

UT Sustainability Internship Program

Fall 2019 Guide



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OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY



Introduction

The **Sustainability Internship Program** provides University of Tennessee, Knoxville students with the opportunity to create and execute a project through in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability. Student interns benefit from a hands-on experience in an environmental organization and receive professional development training in these unpaid positions. Students from ALL majors and backgrounds are encouraged to apply, as the term “sustainability” applies to a vast expanse of topics.

The **Sustainability Internship Program** officially launched in Spring 2019 with the mission to better educate University of Tennessee, Knoxville students on sustainability topics such as waste diversion, carbon footprint minimization, energy conservation, and environmental education. This guide describes how the program is currently structured, gives intern expectations, provides a working timeline for Fall 2019, and defines example projects.

Program Structure

Applications & Interviews

The application for the Sustainability Internship Program asks students to attach their resume and answer a series of questions relating to what kind of project or sustainability interests they want to pursue with the Office of Sustainability. Applicants are not required to submit a project proposal, but they are asked to give examples of sustainability on campus and showcase their passion and desire to be a part of the program. Projects can be oriented in research or community engagement. Projects can be done individually or in small groups, but students must apply and interview separately.

As applications come in, the Internship Advisor will meet with prospective student interns to discuss their sustainability interests and project ideas. The Internship Advisor and the Office of Sustainability Manager, Jay Price, will select which applicants will participate in the year’s program. Student interns will be responsible for accepting the position and committing to the required meetings and hours.

Internship Expectations and Commitments

1. Program Orientation

This will be a half-day workshop orientation that will allow students to get to know their fellow interns, learn more about program expectations, and develop project goals and timelines. Orientation will take place on a Saturday or Sunday.

2. Monthly Group Meetings

These meetings will take place on a day and time that works best for the intern group. During these meetings, students will discuss their projects with each other and participate in various workshops or professional development events.

3. Bi-Weekly One-on-Ones

Interns will set bi-weekly meetings with the Internship Advisor to discuss progress and setbacks of their projects. These meetings will be set on an individual basis. The Internship Advisor will also be available on an as needed basis for hands-on project assistance.

4. End of Semester or Year Deliverable

Interns are expected to produce a project deliverable by the end of the semester or school year. Type of deliverable will be determined during the initial stage of project planning and timelining.

5. Voluntary Service or Social Activities

Students will be able to participate in service or social activities with the other interns as a way to give back to the community and get to know one another better. These activities will not be required.

Academic Credit

If a student intern wishes to receive academic credit for their internship, then they must notify the Internship Advisor before their internship begins. This gives the student intern time to make sure that their research project meets course or department requirements. For example, on page 8 of this guide, the description for the Compost Intern already reflect the requirements of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Department of Plant Sciences. Project examples are given on pages 8-11.

Office of Sustainability Programs & Initiatives

Student interns can choose to create their project around an existing Office of Sustainability program or develop a new project. Interns do not have to restrict their project to an existing Office of Sustainability program, but can use them as a guide to what initiatives are already happening on campus. Some of the Office of Sustainability programs and initiatives and programs are defined below.

My Tiny Trash

My Tiny Trash is a waste reduction initiative implemented within offices on the UTK campus in efforts to Make Orange Green. In the Facilities Services Complex, My Tiny Trash has contributed to a 66% recycling rate compared to a campus average of approximately 33%.

The Mug Project

The Mug Project is a campus-wide initiative to eliminate single-use containers and bottles and save natural resources. UT students, faculty, and staff can bring their own mug of twenty-four ounces or less and receive \$1.19 drip coffee and fountain beverages, a savings of forty cents or more. The program also offers 15% off specialty coffee beverages. More than 90 percent of Volunteer Dining locations are participating, including Starbucks, Einstein's, Quiznos, and Subway.

