

# MATE Center Marine Technical Internship Program



**Tami Lunsford**  
**Internship Coordinator**

**Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center**



# Program Coordinator

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- I returned as the internship coordinator in October 2008
- I am located on the east coast and can be reached at [tlunsford@marinetech.org](mailto:tlunsford@marinetech.org) or (302) 731-3035

# Internship Program Overview

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- **Started with a NSF UNOLS grant in 1999 to fill need for marine technicians**
- **Since 1999, 225 community college and university students have been placed in research vessels, labs and industry settings (135 were placed on UNOLS vessels)**
- **Students demographics over the last 10 years**
  - 47% women and 53% men
  - 35% ethnic minority participation

# Internship Program Overview

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- **Data on 74% of interns as of 2008:**
  - **40% are continuing education in a related field**
  - **43% are working in marine science and technology fields**
    - **63% are in academic science or technology based careers**
    - **37% are in industry**

# UNOLS intern selection process

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- **Preference given to technical community college students and marine technology undergraduate students**
  - 82% of interns this year were from community colleges
- **Interns' interests, knowledge, and skills are carefully matched to mentor requirements**
  - Mentor receives the 3-5 resumes that best match their needs
  - Mentor makes final decision on which student(s) they host

# Knowledge, skills and experience interns gain

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- Job experience essential for employment—often the most important step
- Better understand the diversity of ocean careers
- Experience with cutting-edge technologies that are not available at their institutions

# 2009 Internships

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- 11 interns were placed on UNOLS and USCG vessels
  - *Sharp, Blue Heron, Wecoma, Thompson, Walton Smith, Seward Johnson, Oceanus and Atlantis*
  - *USCG Healy*
- 5 women, 6 men; ages 18-33
- 36% ethnic minorities

# Mentor feedback on 2009 interns

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- **100% of mentors said the intern was beneficial to the organization, made their job easier, and they would hire another MATE intern in the future**
- **100% were impressed or very impressed with their intern's knowledge and skills (up from 91% last year and 80% the year before)**
  - **Weakest areas appear to be scientific and technical knowledge and computer skills (half of the responses on these were adequate instead of excellent or above expectations)**
  - **BUT, 100% of mentors said that the intern developed skills that increased their chances of employment in the field**
- **100% said the intern was very professional or outstanding**
- **80% said would hire the intern immediately in an entry-level position**



# UNOLS mentors have said:

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- One mentor this summer said of their two interns, “two of the best interns we've had in the five years that we've been participating in the MATE program, both of which will be able to succeed in the marine sciences.”

# UNOLS mentors have said:

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- Another mentor said, “We would immediately hire *him*. He was one of the best, if not the best, intern we've had in the five years we've participated in the program.”
- “This is a great program that we will continue to support!”

# Student post-internship survey results

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- 100% feel the internship prepared them for future jobs in marine technology
- 100% said internship was a valuable learning experience
- 90% have increased confidence in working on technical problems
- 100% enjoyed working at sea (second year in a row!)

# UNOLS interns have said:

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- *“This is definitely the greatest learning experience I have ever had!”*
- *“It made me realize I like the sea life and could be a technician.”*
- *“My internship was an exceptional experience...I learned a great deal about marine technology...definitely increased my interest in pursuing a career in marine technology...and the knowledge needed to pursue that career.”*

# Successes in 2009

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We want to thank you for your help in making this year a great success for the internship program.

1. The technicians/mentors have been great mentors and role models for the students.
2. 100% of the mentors completed the paperwork before and after the cruises—thank you!!

# Improvements in 2008/2009

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Based on the input from UNOLS in the past, we have made some improvements to the MATE Technical Internship Program

# Improvements in 2008/2009

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UNOLS Concern: The number of interns applying for positions on UNOLS vessels (not just ROV jobs) after their internships

MATE Answer: Focused recruitment on community college partner students (82% of interns this year) and students near or past graduation

- This was the second year that we accepted graduates of partner programs, which has greatly improved interest in applying for jobs and offers the interns received.

**RESULTS: 2 interns were immediately hired!**

# Students getting hired!

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- 2 interns were hired by the ships on which they worked this summer!
  - Matt Wilkinson on the *R/V Sharp*
  - Brian Johnson on the *R/V Seward Johnson*
- 3 others have reported possible job opportunities that have become available because of their internships



# Improvements in 2008/2009

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UNOLS Concern: Interns did not understand the nature of marine technician work or the equipment used prior to the internship

MATE Answers:

- Created a mandatory “quiz” on marine technical careers and equipment for students prior to their internships

RESULTS: 100% of mentor and student responses show an adequate or better technical preparation and 100% said the overall preparation was excellent / above expectations

# What we are still working on

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## Barriers to participation study

- We are surveying students in our partners and other colleges to determine why more minorities are not participating in the internship program
- So far, we have surveyed and done focus groups with students at LBCC
- Results will be shared and used to improve the MATE Internship Program in 2010 and beyond

# What we are still working on

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## Barriers to participation study

- Results show that minorities have more fear associated with these internships that prevent them from applying
- We will be modifying our application materials and website to address some of these concerns
- We will also be creating a one-page “sensitivity guide” to help mentors and educators

# What we are still working on

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## Updating information for interns prior to their cruises

- We have videos and ship tours that we are planning to post on the MATE website.
- We are updating the website with photos and biographies of past interns and where they currently work in the field.
- Creating a “guide for families” on internships

# Ways you can still help us

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1. Please commit to providing internship opportunities as early as possible this year so we can recruit and place the best students
2. When the “sensitivity guide” is released, please read it and share it with mentors
3. Offer to be interviewed for the MATE website

# Ways you can still help us

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4. Continue to provide your intern with detailed information on the tasks they will have and equipment they will use prior to the internship
5. Use the internship to promote marine technical careers– you are great mentors and role models. **THANK YOU!**

The background is a collage of four images related to marine technology. Top-left: Two people in blue hard hats and orange life jackets on a boat deck, one holding a large, complex metal instrument. Top-right: Three people in a small inflatable boat on the water. Bottom-left: A woman in a red shirt holding a large framed map or chart. Bottom-right: A person in a red jacket and orange pants on a boat deck next to a large metal frame containing equipment.

**For more information visit:**  
**<http://www.marinetech.org/careers/internships.php>**

**Or contact:**  
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