

Candidate Profile

SUMMER INTERNSHIP

2019



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Alejandra González López



Municipality of Origin: Caguas, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Agricultural Science, General Agriculture

Expected Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: I had the opportunity and the pleasure to work, thanks to internships, on farms that specialize on the breeding of race horses and in a dairy farm.

Career Goals: My career goals are finishing my B.S. in general agriculture and obtain knowledge in the different areas of agriculture. Also, I want to be able to study bees and, in the future, specialize as a beekeeper.

Interesting Fact: I'm a musician, I like to learn how to play different types of instruments. I pay attention to details and always strive to do a better job.

Alejandro E. López Rosado

Municipality of Origin: Hormigueros, Puerto Rico.

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College Major: Civil Engineering

Expected Graduation Date: May 2021

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: I was a member of the UPRM Steel Bridge Team for two years. The team designs, constructs, tests and assembles bridges based on the rules sent by the American Institute of Steel Construction. Last year, I was the foreman in charge of the construction of the bridge, responsible for the safety of 18 students in the construction lab, in charge of keeping an inventory of all materials in the lab and teaching the correct use of all the machinery, construction techniques and quality control. As a result, the team placed 1st overall both years in the regional competitions.

Career Goals: After finishing my undergraduate degree, I want to obtain a job where I can apply and develop the knowledge acquired at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus.

Interesting Fact: I am sponsored by local brands (Henry's Wood & Positive Musa) for skateboarding. I love to surf and explore the ocean. Also, I like to paint, go mountain biking and play soccer.



Daniel José González Rodríguez

Municipality of Origin: Lajas, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Agricultural Sciences, Agro-environmental Sciences and Crop Protection

Expected Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: Colegio San José High School, San Germán, & knowledge in tropical plants and crops

Personal, educational and work highlights: Following my passion for plants, I have always sought external learning which has led me to submerging myself in undergraduate research and further developing my skills. As a young plant pathologist, I am moved to keep developing my knowledge as a scientist in a world with increasing crisis to achieve research and technological development for Plant Biology, Agricultural Improvement & Human Health Enhancements.

Career Goals: Pursuing graduate studies after graduation

Interesting Facts: I am a pineapple farmer, fisherman, skateboarder, botanist, and researcher.



Erika C. Soler Maldonado



Municipality of Origin: Caguas, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-383-9329

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College Major: Electrical Engineering

Expected Graduation Date: May 2021

Educational Background: Studied and graduated from Colegio San Juan Apóstol y Evangelista in Caguas. At that time, I was part of the National Honor Society and participated in many activities involving helping the community. I currently study electrical engineering at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez. Also, I am a member of the Solar Engineering Research Racing Team at wiring/ telemetry division.

Personal, educational and work highlights: My personal highlights would be adaptability, organized and always keep self-motivated. As educational and work highlights, I always like to add creativity to the work process. Also, I would like to improve as a decision maker and taking the role of leadership.

Career Goals: Acquire new skills and learn from every experience

Interesting Fact: I like to draw, paint and wood-work.

Gabriela Cristina Román Rodríguez



Municipality of Origin: Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-677-1336

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College Major: Agricultural Engineering and Biosystems with a Curricular Sequence in Comparative Literature

Expected Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: Courses focused on agricultural management, environmental systems and alternatives to traditional agriculture. Notable courses taken: soil sciences, plant sciences, topography, irrigation and drainage, agricultural machinery, farm electrification and food and science technology. I am interested in agriculture and its environmental impact and conservation of natural resources while embracing food security.

Personal, educational and work highlights: I work as an environmental leader in my community, educating and promoting environmental protection and recycling. I have volunteered in the Student Association of Agricultural and Environmental Systems and am an organizing committee member of the University Agricultural Fair. Recently, I was a performer at a Comparative Literature program at the University of Puerto Rico.

Career Goals: Agriculture is economy and culture, and at the same time an alternative that challenges social problems. My future goal is to be an agronomist, I hope to be a spokesperson and develop agriculture. I hope to contribute to the formation of new ideas for the development of crops and the management of agricultural products from cultivation, production, packaging, and distribution in a way that benefits the consumer. I feel the responsibility of planting a seed of awareness to be part of social change through encouraging education and values like civism and responsibility.

Interesting Facts: I like to find alternative solutions to the consumption of plastic and carry them out as part of my daily life. I enjoy poetry, going to the beach and playing with animals.

