

Shalin Lawson Pinkerton

September 28, 2017

Dear Intern of the Year Committee:

I knew from a young age by watching my father, that I wanted to be a voice for agriculture. He would come home from work waste deep in mud, and scorched from the summer heat. He labored countless hours to ensure his crops and cattle were cared for. His calloused hands prove his years of dedication and grit. I come from generations of farmers and ranchers in the Texas Panhandle who battle the uncertainty of agriculture, and as a result I have a motivation to share our culture with others. My internship at National Sorghum Producers and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program allowed me to do just that.

My college career began as a pursuit of excellence. As soon as classes started my freshman year, I pushed myself to be involved across the entire campus. This involvement and dedication to myself and to serving others played a huge part in allowing me to land my internship with National Sorghum Producers and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program. I applied for several other internships in the agricultural industry, but when I found out I was accepted to intern at NSP and USCP I could not turn it down. I am so glad I took this internship because it truly changed my life in so many ways.

This internship had a proven track record for hiring students from Texas Tech University, and in fact, I am the first intern to ever work there from any other university besides Texas Tech. At first, this thought was intimidating to me, but also challenging. I was determined from the beginning to leave my mark as a West Texas A&M University Buffalo.

During my time at NSP and USCP I worked on many projects such as compiling the weekly newsletter "Sorghum Notes", composing blogs for the consumer based website and

Shalin Lawson Pinkerton

campaign “Simply Sorghum” and brainstorming and scheduling “Simply Sorghum” social media content. Additionally, I designed a coffee table album for a former employee of 20 years as a retirement gift from NSP staff. Some of my favorite projects involved interviewing several producers. Telling their stories showed me how much I love to write. Over the course of my internship, I wrote multiple producer profiles and stories about century farms. Lastly, I wrote and designed a two-page spread over sugarcane aphid management, which was published in the national “Sorghum Grower” magazine. Interacting with the farmers, hearing their stories and giving them a voice was truly inspirational.

Today, I am confident in my strengths, aware of my weaknesses and discovered how I can use my passion for writing to help modern agriculture. I am better equipped to bridge the gap between the producer and the consumer. I learned how to interact with people in a real work environment and how to apply skills learned in college to my career.

I have also brought knowledge and experience from my internship back to WT’s campus. I am the president of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, an Agricultural Ambassador, a former President’s Ambassador and a Roger’s LEAD WT Scholar. I have intense fervor for leadership and work to better these organizations for the good of others. Through my involvement, I have learned that true leadership is service. I have participated in the A-21 Campaign to raise awareness for human trafficking, been active in Work-A-Thon, volunteered for the Canyon Snack Pak for Kids and continue to be an active member of my church.

I have received national scholarships from the American Agricultural Editors’ Association and the Agricultural Relations Council and have been awarded Outstanding Agricultural Media & Communication Underclassman for two years. I am very blessed and honored for the opportunities in my life thus far and attribute much of that to WTAMU.



West Texas A&M University

Department of Agricultural Science

September 26, 2017

Steve Sellars
Experiential Education Coordinator
West Texas A&M University
P. O. Box 60728
Canyon, TX 79016
(806) 651-2345

Dear Intern of the Year Committee:

It is with great excitement that I support Shalin (Lawson) Pinkerton's application to the West Texas A&M University's Intern of the Year Award, sponsored by Phillips 66. Shalin is an exceptional student and worthy of recognition.

Shalin's commitment to her profession has been the driving force behind her academic success. I have never met a student who is as passionate about improving agricultural relations than Shalin. Her success in the classroom is evident she wants to excel in her professional pursuits. Her GPA is an indicator of her academic ability; however, I feel it is important for you and the committee to understand the lengths Shalin will go to learn. Shalin takes full advantage of any volunteer or development opportunity she can to better understand the skills and concepts needed in her profession. This internship is only one example. Shalin is required to complete an internship for her degree, however, Shalin has completed three. She is always searching for opportunities to learn new ideas and better her understanding of the profession. She has participated in professional development events and continues to serve the department and the youth of Texas by helping with the Swine Skill-a-Thon every year at the San Antonio Stock Show.

