

Summer Internships

A DEEPER DIVE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

FROM JUNE TO AUGUST, I spent every weekday morning thinking of different ways to greet our summer campers. The younger campers usually had higher energy levels in the morning that the older campers often did not. My days consisted of interacting with 50 children a day and preparing fun workshops and activities for them. I loved meeting the different campers and working with the camp counselors.

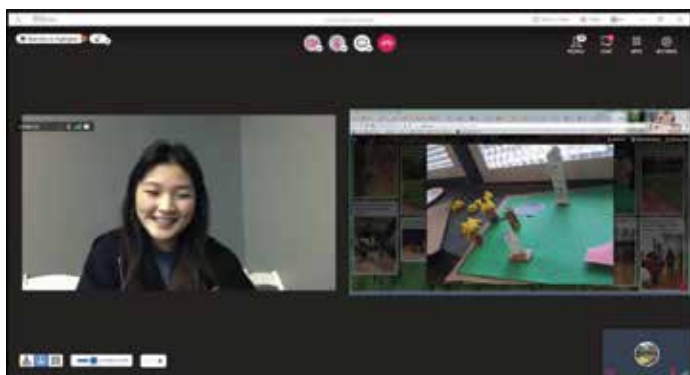
My experience in the Penn Museum Summer 2021 Internship with Penn Museum Anthropology Camp was in-person, making it a much more interactive experience than it was for my fellow interns. This also meant I was able to explore the Museum and its new exhibits much more in depth while discussing artifacts and histories with a variety of ages. The fifteen other interns and I worked in different departments ranging from Development to Learning and Public Engagement. We were led by Stephanie Mach, our Academic Engagement Coordinator. Throughout the summer, we learned about a variety of



Linda Lo with summer campers in the *Native American Voices* Gallery.

topics from Stephanie, our respective departments, and other guest speakers every week. These topics covered the origins of the Penn Museum, current events such as the MOVE bombing, and the efforts towards decolonizing museums. We discussed everything as a group and raised issues and questions around these topics.

I have been involved with the Museum prior to my 2021 summer internship as a Visitor Service's Intern (2018), a Counselor-In-Training with Penn Museum Anthropology Camp (2019), and, currently, a part-time Public Engagement staff member. These roles have allowed me to become more familiar and connected with Penn Museum while providing insight into what I want to do in the future. My internship during the summer of 2021 allowed me to dive deeper into the Museum's behind-the-scenes planning than in my previous roles.



Linda Lo giving her final presentation.

Our access to guidance and education through a variety of museum professionals cultivated a deeper understanding of the roles that museums play in communities. As interns, we participated in conversations directly impacting the Museum through our departments' responsibilities and roles, while also engaging in the implementation of ideas. It was an amazing experience to participate as idea transformed from a simple brainstorm into reality. I appreciate the experiences I have gained as it deepened my understanding of the interconnectedness of all the Museum's departments and effort of teamwork that is not always visible. The care and consideration put into each department's work was shown through the passion of interns when we discussed our current projects with the group.

Although all of us have never met in person, we were all connected through our interest in the Penn Museum. This was especially shown during our internship's final presentation when we shared our experiences and summer projects. Our team leaders virtually cheering us on from their BlueJeans screen was very wholesome and added to the energy and excitement (thank you Tena, Allie, Joelle!). Despite our mostly virtual summer meetings, it was amazing to be in an environment where we could share common interests and passions with each other.

Linda Lo is a sophomore at Temple University studying Criminal Justice and History. She still works part-time in the Learning and Public Engagement Department and plans to return to Penn Museum Anthropology Camp for the 2022 season.

Penn Museum Summer Internship Program

The Penn Museum Summer Internship Program gives college students the opportunity to learn by doing in their field of interest. Diverse populations are severely underrepresented in professional museum roles, and paid internships create access—offering the direct experience needed to launch meaningful careers.

Our first all-paid Summer Internship Program aimed to do just that. More than 275 students competed for sixteen positions, which represented an 87 percent increase in paid summer internship applications over the previous year. The selected cohort included 56% people of color, and interns joined the nine-week program from not only nearby New York and Pennsylvania but also eight states—from Michigan to Texas—farther afield.

Mentored by Museum staff across 13 departments and sections, interns conducted projects with real impact. These included helping to plan and promote inaugural artist-in-residence Carlos José Pérez Sámano's Spanish-language poetry workshops; analyzing data on cultural heritage preservation in sites of conflict; and filming a Digital Daily Dig about the Olympics.

