I applied to the CALS NYS Internship Program for the opportunity to gain real-life experience working for a food company and to learn the different roles within it. The community engagement piece of the internship was important to me as well because I wanted to find ways to provide assistance to a town that may be looking for a fresh, young perspective. I also wanted to obtain a better understanding of how people viewed the food and beverage industry in the surrounding area.

**Personal Profile**

- **Professional Interests**
  - Product development
  - Quality assurance
  - Entrepreneurship

- **Personal Interests**
  - Baking
  - Project Innovation
  - Soccer

**Müller Quaker Dairy**

In 2012, PepsiCo and the Theo Muller Group created a joint venture and opened a yogurt manufacturing facility in Batavia, New York. The opening of the plant sourced 160 new jobs for the local area. MQD's mission is to provide great-tasting, convenient, and high quality dairy products to consumers.

**Responsibilities at MQD**

- **Goods Receiving**
  - Analyzed the quality of raw materials used in the product through testing of viscosity, refractometry, pH, sensory, and sieve analysis.

- **Quality Assurance Project**
  - Developed standard operating procedures for environmental testing of both the air and surface sampling.

- **Side Projects**
  - Worked with the Research and Development department to examine problems with texture and quality of new ingredients from suppliers.

**Community Highlights**

**Issue Addressed**

Lack of interest in working for food and/or beverage companies due to negative perceptions of the industry.

**How it was addressed**

I conducted interviews with local officials in the economic development sector, job development sector, and business education alliance in Batavia to learn why these negative perceptions exist among youth.

**What I learned**

In order to increase awareness of the food/beverage industry, local companies need to participate in events like the Harvest Fair at GCC to inspire and inform students about the various jobs in the industry. The next intern should work on developing a relationship between the local food industries and the coordinators for these types of events.

**Community Engagement Project**

After holding interviews with local officials in the Town of Batavia, I concluded that a lack of available resources to find jobs in the local food/beverage industry was not the main issue, rather there was a lack of interest in those particular jobs due to the negative perceptions of the food industry. To spark interest in the younger population, the next intern should reach out to local food/beverage industries to get them more involved in the career selection process for students ranging from middle school to high school. The Harvest Festival at GCC in the fall is the perfect opportunity for students to showcase the food and beverage industry in a positive light.

**Key Contacts:**

- Business Education Alliance
- Genesee Community College Representatives for the Harvest Festival

**Batavia Community Profile**

- **Population:** 15,399
  - The estimated population has been slowly declining between 2000-2014. However, it is only a slight loss of around 1,000 people in 14 years
- **Median household income:** $49,922
  - In 2013, the median age was 42.6, while 13 years ago the median age was 37.5; the age is gradually increasing
- **Enrollment in school has gradually been decreasing in the past 20 years**
  - In 2007 there was a sharp increase in unemployment from 4.6% to 7.7% by 2009. The unemployment rate then remained constant until 2012 where it recently dropped down by 1%
  - Batavia hosts one of the largest dairy manufacturing facilities in the country (Muller Quaker Dairy LLC)

**Sources:** United States Census Bureau and P-AD Cornell