

Journal of Agribusiness 26,2 (Fall 2008): 117–134
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Enhancing Student Learning Experiences and Providing Value to the Agribusiness Industry by Building the Industry-Institution Interface

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This paper addresses agribusiness industry-institution interfaces, research-education linkages, and improving agribusiness education with opportunities such as agricultural students' internships with agribusiness companies, conducting applied research, and finding opportunities for agribusiness educational seminars conducted by universities. The rationale for agribusiness internships is discussed, and agribusiness internship structure and planning is outlined. The potential benefits of a Departmental Advisory Board are listed, along with suggestions for implementing such a group. Applied agribusiness research opportunities including case studies and extension, outreach, or trade publications are highlighted, and examples of this type of work are discussed. Finally, continuing education opportunities for agribusiness conferences or symposiums hosted and organized by a university Department of Agribusiness are delineated.

Key Words: advisory board, agribusiness management, case studies, continuing education, internships

Many universities struggle with finding the right balance between “theory” and “practice.” One way to bridge this gap is to forge closer ties with the agribusiness industry—uncovering research opportunities that assist managers in their day-to-day and long-term management, and providing real-world scenarios for students to study and learn from. In addition, significant value can be provided by offering forums for continuing education and networking. Such collaboration between institutions of higher learning and agribusinesses can pay big dividends—in industry support for projects, scholarships, faculty positions, and employment for students.

This paper addresses potential agribusiness industry-institution interfaces, research-education linkages, and improving agribusiness education with opportunities such as agricultural students' internships with agribusiness companies, conducting applied research, and finding opportunities for agribusiness educational seminars conducted by universities.

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Internships

Why Are They Important?

An internship is like hiring a temporary employee—both parties get to check the other out, and there is no long-term commitment. Under this arrangement, the employer and student agree to a short-term experience so that they can find out more about each other. From each of these perspectives, such an arrangement can be very positive. In terms of either party “checking the other out,” from the agribusiness firm’s standpoint, the firm can determine the skill level, fit with the company, and level of enthusiasm of the student on a trial basis during the internship. Likewise, from the student’s viewpoint, he or she can observe what the agribusiness firm offers in terms of potential employment, e.g., the type of job, the kind of co-workers the company employs, and the potential pay and benefits. All of these factors are valuable for students to experience, as it will help them determine whether or not the company is a good fit for their skill set, personality, and pay requirements.

Additional important internship benefits for the student include networking contacts and mentoring relationships. Networking is a key proficiency for students to learn, and participating in an internship with an agribusiness firm can help to facilitate their understanding of this skill and the value of developing a network of contacts in business who know them and their abilities. (This is particularly useful for students when they request letters of recommendation or when former internship employers pass on job opportunities they learn about.) Internship coordinators or agribusiness employers can also become valuable mentors—experienced managers and employees who “know the ropes,” and can pass on their accumulated knowledge to the student neophyte.

An internship is an opportunity for students to gain practical experience by taking on the responsibilities of a full-time job or special project for an agribusiness firm, where they acquire skills other than those learned in the classroom. More specifically, it allows them to apply knowledge they have obtained in the classroom to a “real-world” setting.

How Can/Should an Internship Be Structured?

The best internships are ones that are well thought out by all parties involved: the academic institution, the student, and the agribusiness employer. This process involves some careful thought given to the following areas (which we will discuss in more detail below): goals and objectives, reporting frequency and thoroughness, responsibilities of the parties involved, whether or not to grant academic credit, focus of the internship, possible site visits, and expectations for follow-up.

Internship Goals and Objectives

Elements to consider in the area of goals and objectives include:

- What the student wants to get out of the experience. The student should thoughtfully consider what he or she hopes to gain from the internship experience. Probably the best way to accomplish this objective is through a written exercise, which includes a framing of the student's expectations—such as the desire to experience working in an agribusiness firm and observing the tradeoffs surrounding management decisions.
- What the university wants the student to achieve.
- What the agribusiness firm desires.

Reporting Frequency and Thoroughness

One technique to help ensure students stay on track and communicate what they are learning, as well as disclose whether they are encountering any possible problems, is through the submission of some type of regular report. This report can be written and mailed, or it can be e-mailed. This communication process allows professors to follow and assess their students' progress, as well as to be alerted to potential problems (e.g., perhaps the student is being used for errands or menial jobs). It should also be established whether or not this report is to be shared with the employer.

