



CAC AmeriCorps

Position Description

Academic Engagement Specialist



Dates of Service: August 5th, 2019 – June 26th, 2020

Partner: UT Recycling

Location of Service: UT Facilities Services
2040 Sutherland Avenue, Knoxville, TN, 37921

Supervisor: Jay Price, Recycling Manager

About CAC AmeriCorps:

Established in 1994, CAC AmeriCorps is a national service program that combines elements of traditional conservation practice with community action that informs our work and places it in the broader context of the region. CAC AmeriCorps members serve to improve public lands, streams and greenways, educate the public, meet immediate human needs, eliminate barriers to employment, contribute to healthier lifestyles, and build volunteer capacity to enhance the ability of our partners to get things done. We are committed to human and environmental justice in our communities through enduring acts of service.

Service Site Summary:

UT Recycling's goal is to convert the University of Tennessee, Knoxville into a Zero Waste institution by diverting 90% (or more) of all waste from the landfill through reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. In addition to waste reduction and waste diversion, UT Recycling routinely educates students, staff, and faculty about sustainable lifestyle practices. Our dynamic team of staff, students, and AmeriCorps members work to reduce waste, increase environmental practices, and engage the UT community in sustainability.

Position Summary:

The Academic Engagement Specialist serves as a liaison between academic departments and UT Recycling. They create exciting learning opportunities and oversee experiential learning internships by running the UT Recycling Research Internship Program. This position will focus on three main areas: course engagement, mentoring student interns and volunteers, and maintaining familiarity with all UT Recycling projects in order to effectively 'plug in' students to their interest area.

UT Recycling engages a large number of volunteers and shows presentations to multiple classes. Many volunteers participate once or twice in order to fulfill service hours. Other student volunteers are excited and passionate about getting involved with UT Recycling and furthering our mission. Unfortunately, existing team member positions often do not have time to create meaningful

opportunities for these students, and they end up doing menial but necessary tasks such as stickering bins, tabling, and cleaning.

The Academic Engagement Specialist takes involvement a step further by creating long-term project opportunities within UT Recycling for enthusiastic students. These projects can be internships involving the implementation of a new initiative (e.g., a food camera to reduce food waste), research projects (e.g., examining the waste-reduction efficacy of Recyclemania), or creating intentional volunteer opportunities that use students' enthusiasm and skill set to make a difference using resources found within our department. Responsibilities for the Academic Engagement Specialist can be divided between course engagement, student mentorship, and project familiarity and communication.

Course engagement:

- Develop, create, and showcase presentations about UT Recycling initiatives to classrooms
- Communicate internship and volunteer opportunities to professors and students
- Meet with professors to create experiential and service-learning opportunities and integrate them into course curriculum
- Create and expand a database of professors who are interested in working with UT Recycling
- Utilize the Office of Sustainability's sustainable course database and reach out to relevant instructors
- Suggest course projects involving UT Recycling and oversee the successful completion of these projects for professor's desired learning outcomes
- Develop reading guides for interested professors that correspond to volunteer opportunities, tours, and current events

Mentoring student interns & volunteers:

- Be the 'go-to' person when a student expresses interest in UT Recycling
- Meet with students one-on-one and in groups, discuss their academic and professional goals and provide structured opportunities for them to engage in UT Recycling projects
- Provide resources and support for successful implementation of initiatives and research
- Create volunteer 'tracks' so that students can engage in meaningful service
- Help students find other internship and job opportunities in related fields
- Provide assistance communicating their UT Recycling experience on CVs/resumes

Project familiarity & communication:

- Maintain familiarity with all UT Recycling projects and initiatives
- Work effectively with other team members to identify opportunities in their areas for student interns, volunteers, and workers
- Coordinate tours of the warehouse, compost site, recycling facilities, food donation partners, etc.
- Communicate the UT Recycling story to UT Recycling team members and beyond

Minimum Qualifications:

Education

- Bachelor's Degree in and environmental or communication field preferred

Position Requirements:

- Independent self-starter
- Strong commitment to sustainability, recycling, and waste reduction
- Comfortable making presentations to large groups (30+ people)
- Great one-on-one communication skills
- Organized and able to oversee multiple projects and individuals simultaneously
- Able to effectively convey the UT Recycling story through written and verbal communication

Member Benefits Include:

- A modest living allowance of \$14,000, or, \$595.74 bi-weekly (pre-tax), paid over 47 weeks.
- Education Award of \$6,095 that can be applied to student loans and/or future education expenses.
- Health insurance is available for members who are not already covered independently or by a parent.
- Worker's Compensation
- Child Care Reimbursement
- May be eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In-house SNAP benefits specialist available to provide assistance in determining eligibility.
- May be eligible for utility bill assistance. In house specialists available to provide assistance with determining eligibility.
- Staff assistance with identifying housing. Housing, inclusive of utilities, is generally between \$300-\$450 in a share house/apartment scenario.
- Professional development and networking opportunities.

Equity and Inclusion:

The Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will take action to ensure that employees are treated equally without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, cultural or religious convictions. CAC AmeriCorps provides reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process.

