

Class of '007

Department of Sociology internships offer break from norm

BY BRIAN FLEMING
The Battalion

For junior sociology major Ryan Huling, working as an intern was much more than just a chance to file papers and run errands. Last spring he conducted research in criminology with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (D.E.A.), researching suspect profiling and stereotypes.

Working as a dispatch operator, Huling's job included communicating with agents in pursuit of criminals, conducting background checks and working side by side with the Louisiana National Guard.

"There were times when agents would be in pursuit and I would hear all of what was going on.."

Huling said this opportunity amplifies the sociological principals and techniques students learn in the classroom every day.

"By doing this, you see that everything from the classroom fits together with what you are doing in the real world outside of the classroom," Huling said. "Then as you go back to the classroom, you see it all again, and it really puts the information into perspective."

This is exactly what Dr. Carol Albrecht, internship coordinator for the Department of Sociology, said they hope to do with this program.

"We hope to take the theories learned in class and turn them to real life experiences," Albrecht said. Albrecht said the internships they offer fit the career goals of the individual.

"Whatever they want to do in the future is what we get them into," Albrecht said. "Each internship fits their goals and interests and gives them hands-on experience."

Rogelio Saenz, department head of the sociology department and a sociology professor, said internships give students sound research experience as well as a chance to develop research and writing skills.

So far, this program has been going on for a year as part of a re-vamping of the undergraduate program offered at A&M.

Saenz said various programs were part of this redirection for the department of sociology.

"We expanded to add undergraduate research programs, certification programs and internships," Saenz said.

Saenz said the internships, in their second year, have advanced significantly and play a major role in the development of students.

Albrecht said the program started with five students and has since flourished.

"Now, after only one year, we have 36 students, and the program is expanding dramatically," Albrecht said.



ROBERT HYNCEK/THE BATTALION

Albrecht said almost every agency and company students have worked with have had positive reactions to A&M interns.

"Each student has an internship adviser," Albrecht said. "In many instances, advisers have written beyond the standard letters of evaluation."

Albrecht said this is one reason she encourages A&M students to take part in this.

"I know they will make a sound impression," Albrecht said. "They always represent A&M very well."

Huling said the program shows sociology majors what they can do with their degree.

"Some people say they really enjoy this study but don't know what they can do with it," Huling said. "This proves there are many things you can do."

Saenz said students can pursue

careers in law enforcement, research and health fields.

Students interested in the program must have at least a 2.5 G.P.A., preferably a 3.0 for some more prestigious internships.

Albrecht said students should have a research field in mind.

"Most come up with a research question," Albrecht said. "Once they do, they continue to focus on that area of research. Many research topics have included gender differences, AIDS research, statistical discrimination and as in Huling's case, stereotypes and profiling as their research topics."

Saenz said that in the future, he hopes to see this program expand.

"I think it would be nice to see development of a bank of internships," Saenz said. "Not only in the local community but in other areas as well."

Working the dispatch, I heard some pretty interesting stuff," Huling said. "There were times when agents would be in pursuit, and I would hear all of what was going on."

Huling said he is excited to be working with the Texas A&M Department of Sociology and its recently created internship program offering real-world experiences for sociology students.

"I had a lot of responsibility working at the D.E.A. and was exposed to a lot of what the agency was all about," Huling said. "It was a humbling experience for me being placed in such a high and responsible position."

KICK-OFF

Continued from Page 3

"The last time I played in Aggieland was May of '98," Miller said. "I'm real excited about being back here. I miss the Dixie Chicken and Freebirds."

The Dub Miller & HWY 6 Band is most known for its "Fightin' Texas Aggie Song," which sold

2,000 copies in 1997. Miller, who played in the Aggie band while attending A&M, said he went to music school in Lubbock after the local success of the song.

"When the 'Fightin' Texas Aggie Song' did well with local radio, I decided to take a crack at the music scene, so I went to music school," Miller said. "We've been in the studio working on a CD, which should be out in October."

Cole Ballweg, a senior marketing major, said almost anything can happen at the Kick-Off and last year's was full of surprises.

"I can't make it out there this year," Ballweg said. "But last year was crazy. When we finally made it out to the parking lot, we found drunk people in my car because I'd left the car unlocked, and they had thought it was theirs."

Schaberg said he wants every-

one to remember they do not need to be a cowboy or cowgirl to attend.

"You don't have to be a country music fan to go and have a good time," Schaberg said. "If you're an Aggie, you'll have fun — but you're not a true Aggie if you don't make it out to this show."

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