



Formalizing Internship Experiences for Wildlife and Fisheries Undergraduates at Mississippi State University

Sam Riffell and Bruce Leopold

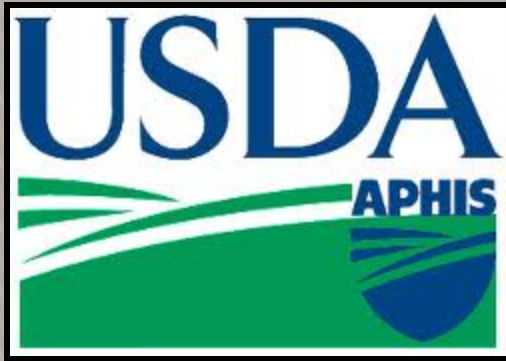
9th Biennial Conference – University Education
in Natural Resources
22 – 24 March 2012



Mississippi State University

College of Forest Resources

Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture



WFA3000 Internship

- > 135 hrs / term
- Weekly journal
- Final report
- Public presentation
- Not required (except HWC option)



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Faculty Goals for Internships

- Integrate knowledge with practice
- Build professional networks (i.e., get a job)
- Clarify career goals



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What type(s) of professional experience qualify for internship credit?



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**ANNOUNCING the 4th ANNUAL
DEMME SCHOLARS Natural Resources Science
Policy
INTERNSHIPS AND COURSE
in Washington D.C.
SUMMER 2012**

COURSE and INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

This course will review and evaluate how each branch of the federal government, as well as nongovernment entities (including the media), affect the development and implementation of federal government policy in the natural resources. The course will be taught through one two-hour lecture and discussion sessions each week, augmented by nine half-day weekend field trips designed to ground class participants in the policy-making arena. Additionally, each class participant will complete a twelve-week, 40 per week paid internship with a government or nongovernment organization active in natural resources policy-making in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

LOCATION

Washington, D.C. metropolitan area

WHEN

Approximately May 21 – August 10, 2012



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What type(s) of professional experience qualify for internship credit?

- Paid vs. Stipend vs. Volunteer
- Agency vs. University
- Do research experiences count?
- Study abroad?



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An *internship* is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.

National Association of Colleges and Employers



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- The experience must be an ***extension of the classroom***: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must ***not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.***
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable
- There are ***clearly defined learning objectives/goals*** related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.

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Wildlife, Fisheries & Aquaculture — Internship Application

Up to 3 credit hours of *WFA 3000 - Internship*, complete this application, attach an OASIS curriculum sheet, secure the appropriate signatures. After completing all requirements, credit may be applied toward graduation and certification if noted below.

Student information

Name _____

Advisor _____

Email _____

Expected graduation _____

Classification _____

MSU GPA _____ Major GPA _____

Internship Information

Company/Organization Name _____

Company/Organization Address _____

Internship Job Title _____

Dates _____

Company Name _____

Agency Mentor and Title _____

Mentor's Phone # _____

Mentor's Email _____

of Credits _____

Is Mentor letter attached? _____

This internship is: Volunteer/unpaid; Stipend/Expenses reimbursed; Wages or salary

Brief description of internship duties and activities:



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Internship Grade Breakdown

5.0%	Satisfactory Completion of ≥ 135 hours (verified by letter from internship mentor)
2.5%	Advance work schedule for 135 hours
2.5%	Advance completion of internship goals
20.0%	Bi-weekly field reports (field journal) – due every two weeks
5.0%	Mid-term report
25.0%	Final written report
10.0%	Seminar to classmates
15.0%	Faculty mentor grade
15.0%	Internship mentor grade



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Student perceptions of WFA3000 Internship



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Met educational goals for internship

