

Developing Tomorrow's Environmental Leaders

The Environmental Internship Program

Fall 2003 | Spring 2004

THE
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CENTER



For Internships and
Academic Seminars

**A Partnership Between the Environmental Protection
Agency's Office of Air and Radiation and The Washington
Center for Internships and Academic Seminars**





Name: **Linda Zarow, Project Officer**
Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation

In 1992, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) began a partnership with The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars (TWC) to establish an internship training program focusing on environmental issues. The Environmental Internship Program (EIP) program has attracted a diverse group of students from all over the country with an array of majors, including science, political science, computer science, biology, chemistry, international relations, and many more. Most of our students are college and university juniors and seniors, although we also host graduate and post-graduate students in the College Plus One Program. Each semester, the students' GPAs average over a 3.00, and the diversity of the student population reflects the diversity of the nation. This program has enabled students to work in science-related fields, and has often helped them pursue careers in the environmental sciences after graduation.

For the past eleven years, the EIP has provided top students with trainee positions in the environment as part of a comprehensive experiential education program. EPA/OAR provides orientation, mentoring, resume writing, and many professional development workshops to the interns. The EIP students are also required to take a class in Environmental Policy. Additionally, they are offered lectures from prominent leaders in government and an opportunity to network in the nation's capital.

Fall and spring semesters are fifteen weeks and summer terms are ten weeks in duration. The students are assigned placements in all of EPA's program offices, including air and radiation, solid waste, water, small and disadvantaged business, pesticides, the Administrator's office, as well as many others.

Each student is required to work 35 hours a week in his or her assigned office. The students work on many interesting projects; for example, they interview career and political leaders inside and outside the EPA. They are also required by TWC to complete a formal portfolio, which is a representation of their professional work during the internship program.

EPA has hosted over 200 students since the inception of this program. We are proud of our work, the participants and the success of the program. To date, approximately 15 percent of the students are working within the EPA, either in the regions or headquarters, and many others have positions in environmental organizations. In the following pages, you will learn more about the amazing contributions student interns have made to the EPA during their internship programs. I encourage you to visit TWC's website to learn more about this program at www.twc.edu.

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Amanda Harrison

Fall 2003 Participant

EPA Mentor: David Sutton and Fredericka Joseph

Office: Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and the Office of Civil Rights

School: San Juan College

Career Goals: With my experience at the United States Environmental Protection Agency, I intend to further my education and receive my Bachelor of Science in Business Technology with a minor in Small Business Management by May 2005. By the summer 2004, I will be transferring to Montana State University to complete my education. After receiving my degree, I intend to start a career with a federal agency in an administrative office or with the private sector. Working for the EPA has been a great start.

Internship Project Description

During my internship with the EPA, I had the opportunity to work on the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization's (OSDBU) website review. The goal of this project was to find out if the website was up to date and could be useful to a potential entrepreneur or business owner. I also worked on preparing "Doing Business Packages" to be sent out and used by small businesses. I also attended conferences in the city and helped with running the OSDBU booth at such conferences.

During my internship, I was asked to assist the Office of Civil Rights with various assignments. My major project was to assist the Office of Civil Rights with the opening ceremony for the American Indian Heritage Month. I helped prepare the script for use by the sign language interpreters and hand delivered invitations to senior officials at the EPA. In addition, I created a spreadsheet for the Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE), a national outreach program. I also designed the membership cards for this outreach program.



Amaris Johnson

Fall 2003 Participant

EPA Mentor: Dr. Lee Hofmann

Office: Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response

School: Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Career Goals: I hope to obtain a doctoral degree in environmental health and work on international public health issues.

Internship Project Description

There are various federal agencies working on issues surrounding asbestos. My supervisor decided that it would be helpful for EPA to learn about asbestos research at other agencies, share our research, and seek ways to forge partnerships. Thus, the idea for an Interagency Asbestos Conference Call arose.

My first task in organizing this huge conference call was to contact representatives from various agencies. Eventually, I was able to coordinate the schedules of representatives from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

While preparing the agenda for the conference call, I learned a lot about current asbestos research at each of the above agencies. One of the major concerns among all of the agencies is the lack of a standard definition for asbestos. This becomes especially problematic when attempting to conduct a risk/health assessment. If there is no set standard for asbestos fiber toxicity, then the risk/health assessments will vary depending on which value is selected.

The EPA is working to increase transparency and scientific rigor of their research. This conference call furthered these goals by gaining inter-agency buy-in on EPA's asbestos research, while simultaneously obtaining the scientific expertise of other agencies. Furthermore, the Interagency Asbestos Conference Call was successful at informing the various agencies of ongoing asbestos research and providing a forum for discussion and greater collaboration.



