Food Access Internship

Interns will be exposed to hands on experiences regarding food and culture. They will learn to develop, implement, and analyze outreach materials for adult audiences related to food access and acquisition of healthy eating behaviors. Interns will also increase awareness and ability to use applied qualitative and quantitative research to improve stakeholder interests as well as increase ability to communicate learning outcomes with stakeholders and peers.

Qualifications

1. **Minimum qualifications**: Rising juniors and seniors from LSU and partner institutions with at least a 3.0 GPA and majoring in Dietetics, Nutrition Science (pre-med option) or Nutrition, Health and Society are most competitive. Second-year students and those with a minimum 2.5 GPA are also eligible and encouraged to apply.

2. **Preferred qualifications**: Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, especially Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher; Must have experience working with people; Familiarity with Qualtrics survey software is preferred but not required.

3. **Physical qualifications**: Must be able to type; Must be able to stand for at least 3 hours at a time and lift 20 lbs.

**Primary Contact/Advisor**: Dr. Denise Holston, PhD, RDN, LDN, Assistant Professor, LSU AgCenter School of Nutrition and Food Sciences

**Interns Needed**: One

**Location**: LSU AgCenter School of Nutrition and Food Sciences, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The School of Nutrition and Food Sciences offers a comprehensive experience in quantitative and qualitative research on processing of value added foods and food access. The interns will participate in broader discussions with stakeholders on food, culture, policy, regulations and environment impacting food access.

**Weeks 1-3**

**Daily Contact**: Dr. Denise Holston

**Location**: LSU AgCenter School of Nutrition and Food Sciences

**Primary Tasks**:  
- Program Orientation to the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences
• Conduct brief literature review on food access, with emphasis in rural communities from scientific literature, policy statements
• Conduct interviews with key faculty, staff and programs, such as FCS agents and program managers working to address food access issues in their community
• Observe and participate in outreach and projects related to policy, systems and environmental approaches to address facilitators and barriers to healthy food access
  o Accompany Dr. Holston and team on extension calls to parish agents and stakeholders, participate in discussions on access to healthy food, policy, systems, and environmental changes to promote healthier lifestyles
• Write weekly reflective summaries and discuss with project team

**Milestones:** Identify an individual “Special Topic Research Issue” with literature review, research objective and timeline

**Expected outcomes:** The intern will be exposed to hands-on experience, different viewpoints regarding food access and promotion of healthy behaviors

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**Weeks 4-7**

**Daily Contact:** Dr. Denise Holston

**Location:** LSU AgCenter School of Nutrition and Food Sciences

**Primary Tasks:**

- Begin implementation of special topics research
- Research barriers to food security and access for rural consumers; research consumer fears and drivers of food choice
- Develop action plan and assessment plan; launch survey instrument
- Continue weekly reflective summaries and literature review
- Evaluate results, progress towards objectives and propose next steps, adjust as needed to meet objectives
- Participate in tours of community gardens, regional food distribution outlets, community forums and coalition meetings
- Discuss with state and federal regulatory policies with DH officers and community stakeholders

**Milestones:** Develop a report that includes a literature summary of the background, current state and objectives, approach, results and conclusions with concrete recommendations to improve access to healthier foods

**Expected outcomes:** The intern learns to develop, conduct, analyze and communicate the results of an individual project as part of a larger program in applied science. The student learns responsibility of working on teams, individual and collective effort. The student learns the AgCenter role in stakeholders’ needs by experiencing teaching, research and extension.
Weeks 8-10

Daily Contact: Dr. Denise Holston

Location: LSU AgCenter School of Nutrition and Food Sciences

Primary Tasks:
- Data analysis, preparation of report, development of video and infographic, distribution using social media
- Complete reflective summaries of experiences and make presentations to faculty, staff, students, and invited guests of SNFS
- Summarize results and present to stakeholders

Milestones: Completion of written reports and communications to stakeholders

Expected outcomes: Increased awareness and ability to use applied quantitative and qualitative research in STEM to improve health outcomes. Increased ability to communicate value of research with diverse audiences.