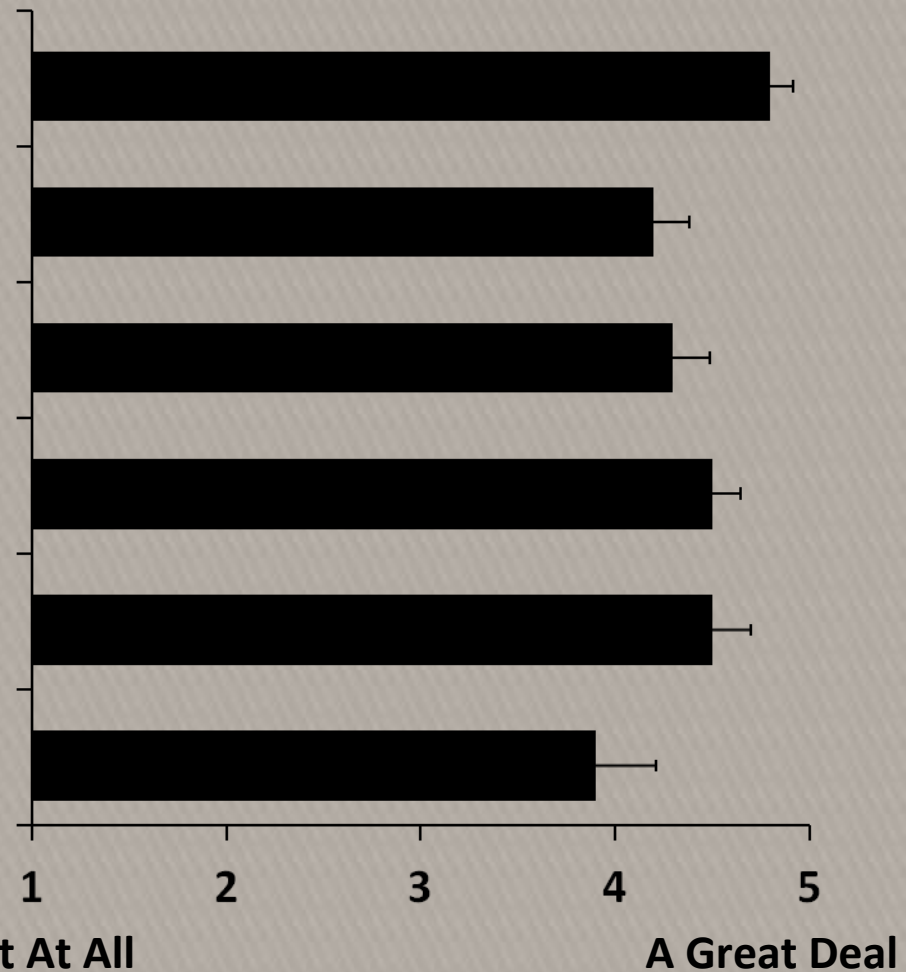
Learned about the agency

Extent of networking and gaining contacts

Gained technical expertise

Increased my employability

Changed perceptions about wildlife careers



N = 10



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4 of 11 internees received job offers directly from internship experiences.



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Do we need to require WFA3000
Internship?

OR

Do our students get adequate
professional experience?