Lacey McKenzie

Fall 2003 Participant

EPA Mentor: Julius Banks

Office: Stratospheric Protection Implementation Branch, Global Programs Division, Office of Air and Radiation

School: Oklahoma State University

Career Goals: To complete my college education and obtain a full time position within a company or agency which allows for advancement and opportunity to use my communication skills.

Internship Project Description

During my internship with the EPA, I worked with the public on issues related to ozone depleting substances, such as the importing of refrigerants like halons and R-11 and R-12, which are types of freon. I also answered any questions from the general public about federal regulations concerning refrigerants that deplete the ozone layer.

The Stratospheric Protection Implementation Branch focuses on protecting the ozone layer and specifically looking at the effect of refrigerants on the ozone layer. Several regulations have been issued under Section 608 of the Clean Air Act to govern the recycling of refrigerants in stationary systems and to end the practice of venting refrigerants to the air. The handling and recycling of refrigerants used in motor vehicle air conditioning systems is also dealt with in this program.

This work was very beneficial to me. In fact, I learned so much regarding an issue that I had no prior knowledge or experience. Working with the people at my branch, who are so dedicated to their jobs and in their research, I found a deep appreciation for the work that the EPA does. I had never realized the importance of the ozone layer until I came to work for this branch. This internship will forever help me realize my potential in anything that I may pursue as a future career. It taught me that hard work and persistence pay off, and that I can do whatever I put my mind to.



Denisse Varela Olivas

Fall 2003 Participant

EPA Mentor: Carey Fitzmaurice

Office: Office of Policy Analysis and Review, Office of Air and Radiation

School: Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM)

Career Goals: While interning at the EPA, my goals were to gain a general understanding of environmental issues and the issues that impact both the U.S. and Mexico. I wanted to learn by working with experts to witness how people not only damage the environment, but seek solutions and answers to improve the environment.

Internship Project Description

During my internship with the EPA, I worked in the Office of Air and Radiation's Office of Policy Analysis & Review designing a project to jointly meet Mexican and American goals for green incentives. In my estimation, the EPA is one of the best-organized institutions in the world for providing economic incentives that meet the cost-benefit-analysis for private industry. However, I learned there remains much work to be done with respect to collaborating with the U.S.'s neighboring countries to address the problem of air pollution.

My project focused on developing green incentives for private industries in Mexico. Agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the U.S.-Mexico Environmental Cooperation Agreement, and the U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Program, are all good examples of collaborative agreements that provided a good foundation for my project.

The initiative presented two specific incentives: ARIEL agreement -acronym in Spanish *Acceso Rápido a Industrias y Empresas Limpias* -which is a strategy for reducing bureaucratic procedures for new companies in Mexico; and DIAPIL tax deduction -*Deducción inmediata del impuesto al activo para industrias limpias*, for current industries that obtain the SEMARNAT's ¹ diploma for green industries (a Mexican federal governmental award) and that want to make an environmentally friendly investment.

At the EPA, I learned that Mexico needs to follow U.S. environmental policies more successfully than it currently does. Mexico has great potential, but it is important to increase financial resources, infrastructure, and environmental education. The incentive project I worked on is a very important way to improve Mexican private industry's environmental performance through preventive measures.

¹ Mexican Federal Environmental Authority. Acronym: Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales.



Laura Richards

Fall 2003 Participant

EPA Mentor: Melissa Anley-Mills

Office: Communications Division, Immediate Office, Office of Air and Radiation

School: The Ohio State University

Career Goals: I plan to finish my undergraduate studies with two degrees, Political Science Journalism. After graduation, I plan to return to Washington to pursue a career in media journalism with a respected publication in the D.C. area, as well as working on freelance writing for other newspapers and magazines.

Internship Project Description

As a communications intern for the U.S. EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, Immediate Office (OAR-IO) - Communications Staff, I was involved in the many different aspects of the office's responsibilities. I assisted in the review of press advisories and press releases, fact sheets, and communications strategies related to regulations and voluntary program announcements/issues. I also helped the Communications staff with the review of products including the review and analysis of conceptual, draft, and final communications products (such as web sites, brochures, reports, newsletters, fact sheets, PSAs etc.) for appropriateness of message, format, and programmatic content. I participated in briefings for the Assistant Administrator of Air and Radiation, Jeff Holmstead, daily OAR staff meetings, and weekly OAR-Regional communications teleconferences.

I also had the opportunity to run daily briefings. To prepare for this, I would research what information had been reported concerning the EPA every morning in the news and report out on topics/issues that were relevant and affect other branches of the Air and Radiation Division of the EPA. By participating in this project, I got a good feel for how agency work translates into public information. I also organized and sent out the agenda for the Weekly Regional Call, where at least one representative from every region participates. The agency really works like a team, and I feel that I was an integral part of that team.



