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**Final Internship Report**  
**Watershed Management Internship Program**  
**San Diego State University- Imperial Valley**  
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## Acknowledgments

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## Executive Summary

Throughout my experience of interning for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus partnership in Calexico, CA I was able to gain valuable knowledge and skills that will stick with me throughout the long course that lays ahead of myself in my education and career. It was the beginning of my sophomore year of college that I decided I was interested in gaining work experience in my field of study and I began volunteering for the USDA-HSI & SDSU-IVCampus Partnership. After I had this opportunity, I was then chosen to act as an intern for this program. Along with participating in this internship and completing my hours, I continued to attend SDSU full time and work. I am truly grateful that I was able to partake in this internship because I was greatly exposed to collaboration between the USDA and Hispanic Serving Institutions. I feel that I was able to understand and visibly examine how the federal government helps students grow in their communities and careers through the connection of higher education and the USDA. The contribution of public service surely does not go unnoticed in rural communities and is something I think is extremely important in order for our nation to grow united and together.

The USDA strives to serve the people as they provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management (USDA). With 29 agencies and offices the USDA seeks to provide economic assistance to rural communities in America, agricultural production that will nourish Americans and others throughout the world, and serves to preserve our nation's land and natural resources through their efforts. The USDA-HSI & SDSU-IVCampus Partnership undeniably assists rural communities as it creates a link between Hispanic serving

higher education institutions and the USDA. The programs that are implemented by this partnership aim to teach and inform underrepresented students on different topics such as outreach and environmental education, and also serves to grow an interconnection between community members and the U.S. Forest Service.

As a student intern for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership I provided office duties, assisted with creating supporting and comprehensive databases that contributed to research and recruitment efforts, and also supported different initiatives and projects in order to plan and further assist the progress of its service. I also provided assistance with field trips and events in order to promote internships with the U.S. Forest Service and other USDA related agencies. I strongly feel that performing these duties has helped gain insight on the many careers within the USDA and public service.

I have enjoyed contributing to the efforts of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership and hope to one day have a career within the USDA. Throughout this internship I experienced performing outreach that impacted students' and community members' lives through different opportunities and their growth of knowledge on different USDA related initiatives. I am truly grateful for receiving the opportunity to advance the efforts of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership in Calexico, CA and give back to those who are underrepresented students and community members. I want to continue serving the public and expanding the efforts of the USDA throughout my career.

### Project Objectives:

As I began my internship with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership I was more involved with contributing to customer service oriented duties and office duties. Within these responsibilities I would further advance research and create databases that would contribute to outreach among underrepresented students and community members. This also led to my involvement in the implementation and promotion of different USDA related projects and careers, events, field trips, internships with the U.S. Forest Service, and career pathways. I learned that all of these duties took an extensive amount of time, close attention, and effort as I completed different responsibilities and performed outreach within my community. I understood and learned that everything I was involved in contributing to involved a process. When the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership set out to create field trips, collaborate with members of higher education and USDA representatives, perform promotion and outreach of different career pathways and programs it involved different preparation methods, strategic planning, and collaboration. I was able to gain insight on how these steps are important when creating different projects and putting them into action successfully. This also furthered my knowledge on the involvement of the USDA in rural communities and their efforts towards helping underrepresented citizens within the United States. I intended on gaining administrative experience throughout this internship and also an understanding of different opportunities and careers within the USDA. The tasks and responsibilities that I was presented with led me to gain experience in a public service work environment and also further understand the overall goals of the USDA.

## Project Approach

In order to achieve my goals and objectives within my internship, I had to take necessary steps and follow a method that allowed me to gain an insightful experience. The tasks that I had to complete also involved a numerous amount of skill sets. It was necessary that I first of all had different goals and objects to achieve, some with longer or shorter time frames to complete. This helped me further manage my time and plan ahead as I contributed to different projects and initiatives. I also learned more about office and professional etiquette when reaching out to students and different professionals in my community about projects, collaborating with them in person and virtually. I would make sure to follow-up with whomever I was reaching out to and answer any questions they had about the event or project we discussed. When I performed research and created databases I would have to pay very close attention to detail and make sure that the information that I inputed was correct. It would be time consuming to do this, but I saw that it was very important and made a difference as the information I collected will be resourceful and contribute to future projects for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership. New projects and discussions involved asking many questions and taking detailed notes. As I was informed about new projects or initiatives I would make sure that I understood the task I had at hand, and its furthers goals and details. I learned that this was very important because in the workplace there are sometimes different projects pending at the same time and it can be easy to forget certain details or tasks that need to be fulfilled. Overall, I felt that the different approaches and skills that I practiced during this internship furthered my professional experience and will contribute to my

approach to any career I pursue. I found the support of my supervisor to be very helpful and took a lot from this professional experience.



