

Office of Sustainability Intern Program

By Maryah Lauer

Do you find yourself turning off lights in every empty classroom you pass? Do you wish you could help reduce Colorado Springs hunger by providing those in need with food that otherwise would have been disposed of? Do you tend to pick up litter along walks all while thinking of our watershed? How about focusing your passion and interest with an internship with the Office of Sustainability?

We have all heard the benefits an internship can provide, especially as you are entering the job market for the first time. Internships can be great resume boosters, provide networking opportunities, and can give you a taste of the career you want to pursue. The Office of Sustainability is excited to launch a new intern program, giving students a chance to gain some valuable work experience and partner with our community organizations.

Interns will have the opportunity to choose the projects they work on and pursue something they are passionate about. Projects could include working on a Green Action Fund proposal to bring more sustainable infrastructure and options to campus, helping plan Office of Sustainability events like Ditch the Dumpster and Donate – where residential students donate items instead of throwing them away, or working with a community organization like the Colorado Springs Food Rescue, whose mission is to rescue food from restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries that otherwise would have been disposed of and provide meals to hungry Colorado Springs residents. Interns must commit to working with the office for at least 30 hours throughout one semester, and help foster sustainability on campus and in the community.

In addition to becoming an office intern, there are also opportunities to earn course credit as an academic intern. Through the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (http://www.uccs.edu/geography/undergraduate_students/internships.html), students can intern with the Office of Sustainability and choose from a range of course credits. Sarah Nichols was an academic intern for Fall 2015, and worked on compiling information, designing a format, and creating a budget for the informational signage in the Sustainability Demonstration House. According to Sarah, "The signs contain information about sustainable technologies or behaviors and are meant to be used as a teaching tool to help make people aware of things they can implement in their own home that are sustainable in nature." The signs are an integral part of the goal of the Sustainability Demonstration House to better reach our campus and Colorado Springs community in a visual, hands-on way to encourage sustainable changes within their own homes. Sarah made sure that "each sign has an action, intent and cost benefit analysis to show people why these items are important, what makes them important and how much they will cost and save a patron." With her eye-catching design and easy-to-follow descriptions of the features, many visitors have complemented her work. During her time as an intern, Sarah also learned the importance of behavior change for sustainability to have a strong impact and uses it as a reminder when trying to bring about change.

If you are interested in joining the green team and becoming an intern with the Office of Sustainability, contact gogreen@uccs.edu to learn more. Applications for summer internships will open in May, so don't miss this amazing opportunity!