Mayra Bilbao

Spring 2004 Participant

EPA Mentor: Khesha Jennings

Office: Office of Transportation and Air Quality, Office of Air and Radiation

School: Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua, Facultad de Ciencias Quimicas

Career Goals: I plan to return to Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua to complete my degree in Chemical Engineering with a minor in environment. My interests are in designing new products, manufacturing methods, or technologies to sustain adequate support for the future. I would like to identify the products or emissions that can cause damage or benefits to public health and the environment. I'm also interested in developing economic feasibility studies for pollution and environmental control.

Internship Project Description

The U.S. EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAQ) protects public health and the environment by controlling air pollution from motor vehicles, engines, and the fuels used to operate them, and by encouraging travel choices that minimize emissions. These "mobile sources" include cars and light trucks, large trucks and buses, non-road recreational vehicles (such as dirt bikes and snowmobiles), farm and construction equipment, lawn and garden equipment, marine engines, aircraft, and locomotives.

I was involved in assisting the Engine Programs Group and Retrofit Teams, who are responsible for issuing certificates of conformity for On Highway and Nonroad Engines and ensuring that the engines meet emission standards throughout their lifespan. I inspected vehicles to get the engine family name prior to testing by the In Use Team.

I also had the opportunity to issue testing exemptions to engine manufacturers that are testing engines, Heavy Duty on Highway, Nonroad Compression Ignition, and Nonroad Spark Ignition engines, that have to be under the standards of the Code of Federal Regulations. I created a database to track Averaging, Banking and Trading credits (AB & T) to analyze them for future use. In the future the database will be used to analyze the manufacturers' emissions credits balance.



Ryley Bjustrom

Spring 2004 Participant

EPA Mentor: Marguerite Pridgen

Office: Grants Administration Division, Office of Administration and Resource Management

School: University of Iowa

Career Goals: I plan on returning to the University of Iowa to obtain my B.B.A. in Finance and a minor in Political Science. Moreover, I plan to take the Law School Admissions Test this June, and attend law school next fall. I wish to pursue a career in the fields of law and finance.

Internship Project Description

As an intern within the Grants Administration Division (GAD) of EPA, I was involved in various activities and projects all throughout the office. First, I had the opportunity to participate in on-site reviews of EPA grant recipients, in order to ensure that these recipients are following EPA's post-award policies and regulations under Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Another responsibility that I held within GAD is completing the Weekly White House Report. All upcoming grants and awards must be reported with the appropriate State, Member of Congress, project description, and dollar amount listed in a spreadsheet. I had the opportunity to attend Senate hearings on EPA's grants management on Capitol Hill. Both hearings were extremely informative and very interesting.

There are numerous other activities that I had the opportunity to participate in throughout my internship. Most recently, I was involved in completing a scorecard for on-site reviews of EPA grant recipients. This project allowed me to understand why Congress is concerned where EPA grant money is disbursed. Upon completion of the scorecard, I really felt like I made a difference within GAD.

I also participated in GAD meetings and completed other policy assignments. In combination with the previously mentioned responsibilities, these policy assignments allowed me to grasp a better understanding of the professional world, and made me realize that I want to be a part of it.



John Bogan

Spring 2004 Participant

EPA Mentor: Julius Banks

Office: Stratospheric Programs Implementation Branch, Office of Air and Radiation

School: Utica College of Syracuse University

Career Goals: I plan to return to New York and graduate next winter with a degree in Public Administration. I will then seek employment with an organization that deals with protection of the environment on either a state or federal level.

Internship Project Description

As a Section 608 implementation program intern, I was involved in a number of different functions here at OAR-SPIB. One of my major duties was to collect and analyze the annual reports of refrigerant recyclers/reclaimers. I also produced several fact sheets on various issues dealing with everyday questions about Clean Air Act Legislation. I managed the stratospheric ozone hotline where I helped people file complaints, answered their questions, and I even helped school kids with science reports.

Another project I worked on that was very educational was a project that my office worked on in conjunction with U.S. Customs. Our two agencies worked together in an effort to crack down on illegal imports of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS). I played a large role in this project and hopefully it yields impressive results. I was also able to work on two projects involving the disposal of ODS's, both of which have been very interesting.

Finally, I worked on the introduction of a new final rule on refrigerant substitutes that my branch prepared. This project involved revamping the text on our web page and sending various notices to the public. Everyone in the office was very helpful from day one. It is nice to be part of an organization that makes you feel like part of the team.



Yuta Ogino

Spring 2004 Participant

EPA Mentor: Carl Mazza

Office: Science Advisory Board, Office of Air and Radiation

School: California State University, Fresno

Career Goals: My primary interest is to link people with policies. Working at the EPA in the Office of Air and Radiation for the Science Advisory Board, I wanted to learn about different environmental policies that are currently the most important and how they function in the government. I also wanted to enhance my research, writing, and professional skills.