The Grow Lab

The Grow Lab is a space that provides UT students with an outdoor laboratory, a place to participate in experiential and service learning and to provide fresh produce to the on-campus food pantry. The Grow Lab grew out of many years of student gardening initiatives, faculty desire to have more outdoor teaching opportunities, and the support of Facilities Services. It is an interdisciplinary initiative that will be used by multiple campus departments and offices, as well as community organizations. The Departments of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Philosophy, Plant Sciences, and Nutrition plan to use the garden in courses, research, and to fulfill service-learning hours. UT Extension is involved in vegetable trial research that will ultimately benefit Tennesseans across the state, and the UT Culinary Institute plans to use produce in cookery classes.

POWER Challenge

The POWER (Programs of Water, Energy, and Recycling) Challenge is a month-long competition that pits UT residence halls against each other in a battle to see which hall is the greenest. A variety of different actions will award points. Throughout the month prizes will be awarded to RAs and residents with cool programs, awesome bulletin boards, and dedication to making their floor go green. At the end of October, the residence hall with the most points wins the POWER Challenge and a prize for all residents to use throughout the year.

RecycleMania

RecycleMania is an annual intercollegiate recycling competition held between nearly 200 colleges and universities. The goal of RecycleMania is to educate faculty, staff, and students about waste reduction. Schools are ranked against each other based on our recycling, composting, and landfill data in addition to the number of people who get involved with programs. Every year, as a part of Recyclemania, the Office of Sustainability hosts a residence hall competition based on a point system. Points are based on the amount a Residence Hall recycles (by weight) and by participation.

Zero Waste Game Days

The Office of Sustainability partners with UT Athletics, Aramark, UT's Office of Sustainability, and Eastman's Good Sports Always Recycle program to make game days at Neyland Zero Waste. Our goal? Keep at least 90% of waste produced at home sporting events out of the landfill through recycling, composting, and food donations.

Timeline:

Below, is a working timeline for internships taking place in the Fall 2019 semester. Schedule is subject to change.

Fall 2019

Classes Begin

Wednesday, August 21st

Labor Day

Monday, September 2nd

Deadline to register for Sustainability Internship Program

Thursday, September 6th

Sustainability Internship Program Orientation

Week of September 16th

Intern Group Meeting #1

Week of October 7th

Fall Break

Thursday - Friday, October 17th - 18th

Intern Group Meeting #2

Week of October 28th

Intern Group Meeting #3

Week of November 11th

Thanksgiving Holiday

Thursday - Friday, November 28th - 29th

Sustainability Project Presentations

*If you are continuing your project into Spring 2020, then you will not be presenting.

Week of December 2nd

Classes End

Wednesday, December 4th

Project Examples:

Sustainability Internship Program Compost Intern

Internship Length: Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 (Start & End Date TBD)

Internship Description: Interns will research best practices and common problems associated with large-scale compost facilities. They will then use this research to evaluate the University of Tennessee Compost Facility and detail plans to improve it.

Research and testing areas should include: C:N ratios (browns to greens), aeration, turning, and temperature and moisture requirements. Evaluation of finished product, NPK values, salt and mineral content, germination and plant development tests, and record keeping. Procedure compliance following established policies for state, local and OMRI recommended best practices. Pursue funding opportunities available for campus composting facilities. The intern, however, has the flexibility to propose and execute their own research project.

Opportunities and Benefits of the Program: Learn about recycling and sustainability. Gain project management experience in creating and carrying out projects. Work collaboratively with others on educating and advocating for positive campus change. Develop professional management, communication, and leadership skills. Develop relationships with recycling/sustainability leaders on and off campus. Learn about careers in sustainability. Make a real impact on UT's campus! (Also, interns can receive academic credit for their internship! If interested in this, please reach out as soon as possible!)

Qualifications: Able to complete a minimum of 300 hours of work. Eager to learn about and advocate for recycling, conservation, and sustainability; creative and enthusiastic. Effective written and oral communication skills. Can work well independently as well as collaboratively. Organized, self-motivated, and accountable for work.