Responsibilities of Each Party

For a successful internship program, it is best to establish up front what the responsibilities of each party will entail. The basics here are whether or not the student will be paid (it is not always necessary for the employer to financially compensate the student—the student is gaining experience, which can be in lieu of payment); whether the agribusiness employer will cover housing costs or perhaps help to arrange for housing; whether the student is required to have insurance (and whose responsibility it is); and finally, confidentiality—i.e., will the student be exposed to information or data of a confidential nature, and what are the firm's expectations of the student to hold this information in confidence?

A way to facilitate some of the responsibilities of the student and the employer is to provide reporting forms. Forms might include: (a) an internship agreement, which outlines in general terms that the agribusiness firm, the university, and the student will work together to provide this opportunity for the student (appendix A provides an example); (b) an educational contract, which outlines specific responsibilities of each party (see appendix B); and (c) a supervisor evaluation form—this may be a midterm evaluation or a final evaluation, or can be completed at both times (see appendix C).

Academic Credit

Academic credit is a benefit the university can provide which has tangible value for students. It allows for them to document their experience on their transcript. It also can generate revenue for the institution. The challenge is that if credit is given and tuition is charged, the institution should work diligently to provide value for the revenue received. All of the items discussed in this section can help the institution provide value for charges levied. Often this becomes an issue if the credit is offered during a time when the University is not normally in session, and the student must pay “extra” for these credits (i.e., the internship fees are not lumped into the bill the student receives when paying for other classes).

Focus of Internship

An internship can be broad or narrow in focus. A determination should be made as to whether the internship will provide the student with an overview of the company, whether the student will be working on a special project, or if the internship emphasizes in-depth work in a particular area. All of these approaches have their positive and negative points—but there must be a “meeting of the minds” between the University and the agribusiness firm as to the focus of the internship.

Site Visits

A constructive way to cement the relationship between the University and the agribusiness firm is for the supervising professor to schedule one or two site visits. The site visit allows students to feel proud that their academic institution cares enough to follow up on what they are doing. It also sends a positive message to the agribusiness employer that the University values its participation in the program. Finally, for the professor, it is a valuable opportunity for a “field trip”—to learn about products, services the agribusiness is selling, and management approaches the firm is employing in the field.

Expectations for Follow-up

From an academic standpoint, a student’s written paper describing his or her internship may suffice to summarize the student’s learning experience. Such a paper might report on the internship activities and routine, or perhaps the student might be asked to reflect on what was learned about agribusiness management—e.g., what was done well in the firm, and what could be improved upon, say if the student were manager of the operation. An additional component having both practical and public relations value is for the student to provide an oral or written

report to the agribusiness. If the report is made as an oral presentation, this affords an excellent opportunity for the faculty member or members to be present and engage in the exchange and to thank the agribusiness staff for their participation in the program.

In the following narrative, we shift to a more informal writing style, speaking directly to the Department of Agribusiness or Agribusiness Management and its faculty as the “entities” being addressed. We feel this style of communication is suitable here for the information we are seeking to convey. Some of our thoughts are paraphrased from “From the Outside Looking In—Consider the Benefits of a Customer Advisory Board,” which appeared as a *Manager’s Notebook* column in *Feed and Grain* magazine (Foltz and Akridge, 2005).

Advisory Boards

Advisory boards can be an effective way for a university Agribusiness Department to interact with the industry. There are multiple benefits of such a board. An advisory board or committee is a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills to your Department and University, which complement your knowledge and skills as faculty members and can provide unique insight into the marketplace—assisting you with job placement opportunities for your students and ideas for your curriculum. The advisory committee does not have formal authority to run or govern your academic department—i.e., the advisory committee cannot issue mandatory directives. Rather, the advisory board serves to make suggestions and/or to react to your ideas. The board provides “hybrid vigor,” encouraging you to not become inbred or myopic.

The first step in establishing an advisory board is to carefully define why you want the board and what you want to accomplish. Is the purpose to regularly take the pulse of the market—as “consumers” of your product (students)? Do you want feedback on new initiatives? Do you wish to build relationships with key industry contacts—so as to cultivate them for possible donations to your University? Is some feedback desired on your performance as an Agribusiness Department—i.e., how well do your students perform when they graduate?