Gabriela Cristina Vélez Rodríguez



Municipality of Origin: Caguas, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-618-8232

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College Major: Agricultural Science, Agronomy

Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: As an Agricultural Science student I have had the opportunity to participate in research related to Nematology, learning different methods and techniques, as well as supporting and assisting grad students in their thesis work. I was a member and collector of the Dragonfly Project, where I collected and documented different species of dragonflies in the southwest region of Puerto Rico. I also had the opportunity to participate in the Student Volunteer Program of the USDA APHIS PPQ at Ponce and Aguada, Puerto Rico, where I worked with different surveys such as the Fruit Fly, Giant African Snail, and Mango Seed Weevil surveys. I am certified as an Agroecological Promoter and Producer by the Agroecological Project “*El Josco Bravo*,” something I am very proud of because I am very passionate about agroecology. I worked as an intern student in the “*Plenitud PR*” farm, here I learned and used agroecological and permaculture practices, and had the opportunity to offer agroecology related workshops to schools and associations. I was member of the Association of Agricultural Students and currently am a member of the “*Orquesta de Cuerdas RUM*” Association.

Career Goals: In the future I would like to pursue a master’s degree in Agricultural Extension, also develop my own agroecological project to teach and produce food, and last, but not least, obtain a career in a federal agency related to crop protection or natural resource conservation.

Interesting Facts: I am a very proud “*Trovadora*” (a traditional music from the mountain side of Puerto Rico singer) and I am member of the “*Orquesta de Cuerdas*” of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez.

José Antonio Seda Salcedo



Municipality of Origin: Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Agricultural Extension

Expected Graduation Date: June 2019

Educational Background: Episcopal San Andres High School

Personal, educational and work highlights: I work in a coffee farm, learning about team work, farm management, and the business of farming. I have applied my knowledge college education on the farm particularly improving our harvested season. After Hurricane Maria, I was involved in all the processes of developing and reestablishing the coffee crop and learn how NRCS helped coffee producers with programs and incentives.

Career Goals: Have a job a USDA federal agency, like NRCS.

Interesting Fact: In my free time I like go to the beach and exercise, I enjoy breeding farm animals and spending time with family and friends.

Melanie E. Martínez-Arocho

Municipality of Origin: Toa Baja, Puerto Rico

Phone: 787-385-3302

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College Major: Agricultural Education

Expected Graduation Date: May 2021

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: My most gratifying academic experience has been designing an agriculture course for elementary school students. It consisted of classroom lectures and hands-on experience in a vegetable garden. I was able to teach them the basics of agriculture and the reception was phenomenal. In my free time, I participate in beach and river cleanups alongside local environmental organizations.

Career Goals: I would love to develop into a position that allows me to use my agricultural skills in the outside world. My goal is to research biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. In the long term, I want to implement initiatives and work with communities to accelerate the restoration of ecosystems.

Interesting Facts: I have an artistic side that loves to create. My brain is almost always brainstorming new ideas!



Ricardo A. Lanzó Calderón

Municipality of Origin: Carolina, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Agronomy

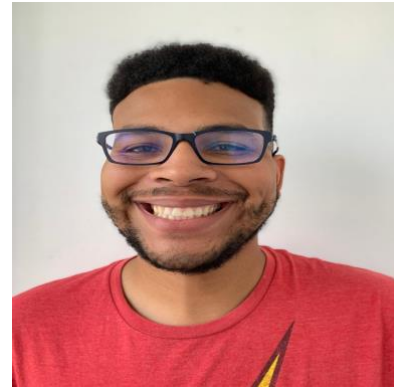
Expected Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: Advanced level ASL Certificate, Completing Curricular sequence in Agriculture Teaching.

Career Goals: Educate and strengthen farmers all over Puerto Rico to increase and promote agriculture on the island.

Interesting Facts: I enjoy reading, watching movies and spending time with friends and family.



Ruben Díaz de Jesús

Municipality of Origin: Humacao, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Industrial Engineering

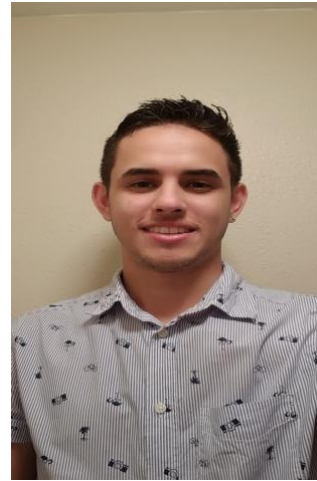
Expected Graduation Date: December 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal educational and work highlights: After the experience of surviving a category 5 hurricane and seeing how people struggled to sustain their agricultural fields, I decided to put my energy and knowledge to help people be better prepared. Following this line of thought, my last research experience was to develop a probabilistic model to determine the potential land impact of hurricanes in the Southeastern coast of the U.S. and Puerto Rico. During the first term of the research, I learned about agricultural impacts in the Southeastern coast which sparked an interest on helping landowners.

