

## Edu002 Discussion with Education and Resilience Teams

February 11, 2021

- Edu002 recommendation submitted April 2020
  - [See recommendation here](#)
  - Gillen Wood is the chair of this team and Director of Education and Outreach for iSEE
- Wanted input from Resilience team before taking action
- Since recommendation was submitted, ELP (Environmental Leadership Program) has started through iSEE
- Happy to have Scott Tess (Urbana), Lacey Rains-Lowe (Champaign), Bob Flider (Director of Community and Government Relations), Dennis Donaldson (Savoy) involved in the conversation
- Idea is that the business collaborates with university; business pays student and student does something focused on sustainability
- iSEE has been successful in the past connecting with donors, especially like supporting programs that involve students
- *Gillen Wood*: There are bandwidth issues, since all roads seem to lead to iSEE. Eric Green is currently leading the iSEE minor (SEE Fellows Program). This internship program would require a lot of work, and iSEE would need help to realistically get this off the ground. Eric should be the one, along with his intern, to lead this.
- *Eric Green*: We started working on this in early February – a few weeks ago. Our initial step was to see if there was a model from other universities. One of the partners of Cornell responded to us regarding their partnership with the university.
  - One key questions: What qualifies as a sustainability internship?
- *Lacey Rains-Lowe*: At Clemson University, university and business shared the cost of the wage for the intern. The employer essentially had an intern for half-price, increased the number of internships that municipalities especially could offer.
  - Example: Urban planning students would have a year-long internship every Tuesday-Thursday with local government or planning firm.
  - Fundamental goal to increase the number of internships. Great opportunity for students.
  - With City of Champaign, there are two planning interns, engineering and Neighborhood Services has some
  - Very dependent on funding and bandwidth – how much time do permit staff have to manage the intern, is there space for the intern?
  - Budget can be an impediment
  - For Planning Dept, looking for someone that has a planning background
  - Especially with the pandemic, Champaign has not been filling full-time positions. Interns are needed but it becomes tenuous to be able to plan/commit one or two years out.
- *Ximing Cai*: Maybe some cities could fully fund interns – it could be a good idea to do half city – half university funding. If iSEE could find a donor, perhaps we could supplement ½ university funding. Some students, though, may just want the experience and not necessarily require funding.

- *Lacey*: Speaking for Champaign, there is an HR policy that only paid internships are offered. Could work with a student on a specific project but they wouldn't necessarily be hired by the city.
- *Natalie Bosecker*: Many corporations are not accepting unpaid interns due to liability. How many students are we expecting? Both graduate students and undergraduates? There are a lot of things to consider – hypothetically you could have a great opportunity but not a great student.
- *Eric*: Focusing on the undergraduate experience. The supply of opportunities will likely be the limiting factor, and defining the qualifications of a sustainability internship.
- *Morgan White*: The iCAP 2020 objective is to establish an internship program. It doesn't have a specific number associated with the objective. We hope that once the program is established, it grows in the future.
- *Warren Lavey*: Very supportive of this proposal. IHSI – Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Internship (community academic scholars initiatives) is a similar existing program:
  - Matches students with community-based research projects for 10 weeks over summer. \$3500 stipend. This is not limited to sustainability type projects.
  - Warren is a faculty mentor, but not sure where the funding comes from.
  - Illinois – Washington D.C. program, connecting students to non-profit, community outlets, social justice, corporations in D.C.
    - Semester commitment or summer commitment with students enrolled in classes and paying tuition
  - Eric and Meredith have also supervised capstone projects where students get course credit on an unpaid basis.
  - [Greenest Region Corps](#) – recent graduates have one-year placement in metropolitan or county agencies
    - Tremendously effective program (e.g., interns develop sustainability plans, recycling programs, energy efficiency, etc.). They get funding from AmeriCorps and funding from receiving agency. There is a centralized coordinator.
  - Putting young people in agencies can be very effective.
- Various students need internships or it is required for their program. There is a lot of work that could benefit by student help. University could help connect the students with opportunities.
  - Could start collection of who offers internships
  - Handshake
- *Ximing*: We could figure out which cities/agencies/departments have internships available, could prepare this list for students and put this on the iCAP Portal and iSEE website. May not be able to depend on a donor or iSEE funding.
- *Stacy Gloss*: Important to start small with the program
  - For summer, could start brainstorming, setting up meetings with likely organizations that may be able to handle this partnership.
  - May be some negotiation and discussion to start. Could start with 4 or 5 summer opportunities as a pilot to see how interactions and relationships work to get some experience for person administering. Could then make tweaks before expanding.
  - Excited about the potential and support for the program!
- *Genevieve*: Paid internships are very nice but even non-paid internships are very valuable for students (e.g., SWATeam/iCAP teams); students appreciate opportunities to put on resumes and

job applications. Students really want these experiences and opportunities even if they are non-paid, especially during COVID times.

- Appreciate the job postings in the iSEE newsletter.
- *Sean Kennedy*: I support this. We want to be careful not to reinvent the wheel; explore programs that already exist that we could help support.
- No shortage of qualified students
- *Lacey*: AmeriCorps seems to be a parallel opportunity – perhaps different than what we want
  - AmeriCorps is 11 or 12-month commitment where students are local, live in that area, may relocate, etc.
- *Kimmy Chuang*: From student perspective, it would be great for opportunities to appear on platforms that we are familiar with (e.g., Handshake or city website, not Glassdoor/Indeed/LinkedIn)
- Eric and Clarissa taking lead on next steps
- Role of SWATeam/iCAP team is to help identify how to move the iCAP objectives forward; iWG reviews recommendations and helps identify feasibility and how recommendations fit in with existing programs
- If you have other suggestions, send to iCAP team clerk, Meredith, Morgan, Ximing, or Eric
- Resilience team will also discuss and pass along thoughts to Eric
- We are being careful to take our time and do it carefully – not urgent, important to do it right and not rush