These objectives take work, and they include people important to your University (your stakeholders), so the board’s purpose must be clear. As discussed more fully below, you need to think through the details of what you want to accomplish, how frequently the board will meet, what you will do at meetings, etc. These issues need to be resolved before board members are recruited, as the first question a potential member will ask is “How much time will it take and what will I be doing?” And you need to think about “what’s in it for them?” before recruiting. But the biggest question is “Why are you seeking to form an advisory board?” Make sure this is very clear—both for you as a Department and for the individuals you ask to serve on the board.

Experts recommend this type of advisory board should have from 5 to 15 members, and people should serve 2–3 years on the board. Terms should be staggered so that your board is always comprised of both new and established members. The board should probably meet at least twice a year, with additional meetings scheduled if needed. It might be appropriate to develop a set of operating guidelines for your advisory board. These help to formalize the group, and can also be given to participants you are trying to recruit.

Roles of the advisory board members revolve around contributing to discussion and planning regarding changes in the market and their respective businesses, and how these factors affect the training and educational needs of students you educate; reacting to ideas for new curricula, and perhaps continuing education programs and services you can provide to the industry (see further discussion on this below); and providing feedback on how your University and Department are doing—giving you an “ear” to the businesses that hire your students. Your advisory board may not necessarily address strategy and performance issues. What all this means is that board members must have a solid understanding of the agribusiness industry (broadly defined), and your University and Departmental roles within the industry.

As most universities are nonprofit, the advisory board should be operated without paying fees to the members. In addition to being cost-effective, this assures that board members are not motivated to say what they think you want to hear. The benefits to the board are covered in more detail below.

The Advisory Board Meetings

You need to decide what information you want to give to and receive from your advisory board. Too much information should not be interjected into the meeting—pick several specific topics and focus on them. Experts state that the best advisory board sessions are made up of 80% facilitated discussion with the board members, with academic faculty and staff politely listening! One of the ways to encourage this type of interaction is to use a facilitator. The participation of a facilitator creates an unbiased atmosphere and a safe environment where board members can voice their thoughts. Advisory board sessions hosted by your department chair or a faculty member can be perceived as biased or as driving the board to a predetermined conclusion.

What are appropriate topics for your advisory board meetings? Initial meetings may revolve around topics you select as an academic department, or from your individual professors. However, as time goes on, changes in agribusiness, the market, and the environment will generate topics. In addition, the advisory board members can be asked to suggest topics of their own choosing. Obvious choices are feedback on new and existing courses, possible ideas for continuing education programs, and possible research topics. Each meeting needs an agenda, with a clear purpose; board members need to know that you are taking their input seriously, and that they are making a meaningful contribution.

As noted above, a key feature of an advisory board is that your board members will expect their advice to be thoughtfully considered. This is a balancing act, but you must provide communication about what action you have taken with respect to specific suggestions or recommendations made by the board. If you are not ready or prepared to act on some of the comments and suggestions provided by your advisory board, then perhaps you may not be ready to convene such a group.

What's in It for the Advisory Board Member?

So, what are the benefits for the advisory board member? In large part, as discussed previously, service on such a board is voluntary and unpaid, and as such is altruistic. Potential board members may be motivated to participate because of the opportunity to network with other “movers and shakers” in the agribusiness industry, or perhaps by a desire to become better informed about industry occurrences; some may be flattered by the community recognition they receive from participation. Compensation should not be completely ignored, and may consist of a meal at your advisory board meeting, and/or a periodic gift certificate. In addition, it may be a good idea to publicize your initial appointments to your advisory board, as well as to take the opportunity to publicize new additions as they arrive to assume their roles. This is good PR for your advisory board members and good for your University and Department, too!

Applied Research

Applied agribusiness research can be interesting, fun, and very productive for both the researcher and the industry. Researchable ideas can be generated from an advisory board (discussed above) or from discussions with agribusiness managers at seminars (as described in more detail below), or from faculty interest and knowledge of issues facing industry. Research areas can come from the wide range of agribusiness management topics that face industry managers—finance, marketing, human resource decisions, pricing, advertising and promotion, product line decisions—in other words, the full range of issues facing these folks on a daily basis. Specific research approaches discussed below include case studies and extension-type publications.

Case Study Research

Case studies are an applied research and teaching tool utilized by many academics in both general business and agribusiness management. Harvard Business School touts case studies, stating:

Experience is the best teacher—and the case method packs more experience into every hour of learning than any other instructional approach. In case discussions, students are introduced to the reality of decision making—including incomplete information, time constraints and conflicting goals—giving them first-hand experience in analyzing business situations. Case studies stimulate students' thinking, challenge their capabilities, and prepare them for future managerial decision making (Harvard Business School, 2008).