Internship Project Description

As an intern in the Office of Air and Radiation, I was responsible for making and receiving phone calls on behalf of Carl Mazza. I set up meetings and schedules for the department's scientists and researchers. In addition to regular office duties, I was responsible for collecting and reading information for meetings from websites and other sources on topics such as the Clean Air Act, mercury, and formaldehyde.

U.S. manufacturers have tightly restricted their use of mercury. However, there have been no strict limits on mercury released into the atmosphere from incinerators. Mercury occurs naturally in the environment, in fossil fuels like coal, and is released into the atmosphere when those fuels are burned. When mercury particles and gases drop into rainwater, some turn into a more toxic form known as methyl mercury, which then enters the aquatic food chain. In addition, people are exposed to mercury mainly by eating fish. Currently, the EPA is trying to reduce mercury emissions from power plants by 70% by 2018.

Working for the EPA provided numerous opportunities for me to familiarize myself with serious environmental issues. EPA has regulated many chemicals to save the health of our citizens and the health of our planet.



Amibeth Sheridan

Spring 2004 Participant

EPA Mentor: Val Anoma

Office: Radiation and Indoor Air Division, Office of Air and Radiation

School: Central Connecticut State University

Career Goals: I will graduate with a B.A. in Psychology and concentration in Criminal Justice in May. I plan to return to D.C. and hopefully work at the EPA in some capacity. Eventually I would like to work in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, preferably in the Criminal Investigation Division.

Internship Project Description

As an intern for the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR), Radiation Protection Division (RPD), I was involved in multiple projects. I performed the daily news scan for relevant news articles involving radiation and the EPA, which are distributed to keep everyone in the office abreast of information circulated in the news. Every morning I would search for articles through news sources on the Internet and decipher what articles are important for the office staff to know about. I would then compile an email of all relevant articles, which were sent to members of the staff.

I also worked on a research project through the Center for Radiological Emergency Preparedness & Response. I researched the legislative history of the Homeland Security Act focusing on Title V: Emergency Preparedness and Response. We worked to define the terms of emergency response under the Homeland Security Act, in particular the Nuclear Incident Response Team (NIRT). The project will be a collaboration between the EPA and the Department of Energy that will be called on in times of emergency.

I was also called upon to do smaller projects during my time at the RPD. This mainly included performing additional research for the Center for Radiation Information. In addition, I attended a variety of meetings and seminars on a range of topics in order to better understand issues dealing with the environment and the inner workings of the EPA. My experience was very educational, and I have thoroughly enjoyed the projects.



Mary Suttie

Spring 2004 Participant

EPA Mentor: Richard Albores, Anthony Maciorowski, and Dr. Angela Nugent

Office: Science Advisory Board, Office of Air and Radiation

School: University of Massachusetts - Lowell

Career Goals: Once my experience here in Washington, D.C. is complete, I will return to the University of Massachusetts - Lowell to complete my Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Political Science. I would like to earn a Master's degree in Regional Economic and Social Development by Spring 2006. Once I have completed my education, I plan to pursue a career in community development and planning, with a focus on smart growth and sustainable development.

Internship Project Description

The responsibilities that I undertook this semester included assisting Acting Deputy Director of Management, Richard Albores, with various tasks relating to the ongoing operations of the Science Advisory Board (SAB). This has included: 1) Meeting with Designated Federal Officers (DFO's) and discussing their needs regarding compliance with Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) regulations; 2) Creating a FACA filing procedure and FACA files for the SAB; 3) Drafting various correspondence and reports; and 4) Familiarizing myself with the SAB Product Database and drafting a user's manual for management and staff to accomplish a variety of record keeping tasks.

I often found myself assisting staff with various technical issues that they faced from time to time. Manipulating data to fit individual needs throughout the office was a welcome task that I encountered on occasion. I arranged file transfers and drafted a procedural document indicating the steps that needed to be taken when putting together certain government files. That document was considered for office wide dispersal as a mandatory process to be executed when filing.

Having been allowed to freely experience the office, and to be available for the entire staff to call upon, I quickly developed a sense that I was part of the team within the SAB community. Each staff member I had the pleasure to work with had an influential role in my experience.

About the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation

The Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) develops national programs, technical policies, and regulations for controlling air pollution and radiation exposure. OAR is concerned with energy conservation and pollution prevention, indoor and outdoor air quality, industrial air pollution, pollution from vehicles and engines, radon, acid rain, stratospheric ozone depletion, and radiation protection.

About The Washington Center

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars is an independent, nonprofit educational organization founded in 1975. Its mission is to prepare college and university students for civic leadership through experiential education. In this way, The Washington Center seeks to promote future leadership for the public, private and nonprofit sectors of society. It has served more than 30,000 students from over 850 colleges and universities.

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars

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