellow 2000-2001 & Summer Intern for the Clean Water Act Enforcement Section in Atlanta, GA

My internship afforded me the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about a variety of environmental fields. I was able to both participate in inspections and learn the legal aspects of EPA enforcement work by writing Compliance Evaluation Reports and sitting in on meetings with EPA attorneys. The ability to work directly with the business community as an enforcement officer, and to observe other environmental professionals at their jobs is a great benefit of an ECO internship, which you cannot duplicate in a classroom.

The experience has been invaluable to my future. I am better prepared for a job in the private sector after gaining exposure to a wide variety of businesses and learning to implement practical skills. My internship at ECO has made me more marketable. I would definitely recommend this intern program to other students.

> *"My internship at ECO has made me more marketable. I would definitely recommend this intern program to other students".*

Arthur Collins, Project Advisor & Chief of the Clean Water Act Enforcement Section in Atlanta, GA

Cynthia worked side by side with enforcement officers and her activities helped us in the devel - opment of inspection reports that identified the violations, the calculations of penalties and the development of enforcement cases. She is a quick learner interested in new concepts and initiatives, and I certainly consider her an asset to any employer.

It is important to me that candidates of Cynthia's caliber continue to participate in the MAIUSF program. The students I have worked with have been interested in the environment as public servants, with an inter- est in making a difference. As a Project Advisor I look for candidates who are highly motivated, self-starters and very professional.

My experience with ECO has been very positive. As mentors, the internship allows us to share our knowledge and open a dialogue to explore the ideas and concerns with students who will become the next generation of environmental professionals.

Things to consider when selecting an internship

by David Forsh, EPA Fellow 2000-01

Keep an open mind about the internship because there are many things that you will be exposed to! I went into my internship not sure what to expect. Since I am a biology major, I kept in mind that I would eventually go to graduate school. But now, since my internship was so interesting, I can see myself doing some of the same things that I was doing over the summer. Another important internship consideration is to decide which geographic location you prefer. Your internship should both strengthen your technical skills and provide opportunities to have fun.

2001-2002 MAIUSF Recipients

Fellow	Major	College/University
Maria Berrios-Rolon	Chemical Engineering	University of Puerto Rico
Camelia Cooper	Biology	Norfolk State U, Virginia
Lymari Aponte	Chemical Engineering	University of Puerto Rico
Golar Newby	Computer Science	Elizabeth City State U, New Jersey
Brandon Peebles	Marine & Environmental Sci	Hampton University, Virginia
Hildred Rochon	Public Health	Dillard University, Louisiana
Irma Lee Vazquez	Biology	University of Puerto Rico
Dodie Arnold	Biology	Xavier University, Louisiana
Aja Charity	Math, Computer, Environmental Sci	Virginia Union University, Virginia
Cara Monroe	Biochemistry	Oakwood College, Alabama
Ikechukwu Obih	Biology	Xavier University, Louisiana
Ogechi Onyewu	Mathematics/Engineering	Bowie State U/U Maryland
Leonard Pace	Marine & Environmental Sci	Hampton University, Virginia
Jessica Ruperto	Microbiology	University of Puerto Rico
Chenille Holloman	Biology	Norfolk State U, Virginia

Alumni Curry Jones helps new Fellows maximize the internship experience

In the summer of 1994, Curry Jones, a rising senior at the Wiley College in Marshall Texas, was introduced to the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO) through his participation in the EPA Minority Academic Institutions Undergraduate Student Fellowships program (MAIUSF). Through ECO, Curry completed his required twelve-week internship at the Office of Water in Seattle, Washington. In 1995, that same office extended Curry a full-time position through the EPA Outstanding Scholar program.

Curry accepted the position and immediately proved to be a valuable EPA employee. In addition to his regular duties, Curry voluntarily assumed the role of a valuable resource, mentor and advocate for the new EPA MAIUSF program participants in his office. Over the past six years, Curry has helped the fellows in many ways: he has assisted with housing searches and the relocation process; helped interested fellows develop individual project management plans; and offered continuous advice and support. The assistance that Curry has given to the many students in the Seattle office over the years has been invaluable to both the students and the program.

This past year, Curry relocated to Office of Water in Atlanta, Georgia where he continues to provide a high level of support to the EPA fellows in the Atlanta area. Though Curry is sorely missed in Seattle, there is no doubt that the Atlanta area fellows are thrilled with his arrival.

Hazel Ogugua, EPA Fellow 2001-2002, wins newsletter naming contest

This year, EPA/ECO decided to highlight the EPA Minority Academic Institutions Undergraduate Student Fellowships program. To name the newsletter, ECO hosted a contest among EPA fellows. In total, there were 55 entries. The winning name was submitted by Hazel Ogugua, an intern at the EPA National Exposure Research Laboratory of the Human Exposure Analysis Branch at Research Triangle Park in North Carolina.