A case study is an in-depth look at a situation faced by an agribusiness, and is probably most useful if it focuses on a particular management area. The author of a case study researches the background of the agribusiness and the industry in which it operates, with an eye toward highlighting a particular opportunity or problem that the firm faces.

Case studies have been used increasingly in education. While law and medical schools have been using the technique for a number of years, the technique is being applied in a variety of instructional situations. Schools of business have been aggressive in the implementation of case-based learning, or “active learning” (Boisjoly and DeMichiell, 1994). Harvard University has been a leader in this area, and cases developed by the faculty have been published for use by other institutions (Tellis, 1997). Harvard has a website where its cases are made available to educators and students (for a charge): http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbsp/case_studies.jsp.

There are several helpful books the case study researcher may find useful. Yin authored a 2003 text that outlines in detail the process a researcher can utilize to put together a comprehensive case study. While they do not specifically focus on business management case studies, Hancock and Algozzine (2006) do a good job of providing a template for the starting social science researcher in their text *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers*. Harvard University offers a text entitled *The Case Study Handbook* (aimed more at students, but is useful for case writers as well), authored by William Ellet (2007), which covers how to read, discuss, and write persuasively about cases.

Extension, Outreach, or Trade Publications

Another excellent way to open the dialogue with and provide value to the agribusiness industry is through applied extension or outreach publications. The focus of these publications should be on practical, helpful agribusiness management topics. Such publications can provide in-depth treatment of a subject (say a 30-page publication on personnel and hiring practices), or they can be shorter circulars that just hit the high points of a management topic and are quick reads for practitioners in the field.

A further option in this area is to consider a quarterly or bi-yearly publication on a variety of agribusiness management topics authored by faculty in your Agribusiness Management Department. Such an approach offers helpful suggestions

and resources for managers, as well as providing visibility for your Department, and positioning your people as experts.

Trade magazines or newsletters are additional communication avenues that should be explored. The first author of this paper has utilized this approach with several co-authors, in a management column for the U.S. feed and grain industry entitled “Manager’s Notebook,” which appears regularly in the magazine *Feed and Grain* (see www.feedandgrain.com). Generally, editors of such publications are looking for contributors—and again, faculty are thus positioned as experts. The writing can report on applied research, or can address management topics that are covered in Agribusiness Management courses in your Department, or which are covered in continuing education seminars (see discussion below).

Another good example of applied research in the agribusiness arena is offered by the Purdue University Center for Food and Agricultural Business. A section of the Center’s website is devoted to research and published articles (https://www.agecon.purdue.edu/cab/research_articles/lcpp.asp). We discuss more of Purdue’s approach below.

Continuing Education

Providing opportunities for continuing education for agribusiness managers can further position your Agribusiness Management Department as an integral industry partner. Not only do these types of educational opportunities strengthen the industry-university interface, they also build credibility and can generate revenue.

Continuing education can take the form of an annual conference which you organize and conduct over a week on or near campus. Or perhaps it takes the form of a program that you sponsor twice per year over a two-day period in a city away from campus. Regardless of the arrangement, the format might include much of the following:

- Motivational speaker—someone who will address your participants and deliver a message that has both substance and appeal, as well as some “take-home” messages for your participants.
- Concurrent sessions or a single track—depending on the number of participants, and the number of presenters you can utilize, you can arrange a program with several tracks (finance, personnel, marketing, etc.) or just have single sessions attended by all participants. You should make use of your faculty for some of these sessions where appropriate, or you can also bring in regional or national experts/speakers to speak to your audience. In this role, your Department is the facilitator, and should not be expected to provide all of the expertise to staff a large conference. Many times key presenters will make these presentations for little or no charge—just for the exposure to future potential paying clients. If the budget for your

conference looks solid, you might factor in paying for these people's expenses as an inducement to get them to present for you.

- Offer some sort of icebreaker/mixer that gets participants enthused and forces them to meet new people and network. There are numerous approaches for accomplishing this, but the key elements are to find a format that forces a group to work together and perhaps pits them in competition against other teams—so much the better if it is related to business management (such as the business simulations discussed below). It may be best to put together topics and plans for teams to complete in, say 5–6 “plays” (so that you can intersperse their team's decisions throughout your conference). Also, you want a simulation/game that is not extremely difficult to learn and does not have numerous decisions to be made (something less than 20–25 decisions/play).

