

HARBOR

Goodbye to the Summer Interns

Harbor celebrates the graduates of another successful summer internship program.

Story courtesy Harbor Dept.; Photos by Jackie Causillas, Club Counselor

During the summer of 2011 the Harbor Dept. began its second decade of "Opening the World Today and Preparing for Tomorrow" when 54 students from Banning High School participated in the International Trade Education Summer internship coordinated by the Port of Los Angeles. On Sept. 1, Martin Chavez, of the Port's Human Resources Division and a Club Board Member, hosted the reception culminating the nine-week summer program. The event took place at the Crown Plaza Hotel in San Pedro.

As part of the program, the 54 interns got valuable work experience at 27 different organizations.

The students, who will be returning to school for their senior year, had an opportunity to perform jobs in public service, commerce, and the maritime industry for many of these students this was their first real work experience. Martin, who has directed the program since its inception, commented, "Over the years, the students have risen to meet the program requirements, no matter how rigorous they have become, and have competed to earn these jobs. No student was given a job; they worked hard by attending workshops since the beginning of the school year. Then they interviewed and competed with other students to be selected." He also added, "More than 100 students met the program requirements at the beginning of their junior year. Those students then had to attend classes learning to prepare a resume, personal statement, and write a cover letter. The students took the SAT exam to gain a qualifying score and then did an assessment interview." The students commented on how the assessment interview was the most dreaded aspect of the program, because it is with Martin, but the reality may be because it is their first time having a "real" job interview. After completing the steps, the students interviewed with four employers, who then selected an intern for their organization.

Students who have participated in this program have gone on to pursue college degrees or entered careers in international trade, commerce, finance, and the public sector. The success of this innovative program and its staying power is due to the support from the private sector and the Port. Eli Romero from Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment was instrumental in attracting past employers American President Lines, California Cartage, and DCA Engineering to return as participants this summer with long time organizations Moffatt & Nichol, Pasha Stevedoring, SA Recycling, Tesoro Refining, and Watson Land Company continue their participation.

Under the direction of the Port's Internship Coordinator, Gabriela Perez, who herself was a summer 2006 program participant and who cur-

rently attends UCLA, the interns attended workshops each Friday afternoon. Topics included: personal financial management (presented by the Los Angeles Federal Credit Union), stress management, communication skills, and an employers' panel from BNSF Railroad, Cal Cartage, and the DWP's Evelyn Cortez, who was a student engineer when Martin coordinated DWP's student program. Students also took math, geography, and vocabulary exams. An added feature this summer, students visited the Cal State campuses of Dominguez Hills and Long Beach. Ms. Perez also took a group of students to UCLA. This year Ms. Perez received assistance from Beatrice Rebollar, who was a summer intern in 2008 and is majoring in international business at the California Maritime Academy.

The City Employees Club sponsored the 2011 Student Awards. The Outstanding Student Award was presented to Evelyn Valle, who related how long the students had to work for this opportunity and their commitment in their quest to be part of this program. She emphasized how the students now feel they are "young adults" ready to compete in the job market and able to contribute to the workplace. She also shared the students' gratitude to the employers for the opportunity to work alongside adults in a professional environment. The Club presented Miss Valle tickets to Knott's Berry Farm for her accomplishment. The Workshop Excellence Award was earned by Nicole Diaz for her scores on the quizzes and participation in the workshops. The Workplace Professionalism Awards were presented to Evelyn Cortez, Rebecca Rodriguez, Violet Paredes, Richard Tucker, and Jamie Vasquez. Recognized for Outstanding Personal Development were Summer Beavers, Alberto Limas, and Julien Sykes. A special recognition for Outstanding Dedication was presented to Alberto Limas, for overcoming any obstacle to attend work each day and the workshops, all the while utilizing public transportation, for this the Club presented Mr. Limas two tickets to Knott's as well.

In closing, Martin Chavez thanked the employers for opening their world to the students and reminded the parents, school administrators, and supervisors that, when students know what they have to do to be successful, they do step up, they work hard to do well and they accomplish those requirements. These young adults proved they are preparing for tomorrow. Congratulations 2011 ITEP Summer Interns!

The Club thanks Martin Chavez for his extra efforts to produce this great program, and for contributing the information for this story.



Stephanie Holloman, pictured with Jose Gonzalez, worked with three students at the Port's C&M Division.



Evelin Cortez, who interned with Brissa Sotelo at Tesoro Refining and Marketing.



Miguel Madrigal interned with Cal Cartage's Chris Goytia.



The USCG continued its participation by hosting Martha Gallardo.



Martin Chavez addresses the audience about the students' hard work to earn a spot as an intern.



The Port's Martin Chavez with Sylvester Vallejo of the POSSE Foundation, who awarded a full scholarship to summer 2010 Intern Edy Delgado to attend Tulane University.



From left: Amy Grat, ITEP, and Alberto Limas share a light-hearted story of his internship at California State Lands Commission.



LA CityView Channel 35 interviews Natalie Aleman regarding her summer experience with Wilmington's Juanita's Foods.



From left: Melissa Avila, Financial Management, a summer 2010 intern; Karen Bajza, ITEP; and Gabriela Perez, Human Resources, prepare for the guests.



State Sen. Roderick Wright coordinated with State Sen. Ted Lieu, along with Assemblymembers Warren Furutani and Bonnie Lowenthal, to provide certificates to each intern. Pictured are Liliana Sivitos, Jamie Vasquez, and Ashley Ingram.



The Port's Internship Coordinator, Gabriela Perez, shares how the program influenced her and now has the opportunity to help these students prepare for their futures.



Nicole Diaz with her supervisors from American President Lines.



Guadalupe Bazan with representatives from Assemblymember Warren Furutani's Office.



Martin Chavez presents the Outstanding Student Award to Evelyn Valle.



The graduates of the 2011 Harbor summer intern project.