## Project Outcomes

Through my experience of interning for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership I gained professional experience and skills that help me advance in my future education and career. During this experience I was able to contribute to different projects and regional higher education initiatives, complete research and create resourceful databases for future reference, and promote different careers and pathways within the U.S. Forest Service, USDA, and other organizations involved in environmental and natural resource management and water-related conservation. I contributed in helping promote and facilitate different field trips that allowed students to explore potential career pathways within the USDA and U.S. Forest Service. I also supported and participated in various educational events, such as the 2017 Southwest Ag Summit hosted at AWC/UA-Yuma. Alongside other students I learned about the importance of agriculture in Yuma, AZ and was exposed to different research and methods that are being used within the agriculture community.

I also highly promoted the USDA Pathways Program for students and recent graduates to federal careers through USAJobs and other internship opportunities with the U.S. Forest Service and other USDA agencies through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities— National Internship Program among underrepresented students in Southern California and Arizona. I assisted in helping these students by creating efficient resources for application procedures and keeping them up to date with deadlines and new opportunities. In addition to this, I also attended different college career fairs in order to highlight potential interest in USDA

agencies, wide-ranging Student Trainee positions with the U.S. Forest Service, the 9th Annual Water Resources and Policy Initiatives Conference.

I also assisted with coordinating and gaining student involvement with the Working for the Great Outdoors Educational Excursion learning experience field trip to the Laguna Mountain Recreation Area. Through this project I was able to travel alongside my supervisor and participate in the collaboration between the U.S. Forest Service Outreach and Conservation Education Team and Descanso District Ranger in order to coordinate the event. I also reached out and collaborated with other faculty at participating Hispanic Serving Institutions in order to better plan the trip and take their needs into consideration. Students had the opportunity to visit the Laguna Mountain Recreation Area mountaintop that overlooks vistas at 6,000 ft. elevation with a view of the surrounding forest at El Prado Campground. They also were able to hear directly from U.S. Forest Service employees and learn about the many career paths available within the agency and their personal experiences. The USDA-FS/ Southern California Consortium also informed students' from Hispanic Serving Institutions about various Student Trainee positions with the U.S. Forest Service. I had the opportunity to make a fun and informational video that captured this experience alongside another SDSU-IV student and it was shared with the USDA-FS employees who participated in this project and other USDA employees.

In addition, I also arranged and provided presentations to high school students interested in environmental and agricultural topics throughout the Imperial Valley School District in order to promote USDA related programs. This included the AgDiscovery Program, which is a summer residential program for high school students under the age of 18 funded by the USDA-APHIS

and focuses on informing students about careers in plant and animal science, wildlife management, and agribusiness. I also promoted the 2017 USDA Food and AgScience Summer Program hosted by the University of California Desert Research Center and Extension Center and its Farm Smart, which is an experiential learning program that engages high school students interested in pursuing a career in food, agriculture, the environment, and conservation. These programs allow underrepresented students from rural communities to have meaningful and practical experiences in the field of agriculture and intensify their interest in USDA-related careers in food, agriculture, and sustainability. I also reached out to college students in my rural community promoted the 2017 USDA “STEAM” Summer Program in Yuma, AZ which was created to involve students interested in science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics fields of study from the Imperial Valley to a residential camp. The program gave the students the opportunity to participate in hands-on learning, educational activities, and regional field trips.

Overall, these experiences and my involvement in numerous projects gave me the opportunity to grow professionally and become involved in my rural community. I was also able to learn about different topics related to agriculture and environmental sustainability and better understand how these topics connect to different careers in the many USDA agencies.

## Conclusions

My experience as an intern with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Hispanic Serving Institutions and SDSU-IVCampus Partnership has helped me to grow professionally and as a future public servant. It has lead me to better understand and make connections with members of the rural community that I come from. I plan on continuing to be involved in my community by serving as an ambassador in the Associated Students of SDSU-IVCampus. During this experience I will take on a leadership role that involves giving back to students and enriching their educational and professional experience by providing workshops and information about professional and volunteer opportunities in our rural community. This internship also influenced my recent decision to have an international experience and study abroad in Milan, Italy in order to take on a new challenge, expose myself to a different culture and way of life, and gain new skills in another country. I'm also happy to report that I was also recently selected to be an intern for USDA-FSA in Imperial, California which I am truly looking forward to in order to gain experience within USDA-FSA agency and its programs within the community. I am grateful for being able to participate in the Watershed Management Internship Program and further advance my professional skills and help numerous underrepresented students and members of my rural community. I want to continue further advancing my educational and professional experience. I am currently learning the German language and hope to pursue earning a Masters Degree in Public Administration or Public Policy and Management in Germany. I truly want to serve others and contribute to different communities in my future career and this experience gave me insight on how different careers within the USDA would allow me to take part in helping others in rural communities.

## Appendices



**2017 Working for the Great Outdoors Educational Excursion in Mt. Laguna, CA**

Link: <https://youtu.be/UcW3nAGVRJo>