For over a decade, the first author of this paper ran a PC-based agribusiness simulation for an agribusiness management conference that he chaired. These conference simulations accomplished all of the objectives outlined above. Here are several examples which might be worth considering: (a) Industry Player (see <http://www.industryplayer.com>); (b) the Global Business Game (see <http://www.onlinegbg.com>); (c) Capsim Management Simulations (see <http://www.capsim.com>); (d) Income/Outcome Business Simulations (see <http://www.incomeoutcome.com>); and (e) Marketplace Business Simulations (see <http://www.marketplace-simulation.com>). Many of these have free evaluation samples, which allow you to determine if the simulation has the attributes you are looking for.

Other examples that focus more on teambuilding and creative thinking can be found from such organizations as Performance Management Company (see <http://www.performancemanagementcompany.com/index.php>) or TeamBuildingGuide (at <http://www.teambuildingguide.com>).

Another thought to consider when putting together a conference or symposium is the niche or focus you want to create. Do you want to work with all fertilizer dealers or focus on milk processing firms? There is significant power in tailoring your program to a particular industry, as it allows you to spotlight your sessions on issues that these similar businesses face. Additionally, you will find that as we have discussed above, all businesses face similar challenges—human resource management, financing, marketing, etc.—just in their particular market. In this way you can develop somewhat generic materials and presentations, and then customize them for the audience you choose.

In the United States, Purdue University initiated its Center for Food and Agricultural Business about 20 years ago. The Center has been very successful at putting the Continuing Education/Applied Outreach Model for Agribusiness Management into practice. Purdue's website outlines the Center's programs in detail, and discusses its approach to seminars, degree programs for managers, and research (<https://www.agecon.purdue.edu/cab>). In Canada, the George Morris

Centre fills a similar niche. It was originally part of the University of Guelph, and separated from the University to become a nonprofit charitable corporation in 1998. Its website can be found at www.georgemorris.org.

Concluding Comments

Working with agribusinesses and their managers can be a rich and rewarding experience for all involved. It can provide research data for your faculty, teaching case studies for your students, and useful support and assistance to the industry itself. The key is to utilize some of the thoughts we have presented, combining them with your own planning, research, and insight . . . and then start to develop products and programs you can deliver to the agribusiness industry. Such an approach brings recognition and reward to the Department (and its University) that implements it successfully.

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Appendix A: Internship Agreement *

AGRIBUSINESS FIRM

This agribusiness firm agrees to engage the student under the same conditions and rules that govern other employees and/or volunteers without regard to race, creed, color, or sex. We agree to hold the University of _____, its employees and agents, free and harmless from any claims and causes of action resulting from our voluntary participation in this program. We also agree to provide a staff member to supervise the intern and make every reasonable effort to provide a safe working environment. We will attempt to ensure that not more than 10% of the tasks completed by the student will be menial. We agree to assist the _____ Department by evaluating the student's performance and certifying the hours and work performed for the organization. We also understand that the University provides no insurance coverage for this program (including Worker's Compensation).

Agribusiness Firm Name and Address (please print clearly)

Name / Title of Agribusiness Firm Representative (please print clearly)

Phone No./e-mail

Signature of Agribusiness Firm Representative

Date

STUDENT

I agree to abide by the requirements of the _____ Department (see internship manual) and the guidelines set forth by the above agribusiness firm. I agree to hold the University of _____, its employees and agents, free and harmless from any claims and causes of action resulting from my voluntary participation in this program. I understand that I am responsible for turning in all forms to the _____ Department at the required times and for meeting all deadlines. I also understand that the University of _____ provides no insurance coverage for this program (including Worker's Compensation).

Name and Address of Student (please print clearly)

Phone No./e-mail

Signature of Student

Student I.D. #

Date

UNIVERSITY

The University of _____ will assist the agribusiness firm and student with all related matters and, when appropriate, in appraising student performance. The University will not provide the student or agribusiness firm with any kind of insurance coverage (including Worker's Compensation) for this program.

[Name]

Director, Agribusiness Internship Program

University of _____

City, State

This form must be submitted to the AH Director BEFORE beginning internship.

[*Note: This form is modified from a document provided through the University of Nebraska, Omaha (2008).]

