

# INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## Joseph Harriger

**Graduation Semester & Year:** Fall of 2021

**Semester & Year of Internship:** Spring 2020

**Major:** Biology

**Minor:** Chemistry

**Hobbies:** Biological Research, Woodworking, Backpacking, Firefighting/Fire-Rescue, and animal rehabilitation

**Campus Activities:** Teaching Assistant in for the Natural Sciences Department (Biology and Microbiology), Judicial Board Member, Research Assistant to Dr. Nayyar Ahmed (Previously of UPG) and Jacob P. Rubus (Previously of UPG), Independent Student Researcher studying the effects of elemental metals on the immune system, and I have also been a teaching assistant to the department of mathematics and engineering

**Future Plans/Career Goals:**

My future plans/goals are geared towards biomedical research and obtaining my PhD in microbiological sciences with a strong focus in infectious diseases and immunology. I have a strong drive and passion for this field and its accompanying research. I have also toggled with the idea of pursuing an MD and a PhD through a combination program; however, I am still undecided on this particular thought.



**Hometown:**  
Murrysville, PA

- **Internship (company/your title):**

- Microbiological Sciences Lead Teaching Assistant for Nursing Students  
Biological Sciences Teaching Assistant to Foundations of Biology Students

- **How did you find your internship?**

- Through persistence and dedication to my studies as well as the drive to become more involved with 'science' and students on a more intimate basis where I am able to learn, grow, and help simultaneously.

- **What were your duties?**

- For the nursing microbiology courses I aided Dr. Nayyar Ahmed with all laboratory, worksheet, examination, and grading duties. I also aided in the alignment of both lab sessions to help ensure that both sections were covering the same content at the same interval.
- For the Foundations of Biology Class I aided with in class activities, grading, as well as examination review. I also had the opportunity to start mass review sessions that incorporated all of the Bio 1 students. Myself as well as the other Bio 1 Teaching Assistant, Sam, were able to hold review sessions that literally filled rooms and had people standing. It was awesome to be able to help so many students.

- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?**

- For nursing microbiology about 20 to 30
- For Bio 1 about 15-20

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**

I truly enjoyed the experience and help that I was able to provide to the students as well as the faculty I had the opportunity to work with. Both Dr. Nayyar and Dr. Barnhart over the past couple semesters have been an honor to work with and get to know. They both have changed my life and for sure helped me to gain an edge in my field. It was an honor to be able to make a small difference in our campus community.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

I would say that the most difficult aspect was preparing materials; delivering them verbally or through a presentation was one thing, but putting them on paper so everyone would universally understand them was

quite difficult. However, I was able to learn the various personalities of the students I had the honor to work with and they helped me to create ideal materials that everyone could understand.

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Natural Sciences/ Biology departments prepare you for your internship?**
  - Well, they were my internship! So, they continuously helped me to develop my professional and scientific background and they did so very well. I am forever grateful to those who have helped me along the way.

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

I believe that these internships have helped prepare me for the workload as well as helped me to develop the competitive edge necessary to gain traction in my industry.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

I would tell other students to always dive further into their internship! These opportunities are difficult to come by and are always full of so much more opportunity than meets the eye! Show ambition and initiative and never back down from a challenge! Also, push for individualized tasks as I believe that they help to build a name for you (the student) as the results of individualized tasks represent your capabilities in conjunction with the professor's efforts.

*Joseph T Harriger*

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