

NATIONAL OFFICER CANDIDATE

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Joys and Discomforts of Serving as a National Officer

Most national officers current and past, will tell you that the joys of office far outweigh the discomforts. It is a joy to make a positive difference in the life of an FFA member as past national officer, Christy Windham did in Texas when she spent quality time with a lonely young lady who was struggling with a personal issue. Christy said, “I had the chance to spend time with her incognito (no one knew I was a national officer) and we began a friendship...I think she did not feel as lonely while I was there. I made the difference that I could in the time that I had.”

For Angela Browning, joy was finding a lifetime mentor in Colorado state leader and past national officer manager, Scott Stump during her year of service. “Absolute joys would be relationships I built with staff and students...I have been able to maintain so many more relationships than I imagined,” said Angela.

From the hundreds of new relationships that begin during your year as a national officer, many become lifetime friendships. “Perhaps most cherished is the fellowship you gain with five other team members who are really the only people who can understand what this year is like for you,” said Dustin Clark.

For past national FFA president, Corey Flournoy, the joys were many. “I enjoyed being a face that some students may not have seen as a national officer and representing the non traditional background and urban areas. It still feels great when I run into people now and they tell me that although we never met, I inspired them. And seeing the diversity of agriculture in our country was amazing: especially to see the California coastline.”

Yet, the transition from life as an easy going college student to that of a national officer who is maintaining a rigorous schedule similar to the CEO of a company is not easy. It is trying to be away from family and friends consistently and at times, you will just run out of steam. There are even those days when your teammates confuse and frustrate you. How can you keep your batteries charged with all of your responsibilities? Knowing you are making a positive difference in the lives of members, advisors and partners helps a lot.

“Serving as a national officer has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had in my life. Yet, I never expected training to be so challenging. The staff at National FFA will do everything they can to get you ready before you begin traveling as an officer. No matter how much time you spend training, you never feel prepared when you first go out. About half way through my year, I finally started to feel 100 percent confident on my abilities. As an officer, you tend to think that people have very high expectations of you (which most do), and therefore set the bar very high for yourself. Remember why you ran for office in the first place and your mission as an officer; it's your duty to support the mission of the organization.” said Javier Moreno.

Yes, it's true you will spend more than two months in training and preparation for your year. “The biggest discomfort was all of the time that it took training at national FFA. In the moment it was painful, I realize that a lot of it was needed. It was ten weeks before we even saw an FFA member and it was hard to feel as though we were contributing because we were not with members. Fatigue was a discomfort. Missing things back home including our family's county stock show and Father's day or flying back to the FFA center on Easter Sunday were all sacrifices that I was more than happy to make. Final discomfort was the pressures of national FFA staff and state staff pulling me in the opposite direction. If you try to please everyone, you are going to severely displease yourself and become ineffective and live with all of regret,” said Dustin Clark.

So, do you believe that the joys outweigh the discomforts? Contact a past national officer in your area and learn more about what national officer life is like first hand.



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“I knew that we would be extremely busy and time would be valuable but had no idea as to what extent that would be true. During December training, we were up at 6:00 a.m. and didn’t go to bed until nearly midnight every night and that was just doing national officer work. Personal time to answer emails or call home was very little. This was a difficult adjustment because you couldn’t keep in touch with everyone and only could call a few people every now and then. Most friends back home can’t understand this and wondered why I never called. It was also hard to make the adjustment from college life where you have a lot of freedom. Learning how to manage your time early is extremely valuable. Knowing how to make the most of every moment in the day is what is necessary for you to be the most successful national officer that you can be. This seems like a small thing to me now but at the time it was a surprise and difficult,” said Stuart Joy.

“...Very few people get the chance to represent an industry as amazing agriculture. Hands down it was the coolest experience that I have ever had,” said Emily Horton.

“One joy is knowing that you have impacted somebody’s life. Another joy is for the fellowship with my teammates...we still have an annual reunion every year. There’s a selfish aspect of personal growth that goes with being a national officer,” said Dustin Clark.

