

impact

of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Society-Ready Graduates Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)

Issue

According to a 1999 survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers the top skills employers are seeking among college graduates are leadership, teamwork and communication skills. Course work is useful in developing these skills, but it's very often extracurricular activities and work experience that make the greatest impact in the development of these skills. At the same time, because of the sluggish economy, there are fewer opportunities for students to participate in internships, according to the 2001 Experiential Education Survey, published by National Association of Colleges and Employers.

What has been done?

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences sponsors the award winning Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) Team. This national organization has as its mission "to develop leadership, teamwork and communication skills by learning, practicing and teaching the fundamentals of free enterprise." This organization encourages students to get involved in the campus and larger community in the development of

community service projects that teach and demonstrate the benefits of a free market economy. As a result of the planning and implementation of these projects students develop many valuable skills that translate easily to the workplace. The SIFE Team conducted summer outreach programs for youth, coordinated the spring career fair and worked with many area middle and elementary school teachers to provide enrichment in their classrooms. Through a \$7,500 partnership with Credit Counselors of America they students formed the "Credit Wise Cats" program which provided credit education to college students. In 2001 the students began the research and development necessary to create their own brand of salsa, utilizing the controlled environment tomatoes grown the UA greenhouses.

Impact

In 2000 01 the SIFE Team contributed 9,565 volunteer hours to the community. The students completed 20 projects and obtained exposure in two campus newspapers, three citywide newspapers and one television station. Total reach through all

media exposure was more than 342,175 individuals. Over 50 students were involved in SIFE activities throughout the academic year. Every May the SIFE Teams compete at a national competition in Kansas City. In 2000-01 the UA SIFE Team placed in the Elite Eight among the 120 competing teams. For the past three years 18 students have participated on the presentation team. Among these students, 83% had job offers upon graduation with companies that they met at national competition. Testimonials:

"I've been offered a two-year internship with Macy's in San Francisco. I believe this is a direct result of my SIFE experience; in fact it's all we talked about during my interview!"
-SIFE member, sophomore year

"As president of the SIFE team, I was introduced to the recruiter from E. and J. Gallo. I was offered a job in their executive development program because of the skills I developed through SIFE."
-SIFE member

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