ACE: Soybean Innovation Lab Research Internship

Background & Description:
The Soybean Innovation Lab (SIL) in the Department of Agricultural & Consumer Economics (ACE) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) is seeking two outstanding applicants for its Undergraduate Research Internship for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Specifically interns would: 1) work part-time in the Soybean Innovation Lab administration offices located in Mumford Hall on the Champaign-Urbana campus; 2) register for, and complete, 3 hours of independent study research on an aspect of soybean for development; and 3) complete a two week study tour to a SIL research site in Africa during the summer of 2016.

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research (Soybean Innovation Lab, SIL) is a program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), seeking to provide the research foundation needed by the development community to successfully scale and develop soybean in Sub-Saharan Africa. The laboratory works in five Sub-Saharan African countries including Ghana, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia and implements research projects focused on genetics & plant breeding; seed quality and seed storage; plant breeder education; soybean agronomics & production; smallholder soybean adoption; gender equity in soybean production; environmental impact of soybean production; and soybean seed systems.

The undergraduate research internship was implemented in the 2014-2015 school year on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The internship program integrates the undergraduate experience with important development issues such as poverty reduction, agricultural development and food security as well as the research methods used in these analyses. Two outstanding undergraduate students will be selected as the SIL research interns for 2015-2016, providing support to the Lab in its goal of improving the soybean value chain in sub-Saharan Africa. SIL interns assist the administrative team in implementing its research efforts and provide direct support to the Principal Investigator and Managed Research Area (MRA) faculty leads in developing a platform for tropical soybean information dissemination. This includes soybean varietal research, database management, literature reviews and desktop research related to development issues in these countries focused on poverty reduction, agricultural development and food security.

Academic Credit & Travel:
SIL undergraduate research interns are also required to develop a detailed research plan in consultation with the Principal Investigator of the SIL project, Dr. Peter Goldsmith in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Economics (ACE), which outlines the scope, objectives and output for their research project. In close coordination with ACE faculty, SIL interns develop a 20-page research paper on their research focused on soybean for development. SIL interns conduct statistical analyses for their research and are supervised in their research by the Principal Investigator. Interns register for 1 – 3 academic credit hours of independent study in support of their completion of the research project. The research focus for the SIL interns is on an aspect of soybean and development. Past undergraduate research interns have focused on issues related to intellectual property rights in soybean varietal development in the tropics and the socio-economic considerations of small-holder production of commercial crops in Sub-Saharan Africa. The completed research paper will be considered for possible participation in the American Agricultural Economics Association undergraduate research competition.
SIL undergraduate research interns are also afforded the opportunity to travel to an African study site to collect data, see first-hand the area of soybean for development in Sub-Saharan Africa and assist project implementers with research in-country.

**Compensation:**
In addition to the 3 academic credit hours, SIL undergraduate research interns are paid at a rate of $8.25/hour and work approximately 10 hours/week on SIL activities. SIL interns are required to become familiar with SIL countries, locations, activities, and partners and attend university open seminars on relevant issues of African development.

**Qualifications:**
Undergraduate interns must be juniors or seniors enrolled at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Interns should have a passion for international agriculture development and be savvy in social media, website development and promotional material development. Interns must be able to multitask, complete projects efficiently and with great attention to detail and be able to respond to demanding deadlines and tight turn-around times. The Soybean Innovation Lab is looking for exemplary undergraduate students who can fulfill the role of an undergraduate research intern and who has a demonstrated passion for international development.

**To apply:**
To apply please send a resume and cover letter to Courtney Tamimie tamimi@illinois.edu before November 15, 2015.

Web: [http://soybeaninnovationlab.illinois.edu/](http://soybeaninnovationlab.illinois.edu/)
Twitter: USAID Soy Lab [@tropicalsoylab](https://twitter.com/tropicalsoylab)