In addition, Shalin is one of the most positive examples of how someone should live their life. Shalin, to my knowledge, has never expressed negativity nor has she ever stopped smiling. Her character is infectious, and her peers gravitate to her when they need to be lifted. She gains

her character from her faith, and I know of few people who exercise faith with as much action as she does. Shalin truly follows her path and cannot be swayed no matter the situation.

Because of her character and her ability, Shalin has been recognized at all levels as well as been asked to serve in leadership positions. Shalin was recently a finalist for a national scholarship awarded to agricultural communicators. This recognition came at a national meeting where she was able to meet industry leaders in agricultural communication. Shalin also is a member of the Rogers' LEAD WT program, the department's Agricultural Ambassador program and the current president of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow. In addition, the Texas Pork Producers' Association consider her a "go to" when things need to get done, thus she holds some leadership roles within the association.

Shalin is a true representative of what we hope the world becomes. I know of no other person who can accomplish so much and maintain her humble spirit. I know of few that can both lead their peers and maintain close friendships. In short, I feel Shalin is deserving of this recognition and would be a wonderful asset to invest in. If you or anyone on the committee needs further clarification on Shalin's academic performance, her character or her leadership ability, do not hesitate to contact me at 806-651-2591 or trobertson@wtamu.edu. Thank you for your consideration and service to the university.

Sincerely,



J. Tanner Robertson

Discover the **BUFF** in You.



September 29, 2017

Steve Sellars
Experiential Education Coordinator
West Texas A&M University
P. O. Box 60728
Canyon, TX 79016

Dear Intern of the Year Committee,

It is with honor that I have the opportunity to support Shalin (Lawson) Pinkerton in her application to West Texas A&M University for the 2016-2017 Intern of the Year award sponsored by Phillips 66. While I have only known Mrs. Pinkerton since April, she has created a lasting impression as a unique young individual who is confident, ambitious and career-minded and someone, who in my mind, is a perfect representation of this award and the merits it symbolizes.

National Sorghum Producers and the United Sorghum Checkoff Program support multiple interns each semester. From the beginning, Mrs. Pinkerton's interview was exceptional as she displayed a unique mannerism of maturity and professionalism, leading to her place as a valuable asset on our communications team. She presented a willingness to work, learn and grow, completing any task she could obtain while also being uniquely aware of areas for improvement or added experience. I respect her pursuit to strategically improve her entire skill set in order to make herself a more rounded asset for future employers.

During Mrs. Pinkerton's time with NSP and USCP, she was responsible for formatting and writing copy for our weekly NSP e-newsletter and bi-weekly print newsletter. She tracked daily media coverage; planned, developed and scheduled social media posts; wrote articles and was published in our quarterly magazine *Sorghum Grower* (distributed to over 23,000 individuals) and she generated web content among other miscellaneous tasks.

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One project in particular Mrs. Pinkerton was given the responsibility to complete was a book dedicated to an influential man with a 60-year career in sorghum. The book was composed of letters from individuals throughout our entire industry and photographs of the man during his career. She did a tremendous job putting this item together that in turn was a treasured gift to National Sorghum Producers' long-time research adviser.

During Mrs. Pinkerton's internship, we had the opportunity to celebrate one of her many successes as a student when she was chosen as an American Agricultural Editors Association scholarship winner and finalist for the prestigious Jim Evans scholarship. The event took place at the annual Ag Media Summit where students are incorporated into the event and recognized as upcoming leaders in the field of agricultural communications.

Aside from Mrs. Pinkerton's responsibilities and achievements, I can speak to her personal character. She was a pleasure to work with each day and always showed kindness to others. She added energy to our office and the camaraderie that existed between her and the other interns was that of a tight-knit family. Mrs. Pinkerton easily communicated with staff members from both organizations, even challenging our executive director to a t-shirt designing contest, which he gladly and willingly accepted in the spirit of competition and pushing for out-of-the box ideas and mindsets.

In short, Mrs. Pinkerton is an outstanding representative of an upcoming leader and the type of student employers want to hire. She is most deserving of this award recognition and is a worthwhile investment by the selection committee. If I can answer any questions or provide additional information, please feel free to call 505-850-5925 or email jennifer@sorghumgrowers.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Blackburn
External Affairs Director
National Sorghum Producers