

**Fort Lewis College / Mesa Verde National Park  
Internship Partnership  
Summer 2006**

**Project final summary**

This summer program represented the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Fort Lewis College internship partnership with Mesa Verde National Park. During the 5 years of the program, we have placed 42 interns, and three have gone on to become full-time National Park employees.

The summer 2006 program placed 9 interns in a variety of venues including archaeological site preservation, backcountry site condition assessment, natural resources, interpretation, and research infrastructure / data base management. As in previous years, interns spent 10 weeks at the park, putting in a total of 400 hours of service time. Interns were required to register for these experiences for academic credit, so internships were mentored both by park personnel and by Fort Lewis College faculty members.

Each intern was required to identify and execute a specific project, chosen as the result of discussion between faculty mentor, park mentor, and student. We felt this essential to identify the internship as academic, learning experiences, and differentiate the internships from “summer job” experiences. Evaluation was conducted at three points during these internships; at the time of the identification of the specific projects, at a midway point in the 10 week experience, and finally, at the end of the 10 week internship. A final written report was required of each intern, as well as a daily log of activities, hours, and travel expenses.

Interns were each paid \$3400 as a stipend for this experience, and up to \$400 for mileage and travel expenses. Housing consisted of VIP camping arrangements and Morefield Campground, and students were required to provide their own camping gear, meals, and transportation.

Funding for these internship experiences was provided from a grant from the Colorado Historical Fund, and a partial cash match from the National Park Service and the Fort Lewis College Foundation. Each CHS grant we have received has been for a one summer internship program, requiring a new successful proposal to sustain the program each year. Each summer internship program begins with organizational meetings between FLC and Mesa Verde professional personnel (November) to establish budgets and logistics, and to plan an internship recruitment fair in January. During the last week in January, we conduct an open recruitment fair to allow student to interview with park personnel and indicate an interest in being considered for internships the following summer. For this 2006 cycle, the fair was attended by approximately 45 students, from whom the 9 final interns were selected.

Following the internship fair, students were required to return a questionnaire indicating their specific interests, and a list of potential interns generated. Fort Lewis College faculty were then asked for input concerning this list of candidates (academic record, work ethic, value of an internship to their personal and professional goals, etc.) and this information shared (with no attribution) with Mesa Verde park personnel. Two weeks following the recruitment fair, a general meeting was held at the park allowing each mentor to choose appropriate intern candidates. Phone calls were then made and intern matches established.

During March, individual contracts were drawn up establishing internship logistics, goals, and individual assignments, and these were reviewed and signed in April during a general orientation session for the selected interns.

Actual internships began the first full week in May, and terminated mid-July with a final meeting and reports. All of the assignment, contractual, and payment logistics were handled by the Dean of Natural and Behavioral Sciences at Fort Lewis College. By these arrangements, our student interns remained classified as FLC students, and not as college or National Park employees. Final grades for internships appear as *Mesa Verde Internships* on permanent student transcripts.

As of this writing, we are into our 2007 internship program, this year placing another 8 interns at Mesa Verde National Park. A future report will summarize our experiences with the program this year. Since this is the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the program, organization and logistics have been well established to the point where recruitment and assignment works very smoothly, and we can attract particularly qualified students.

We are very proud of the success of this program and plan to carry this forward into the future, as long as support can be obtained.

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