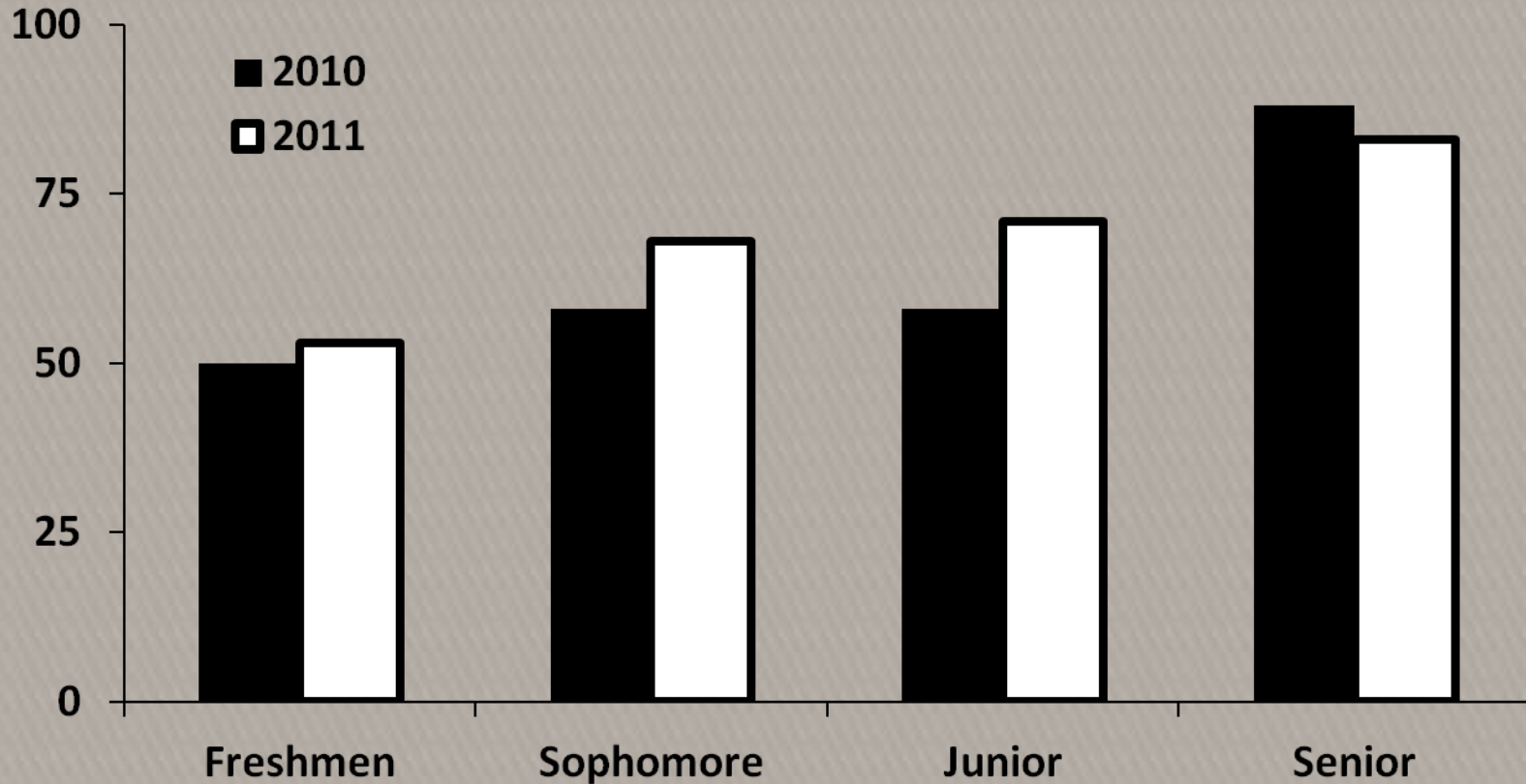


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% of students with professional experience



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% of students with professional experience



100% of Graduates have at least one professional experience!!

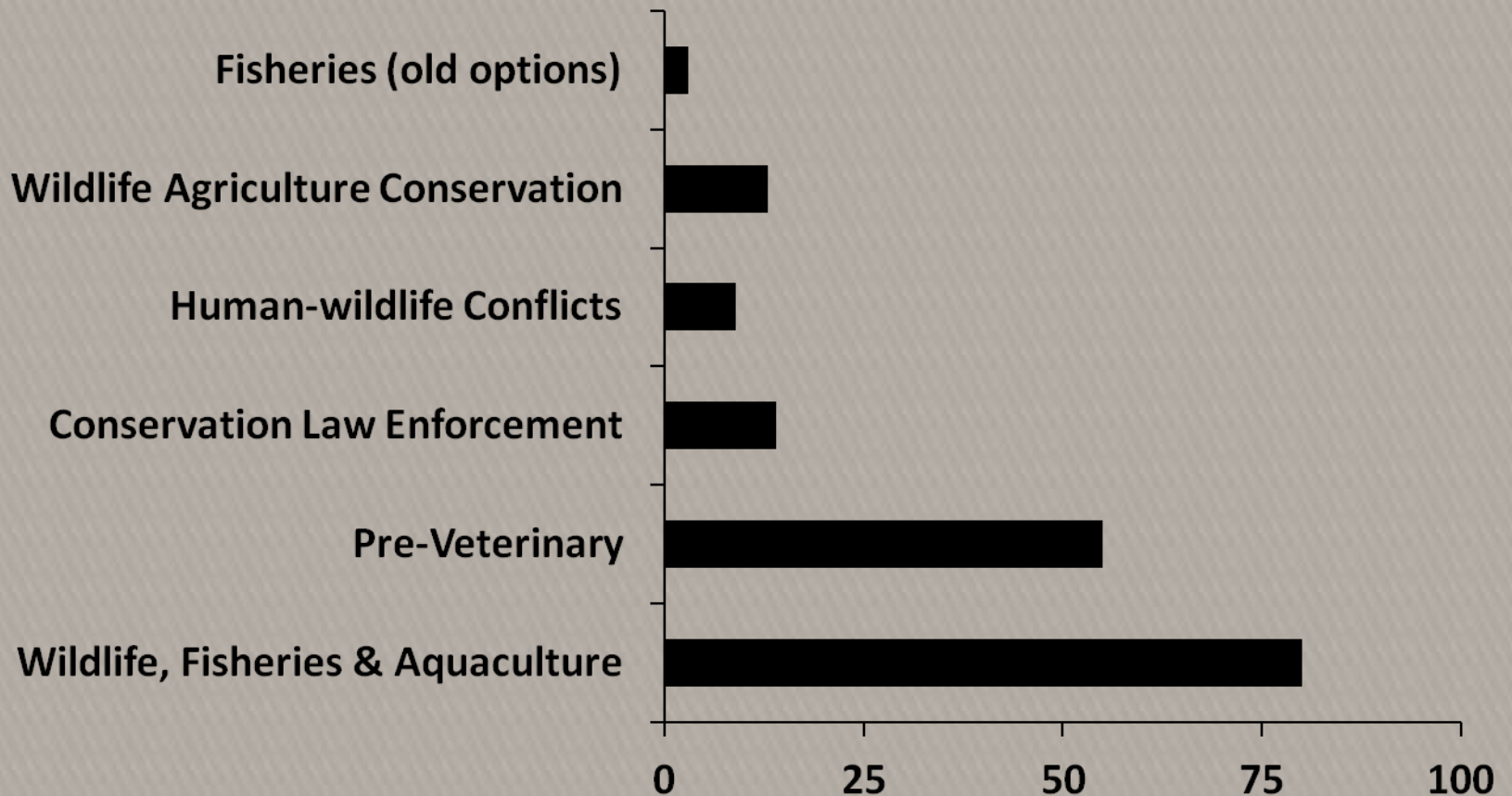


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of students in WFA Options



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