While this is an **unpaid internship, students can request funding for their summer internships from UT's Center for Career Development:

<https://career.utk.edu/students/gain-experience/apply-to-fund-your-impact-internship/>

Sustainability Internship Program

Residence Hall Recycling Intern

Internship Length: Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 (Start & End Date TBD)

Internship Description: There are many group project opportunities here! Interns could research the best methods for getting residence halls to recycle by creating an official move-out program for residence halls. Interns could even attempt to expand move-out to non-UT affiliated apartments. However, the interns have the flexibility to propose and execute their own community engagement project or research project.

Opportunities and Benefits of the Program: Learn about recycling and sustainability. Gain project management experience in creating and carrying out a project. Work collaboratively with others on educating and advocating for positive campus change. Develop professional management, communication, and leadership skills. Develop relationships with recycling/sustainability leaders on and off campus. Learn about careers in sustainability. Make a real impact on UT's campus! (Also, interns can receive academic credit for their internship! If interested in this, please reach out as soon as possible!)

Qualifications: Able to complete a minimum of 6-8 hours of work a week. Eager to learn about and advocate for recycling, conservation, and sustainability; creative and enthusiastic. Effective written and oral communication skills. Can work well independently as well as collaboratively. Organized, self-motivated, and accountable for work.

Sustainability Internship Program

Sorority & Fraternity Recycling Intern

Internship Length: Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 (Start & End Date TBD)

Internship Description: There are many group project opportunities here! While interns have the flexibility to propose and execute their own community engagement project or research project, they could propose a plan to get all the chefs in sorority village to use the compost bins regularly. A “Weigh the Waste” competition could also be an effective way of getting sorority village or fraternity park to compost, and research could be gathered on what methods of getting sororities/fraternities to compost were the most successful.

Opportunities and Benefits of the Program: Learn about recycling and sustainability. Gain project management experience in creating and carrying out a project. Work collaboratively with others on educating and advocating for positive campus change. Develop professional management, communication, and leadership skills. Develop relationships with recycling/sustainability leaders on and off campus. Learn about careers in sustainability. Make a real impact on UT’s campus! (Also, interns can receive academic credit for their internship! If interested in this, please reach out as soon as possible!)

Qualifications: Able to complete a minimum of 6-8 hours of work a week. Eager to learn about and advocate for recycling, conservation, and sustainability; creative and enthusiastic. Effective written and oral communication skills. Can work well independently as well as collaboratively. Organized, self-motivated, and accountable for work.

Sustainability Internship Program

The Mug Project Intern

Internship Length: Fall 2019 and/or Spring 2020 (Start & End Date TBD)

Internship Description: There are many group project opportunities here! While interns have the flexibility to propose and execute their own community engagement project or research project, they could research how effective our messaging is in getting people to participate in The Mug Project. For example, the intern could survey and/or observe people that go to Starbucks in Hodges Library, or the intern could host a competition between establishments (like residence halls) to get the word out and reduce single-use cups.

Other research project opportunities: What strategies are most effective to get people to bring cups? What beliefs do people hold about paper cups (do they think they are recyclable?) Can students accurately estimate how many cups UT's campus uses per day? Do they have any conception about the environmental impact of this usage? Overall, there are a lot of interesting research questions that could be answered.

Opportunities and Benefits of the Program: Learn about recycling and sustainability. Gain project management experience in creating and carrying out a project. Work collaboratively with others on educating and advocating for positive campus change. Develop professional management, communication, and leadership skills. Develop relationships with recycling/sustainability leaders on and off campus. Learn about careers in sustainability. Make a real impact on UT's campus! (Also, interns can receive academic credit for their internship! If interested in this, please reach out as soon as possible!)

Qualifications: Able to complete a minimum of 6-8 hours of work a week. Eager to learn about and advocate for recycling, conservation, and sustainability; creative and enthusiastic. Effective written and oral communication skills. Can work well independently as well as collaboratively. Organized, self-motivated, and accountable for work.