Environmental and Sustainability Studies

Spring 2016 Newsletter

Student Groups

ENVS tries to provide opportunities for students to be involved on campus, gain valuable experiences, and make strong connections with their peers in their time here at the U. These student groups provide an outlet for such opportunities:

Edible Campus Gardens
The Edible Campus Gardens is a living, learning, outdoor laboratory where students and community members are encouraged to come and learn basic gardening skills, healthy nutrition, community, and environmental justice. There are two gardens, the Pioneer Garden and the Sill Garden, and a greenhouse. The ECG hosts weekly sessions throughout the growing season and educational workshops during the off season. To learn more or to get on the email list to receive weekly memos about upcoming work sessions and events, email uofacampusgardens@gmail.com.

SCIF Grants
The Sustainable Campus Initiative Fund, or SCIF, is a grant program that enables students to contribute their vision of sustainability to the University of Utah community. Students are invited to submit proposals for projects that address an issue related to sustainability, and accepted proposals are implemented on campus. Here are a few exciting ways in which students have employed SCIF grants to improve our campus community:

Air Filter Mask
Large Grant: $1,000
Warren Beecroft is a senior graduating this Spring semester (2016) with a Bachelors of Science in Environmental and Sustainability Studies program, Geography, and Design. Inspired by the air pollution in Salt Lake City, he has become a core member of the University Student Clean Air Network (USCAN) and has followed through with his air Filter Bike Mask by being funded over $1,000 by SCIF. He feels that this project is important not only to raise awareness to Salt Lake’s air pollution problem, but also it finds it important to help protect people from it as they are outside during the high risk pollution days.

Edible Campus Gardens Hoop House
Large Grant: $12,000
The Parvaz High Tunnel Hoop House SCIF project was granted to the Edible Campus Gardens and will be installed at the Pioneer Garden by the Summer semester. It will be used for starting seeds, season extension, and the Organic Gardening class that is held in the fall semester. Fashioned with roll up sides to facilitate air flow in the summer months, housing three 20ft long and 2ft wide beds, this project will allow the Edible Campus Gardens to make an even larger impact on sustainability at the U.

OSH Water Sustainability
Large Grant: $80,000
Beginning this summer the OSH building, where ENVS is housed, will be replaced and will be partially funded by student fees. In attempt to increase the sustainability of this new building as well as to set a precedent for student involvement in all new buildings on campus, this SCIF grant will implement a project focused on water sustainability. As the building is still in the planning phase, the opportunities for what this grant can become are in progress as well. By working closely with the architects, committees, facilities, and others involved in the new OSH project, this SCIF grant will be designed to best fit the needs of the building as well as the university, continuously pushing to further reduce environmental impact.

Career Panel
The Sustainability Leadership Committee hosted the first Annual ENVS Career Panel this April. This event introduced students to professionals from a range of environmentally focused fields and provided students with great career advice. This year’s panel guests were Kari Lundeen (Environmental Scientist from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality), Nell Larson (Executive Director at Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter), Betsy Byrne [Lead Planner at EnvisionUtah.org], Cathy Kahlow, (Salt Lake District Ranger from the US Forest Service), and Andrea Nelson, (Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy).

The panelists shared the path that led them to their career, including their education and other relevant employment positions. They gave helpful insider recommendations for students wanting to prep for similar positions, what they wish they would have known before diving into their career, and how their position allows them to balance work life with personal life. The panel opened up for students to ask questions, discover internship opportunities, and network.

There was a great turnout of students who found the event to be eye-opening and helpful. We look forward to hosting next year’s panel!

Alumni Spotlight
Tyler Higginson
Outreach Coordinator, 3Degrees
As a freshman, Tyler Higginson was unsure of his pursuit of study and future career paths. Upon completing his general education he took a leap of faith in his freshman through junior year on a degree in business and finance. Influenced primarily by his job at the time, Tyler originally intended this expedition to help him to pay for school, but soon realized this was a de-facto career path.

Quickly understanding this job was not a representation of his life goals he enrolled in the ENVS program. Not long after Tyler began to engage in the ENVS program with greater depth, stepping outside the bounds of a conventional university student and excelling. Economic depression and social disorder, the dissonance of climate change opened Tyler’s mind to something more than affluent domination.

“Replacing my ambivalence with a desire to make a difference was the most important thing that the ENVS program could have provided me with. It helped me gain the motivation to learn and develop skills that would be helpful both academically and professionally.”

In the spring of 2015 the eager young graduate was ready for anything. Taking a position as an Outreach Coordinator for 3Degrees, a renewable energy company, he worked to advance renewable energy generation in Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. Here, Tyler was given the opportunity to find a way to make the impact he so desired.

Currently Tyler is preparing to enter the joint MBA/MA program in International Policy and Development at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey in June. He hopes to be working on policies and social ventures that advance sustainable development, including increased utilization of renewable energy. While waiting to begin his graduate studies, Tyler has been working, volunteering at the YMCA, International Rescue Committee, & Save Our Canyons, as well as serving on the ENVS Advancement and Alumni Board. Tyler has been a successful and adamant role model to current students in the program, guiding them to discover their passion just as he did.

If you would like to share your story as an alumni of the ENVS Program contact us at envs@envis.utah.edu.

EnviroClub
EnviroClub is a sustainability focused student group dedicated to connecting students with other like-minded individuals who are interested in environmental issues and exploring the outdoors. By working with organizations in the community and other student groups, EnviroClub strives to provide students with opportunities for involvement, networking, and fun!

Advancement Board
The Environmental and Sustainability Studies Advancement Board provides an opportunity for alumni and supporters to become better acquainted with the Program’s activities and accomplishments and to use their influence and resources to promote its ongoing success. The members of the Board serve as advocates for the Program and assist the Director and Associate Director in securing support for its educational activities, outreach to the community, faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity. For more information, contact Brandon Lee at brandonleec@anacostacounseling.com.

Upcoming Events

Fall Semester

ENVS Lecture Series
An opportunity to meet and learn about environmentally focused graduate programs from around the country.

October

Fall Harvest Soiree
Come in costume to the campus gardens for the harvest and a delicious tasting of this years yield.

November

Wild and Scenic Film Festival
Support ENVS scholarships by attending the Wild and Scenic Film Fest. An eclectic collection of films focused on sustainability and the outdoors.

Contributors
This issue of the ENVS Newsletter was put together by the ENVS Student Leadership Committee of the Spring 2016 Semester, with help from those in the program’s office.