Career Goals: I am currently, and want to continue, helping and motivating women to pursue a career in engineering. I want to be part of a professional team in which I can use my knowledge and skills to make improvement and present solutions to different problems in different fields.

Interesting Fact: I am the first in my family to pursue a college education. I would like a career in an engineering field. I have a love for acting, I like to travel and learn more about new cultures.



Sara Teresa Espinosa Puig



Municipality of Origin: Camuy, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Animal Science

Expected Graduation Date: June 2019

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: My father, being a third-generation cattle rancher, has taught me about the livestock industry. I have worked with animals since childhood; performing milking's, feeding calves and heifers, administering medicine and vaccines, and assisting in pregnancy tests with the farm veterinarian. Animals have always been my passion and I have continued to feed that passion in my adult life by studying Animal Science in the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus.

Career Goals: Being raised in an agriculture centered family, I have come to know the struggles that one can find as a farmer. My goal is to have a career in which I can help farmers achieve their goals of prosperity and success.

Interesting Facts: One of my many passions is geology. I collect different minerals and crystals; I study their formations and properties.

Stephanie Muñiz



Municipality of Origin: Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

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Email: stephanie.muniz4@upr.edu

College Major: Industrial Engineering

Expected Graduation Date: December 2021

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, education and work highlights: I have been a part of two research projects at the University, these being the Solar Engineering Research Racing Team (SERRT) and the UAV Search & Rescue Research Project. I have also participated in NSPE's Corporate Development Program and will participate in the New Venture Design Experience this upcoming semester.

Career Goals: As soon as I finish my bachelor's, I plan to get a master's in Environmental Engineering. Then, I will use my knowledge in eliminating wastefulness, creating efficient systems, and conserving natural resources to help industries reduce pollution and protect the environment.

Interesting Facts about you: I love all forms of storytelling: music, movies, books, theatre, art, you name it... I'm forever fascinated with all the creative ways we can tell stories.

Stephanie Marie Vargas Rodríguez



Municipality of Origin: Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Agricultural Engineering and Biosystems

Expected Graduation Date: May 2020

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: Throughout my academic journey, I have learned about the use of AutoCAD in the agricultural environment, topography, and the handling of agricultural machinery, among other aspects necessary for my area of studies. I have always liked getting involved in extracurricular activities, inside and outside the academic environment, since these help me grow professionally and as a person. As Vice President of the Agricultural Systems Student Association for the 2018-2019 school year, I was able to develop my leadership skills and create new concepts while contributing new ideas within it. I was also part of the Disney College Program in fall 2017, where I worked with people from all over the world.

Career Goals: In my career as a future agronomist I want to continue expanding my knowledge and help motivate others to explore the field of agriculture. My goal in the future is to be able to work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) with agencies such as the NRCS, since one of my greatest interests is to promote the conservation of our soils and agriculture.

Interesting Facts: As an agriculture student, it is worth mentioning that I enjoy hiking, camping, exploring new places, trips to the beach and taking care of my home garden. On the other hand, I'm a musician and was part of my universities marching band "*Banda Colegial*" as a French Horn player.

Verónica Aimeé Fontanals Cuebas



Municipality of Origin: Bayamón, Puerto Rico

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College Major: Science, concentration in Biology

Expected Graduation Date: June 2019

Educational Background: University of Puerto Rico- Mayagüez Campus

Personal, educational and work highlights: During my undergraduate I was involved in agricultural practices with Student Agricultural Association. I also worked with NEON (National Ecological Observatory Network) as a summer intern, which I applied environmental and biological practices. As personal highlight, I am the co-founder of the first cooperative of Puerto Rico, BICICOOP, which offers mechanical services to the bicycles of the community. In 2018, I did a student exchange for a semester in Complutense University of Madrid, Spain and dedicated to travel around Europe.

Career Goals: I aspire to continue my studies to a masters' degree and PhD with a focus on environmental science and conservation of resources. After my B.S., I am acquiring professional experience that help me developed better techniques and practices. I also seek to do volunteer work in or out of Puerto Rico, participating in agencies such as Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, WWOOF, among many others.

Interesting Fact: I always love being around nature so in my free time I visit the beach, a river or forest. I tend to do activities as snorkeling, swimming and hiking. I have hiked in different countries and states, including Canada, Croatia, Spain, California. I like playing sports and am a yoga student. Most of my spare time I spent it with my dog which is more like a partner.