Appendix B: Educational Contract *

By way of this agreement, [*Agribusiness Firm Supervisor*] _____ agrees to accept the student named [*Intern*] _____ in an Internship Program. By signing this agreement, the intern acknowledges that he/she is aware of the responsibilities and the commitment being made to the organization/agency. The student agrees to complete this internship according to the guidelines and procedures of the University of _____, Department of Agribusiness (*see internship manual*) to the best of his/her ability.

1. The work assigned to the student is at the discretion of the employer. Specific goals should be discussed and agreed upon prior to initiating the internship (*see job description form below*). This experience should relate to the student's academic background and offer opportunities to use the student's skills and meet the Department of Agribusiness competencies.
2. The Department of Agribusiness Internship Director will visit the supervisor at the internship site midway through the internship.
3. Communication of any existing or arising problems regarding the internship agreement should be reported by the agency to the Department of Agribusiness Internship Director prior to any action. The possibility of termination of the internship agreement requires a meeting of the involved parties (employer, student, and Department of Agribusiness Internship Director) to identify the problem and implement a solution if possible. Any party may withdraw from this affiliation upon giving one month's notice in writing to the other parties and after provisions have been made for transfer of the student(s) if applicable.
4. The student and agency should understand that the University of _____ assumes no liability with respect to the student's duties in the internship. Without limiting the foregoing, the student will not seek compensation for such injury from the University, irrespective of whether or not the student is considered a volunteer or an employee of the agency.
5. This agreement in no way implies that the agribusiness firm is obligated to pay the student intern for services rendered as part of the internship experience. If the organization wishes to pay the student for internship services, it is at the discretion of the organization.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Agribusiness Firm Supervisor Will:

1. Provide the intern with a meaningful orientation to the organization's purpose, services, organizational structure, and operating practices.
2. Provide an atmosphere for learning that is supportive and free of discrimination with regard to race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual preference, religion, age, or political beliefs.
3. Provide opportunities for the student to reinforce learning in accordance with the behavioral objectives relating the internship with the academic requirements identified in this *Educational Contract*.
4. Provide leadership in planning and developing a meaningful program to allow the student intern to experience the role of a professional in agribusiness and the basic operation of the host organization.
5. Monitor and verify hours completed by the intern.
6. Conduct periodic work planning and review sessions with the student intern to assess progress and planning for continued learning.

[*Note: This appendix is modified from a document provided through the University of Nebraska, Omaha (2008).]

7. Make available the necessary resources to carry out assignments.
8. Serve as the intern's mentor throughout the internship.
9. Notify the Department of Agribusiness Internship Director immediately in the event the student intern's performance becomes unsatisfactory.
10. Conduct a midterm evaluation of the intern in a meeting with the Department of Agribusiness Internship Director.
11. Conduct a final evaluation of the student in a meeting with the student and forward the evaluation form to the Department of Agribusiness Internship Director.

The Student Intern Will:

1. Develop a schedule of regular office hours with the agency supervisor.
2. Be on the job for the agreed upon number of hours.
3. Complete all duties and responsibilities, as required, in a professional manner.
4. Participate in any required training and/or conferences.
5. Be aware of organization's Standard Operating Procedures.
6. Submit a log on a daily or weekly basis for sign-off by the agribusiness firm supervisor.
7. Arrive on time and clear with the site supervisor any deviation from the specified schedule.
8. Dress appropriately as expected by the host organization.
9. Arrange a site visit and a meeting between the site supervisor and Department of Agribusiness Internship Director midway through the internship.
10. Arrange for a final evaluation meeting with the agribusiness firm supervisor upon completion of internship hours.

Note: It is the responsibility of the intern to verify that the final evaluation form is submitted to the Department of Agribusiness Internship Director at the end of the internship. Any necessary follow-up is the responsibility of the intern.

The Department of Agribusiness Internship Director Will:

1. Bear responsibility for academic administrative elements of the internship.
2. Serve as the University of _____ representative to the host organization and visit the organization midway during the internship according to the desires of the host organization.
3. Assist the students in their recognition and understanding of the mission of the host organization, as well as in dealing with organization clientele, staff, and administrators, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual preference, age, religion, or political beliefs.
4. Remove, upon written request of the host organization, any student whose performance is unsatisfactory or whose conduct is unacceptable to the host organization.

STUDENT PROFILE (to be completed by student)

1. Assessment of current strengths (knowledge, skills, values): . . .
2. Assessment of current limitations (knowledge, skills, values): . . .
3. Career goals: . . .
4. Experiences desired during this internship: . . .

JOB DESCRIPTION

The student and agency supervisor should identify specific goals of this position and list the responsibilities required of the student below (or attach separate job description). *Note: Please retain a copy for your records.*

How will the activities described above incorporate the following learning objectives (if applicable)? List the specific steps, activities, tasks, and functions that students will be engaged in to reach goals and objectives. Learning objectives may be met by activities that encompass: observing/shadowing, discussion/reflection, and/or practicing/doing. Refer to Department of Agribusiness competencies for *specific tasks* or learning objectives.

1. Board Development (if the agribusiness firm has a Board of Directors)
2. Marketing Principles and Practice
3. Human Resource Development and Supervision
4. General Management
5. Financial Management
6. Product Mix Decisions
7. Strategic Planning
8. Risk Management

PERSONNEL DETAILS (please be specific to avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings)

1. Work schedule (please include start and end dates)
2. Holiday and sick leave arrangements
3. Other requirements/arrangements to be made
4. Compensation (if applicable)

EVALUATION

Evaluation will take place through regular supervisory conferences, in keeping with the criteria established by the Department of Agribusiness Internship Director. Formal evaluation will take place midway through and upon completion of the internship.

_____ Date _____
Employer (supervisor) signature

_____ Date _____
Student signature

_____ Date _____
Department of Agribusiness Internship Director signature

Name and Title of Supervisor
(Please attach résumé if available)

_____ Agribusiness Firm

_____ Address

_____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

_____ e-mail: _____ Website: _____

Please return to:

[Name]
Director, Agribusiness Internship Program
University of _____
City, State

This document must be returned to the Agribusiness Internship Director by the second week of internship.

**Appendix C:
Supervisor Evaluation Form ***

Midterm Final

Date: _____

Internship Supervisor: _____

Organization: _____

Intern: _____

To evaluate the student's competence, the internship supervisor and student jointly review the student's performance in terms of the criteria specified in the evaluation instrument. Following their review and discussion, the intern instructor completes this instrument using the following scale to evaluate the student's performance.

4 = The student demonstrates this skill or knowledge in a highly proficient manner.

3 = The student demonstrates this skill or knowledge to an acceptable degree.

2 = The student has some ability in this area, but performance continues to require close supervision and direction.

1 = The student does not demonstrate this ability.

NA = Does not apply.

Following the completion of the instrument, the intern reviews it and writes comments in the section indicated. If the student wishes, he or she may append an additional statement to the instrument. Finally, the internship supervisor and the intern both sign and date the instrument. The intern should send the instrument to the Agribusiness Internship Director. **Two copies** of this completed form should be made so that both the Agribusiness Internship Director and the student have one for their individual files.

Please mail to:

[Name]
Director, Agribusiness Internship Program
University of _____
City, State

[*Note: This appendix is modified from a document provided through the University of Nebraska, Omaha (2008).]

Intern and Supervisor Input Form

(to be completed by site supervisor and discussed with intern)

Intern Name: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

PERSONAL	Score: 4-1 or NA	COMMUNICATION (cont'd)	Score: 4-1 or NA	WORK EFFECTIVENESS (cont'd)	Score: 4-1 or NA
Demonstrates a positive attitude		Uses effective listening skills		Demonstrates ability to manage time	
Demonstrates initiative		Demonstrates importance of cross-cultural communication		Demonstrates ability to create short-term plans	
Demonstrates commitment to the organization's mission		Develops positive working relationships with employees		Demonstrates ability to create long-term plans	
Exhibits responsible behavior		Demonstrates ability to resolve conflicts		Demonstrates ability to implement plans	
Understands importance of ethical behavior		Demonstrates understanding of group dynamics		Demonstrates ability to be flexible	
Demonstrates honesty and integrity				WORKING WELL WITH OTHERS	
Demonstrates a commitment to service		EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS		Peers and Co-workers	
Understands importance of confidentiality		Exhibits appropriate personal appearance		Supervisor(s)	
Understands importance of organizational accountability		Demonstrates basic computer literacy skills		Customers	
COMMUNICATION		WORK EFFECTIVENESS			
Uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication		Demonstrates problem-solving ability		RISK MANAGEMENT	
Uses proper grammar and vocabulary		Demonstrates ability to work under pressure		Understands importance of risk management	
Demonstrates effective public speaking skills		Meets performance objectives			

Intern's Comments: . . .

Supervisor's Comments: . . .

Intern Signature_____
Date_____
Supervisor Signature_____
Date