**Strengthening Sustainable Systems 2017/2018**

RCC Sustainability Minor and IDEASS Program Outreach

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RCC Sustainable Systems Programs/Provost Sustainability Internship

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**Strengthening Sustainable Systems Abstract:** *250* *words, maximum*

Outreach is a crucial component of helping fairly new and small programs gain traction within the university. Through my Provost Sustainability Internship position I have attempted to increase visibility and measure the efficacy of these programs. The IDEASS program and Sustainability Minor only attract attention from a small niche of faculty and students when, in fact, it is necessary for them to be highly interdisciplinary in order for them to succeed. Through avenues such as newsletters, tabling, project analysis, and focus groups for Sustainability minor students, I will learn about student perspectives of the programs and invite interested students into these programs even if they have never heard of them.

My goal by the end of the year is for most departments on campus to have an interaction with Rachel Carson Sustainable Systems Programs. I want my project to have an impact on students both within and outside of the minor by increased campus-wide visibility of the minor and by increasing the amount of input that students have in the minor. Similarly, with IDEASS, the success of my recruitment and outreach efforts can be measured by an increased interest from students and therefore more successful projects for students who have been participating in them for an extended amount of time. Ultimately, my project will assist the curriculum of the IDEASS program and projects as well as the students involved.

**3. Introduction: Problem Definition, Context & Background:** *200-400 words maximum*

At UCSC, interdisciplinary projects face institutional challenges. Hands on Sustainability Projects in higher education institutions are not standardized or repeatable and they struggle to gain traction. My project will increase visibility for the programs and student projects of the Sustainability Studies Minor and IDEASS Programs which will help maintain experiential learning in interdisciplinary sciences by helping them gain access to faculty, students, spaces and university support.

Issues of climate and environment will affect every profession and person in the very near future. For this reason, communication between disciplines is necessary to think through and therefore address these wicked problems. Part of my job is to appeal this area of study to all disciplines and departments. Many might doubt the fact that they have a personal stake in sustainability. I have tried to make this curriculum accessible to anyone no matter their field of study/department involvement through outreach and increased visibility.

Because the Sustainability Minor is fairly new and the IDEASS Program has a high turnover rate of involvement, evaluation, documentation, and archiving is an important portion of strengthening these programs. By keeping track of the progress of these projects and sharing it with the sustainability community, the positive effects of the program on students will be measurable.

<https://rachelcarson.ucsc.edu/academics/Minor/Index.html>

<https://sustainability.ucsc.edu/get-involved/jobs-internships/ideass/index.html>

<https://us17.admin.mailchimp.com/templates/>

**4. Project Description:** *350-700 words*

My goal this year was to spread awareness about the minor and IDEASS program campus-wide to staff, faculty and students. I want to build the programs up as a radical and unconventional way to provide students with hands-on experiences, as well as provide students with the resources and information to expand on their ideas. I have done this by developing and maintaining an Environment and Sustainability Newsletter that shares information of student projects and events. I will attempt to create awareness of the minor through maintaining an online and physical presence through attendance, media, calendar and website. Through interviews and auditing of student projects, I will be able to understand, document, and measure the efficacy of programs and successes of the programs with students.

Recruitment, documentation, and evaluation were the largest components of my internship. These were the tactics I used to address the issues of lack of visibility of Rachel Carson Sustainable Systems programs. Making student project progress updates accessible to the larger Sustainability community on and off campus is crucial to strengthening these projects.

My project operated through outreach methods such as developing a Rachel Carson College Sustainability Newsletter. This newsletter was sent out at least twice a month to support sustainable programs such as events also found in Humanities, El Chicanx, and Common Ground. I also sent out sustainable projects that could be supported on giving day. The newsletter also functioned as a way to spread awareness of IDEASS Project updates and info sessions to recruit more students. The emails that I collected during class reps and tabling were subscribed to the newsletter to keep them involved and interested. The Sustainability Minor was also supported by the newsletter by spreading visibility of events to sustainability students. The newsletter also spread information on focus groups that I held. The focus groups gave me the opportunity to have an open discussion with students in the minor in order to evaluate it.

More outreach methods included class reps and tabling. Giving presentations to large lecture halls was a personal skill that I developed. I tried to make the IDEASS projects appealing to many areas of study, anywhere from math to chemistry, physics, politics, environmental studies, engineering, or legal studies. This required a broad understanding of the projects and why they might enhance the learning experience of someone in any one of these fields.

Moving forward, I will increase reliable information and visibility of these programs by updating the IDEASS Website and Learning Outcomes for courses on the website. I need to familiarize myself with the WMBC skills in order to do this.

**5. Project Timeline:**

I have included the highlight of each month of my internship or time when I felt most productive

* Sept 2017: On the 18th and the 26th I gained some valuable tabling experience at OPERS and the Transfer student orientation. I would use these skills for the rest of the year.
* Oct 2017: I felt somewhat stagnant until my middle of the quarter check in with Ronnie and Shauna on the 31st. This helped me feel more supported in my internship, gave me more of a direction and guaranteed that I would meet with Ronnie at least once a week.
* Nov 2017:This was the month where I first started getting a lot accomplished. I began to get the newsletter going, make flyering materials and become more solidified in my position in this internship through meetings and my project clearinghouse assignment.
* Dec 2017: This month I worked a lot on informational session planning and on recruitment of new students onto the newsletter.
* Jan 2018: Inter-org was probably the highlight of this month because I made many valuable connections that I could use as resources in the future.
* Feb 2018: February was filled with more outreach through a newsletter, kzsc, and a giving day newsletter. I felt that I benefited IDEASS and the wider sustainability community by discussing the programs this month.
* Mar 2018: Tabling in the quarry allowed me to reach students who aren’t necessarily directly involved with the sustainability community and I felt that I was able to share a lot about the minor and IDEASS with new minds and faces.
* Apr 2018: I continued this month with familiarizing myself with the IDEASS Projects in preparation for tabling events, the newsletter and the Earth Week Symposium.
* May 2018: Many class reps are planned for this month.

**6. Project Stakeholders, Student & Mentor Roles:** *200-400 words*

Direct stakeholders were those directing and facilitating the programs such as faculty members:

* Ronnie Lipschutz, Provost of RCC and director of the Sustainability Minor: [rlipsch@ucsc.edu](mailto:rlipsch@ucsc.edu)
* Tamara Ball, Engineering dept. and teacher of IDEASS Projects: [tball@ucsc.edu](mailto:tball@ucsc.edu)
* Tela Favor, Engineering dept. and instructor of S-Labs: [tfav@ucsc.edu](mailto:tfav@ucsc.edu)
* Kevin Bell, Teacher for IDEASS and CRSN courses: [kbell@ucsc.edu](mailto:kbell@ucsc.edu)
* Susan Watrose, Instructor of CRSN/SSM courses: [swatrose@ucsc.edu](mailto:swatrose@ucsc.edu)

I reached out to additional faculty and staff in order to get the word out about the programs:

* Asako: Ronnie’s assistant and RCC staff
* Barbara Laurence: RCC Offices (contacted to use rooms and RCC advising office printer)
* Chris Krohn: contacted to keep line of contact with ENVS internship office
* Tamra Schmidt: Head of film Dept
* David Guerra: Head of Philosophy Dept

Additional stakeholders that were impacted by my work:

* RCC students class of 2021
* Students interested/already involved in IDEASS or the Sustainability Minor
* General campus population and Sustainability community

All of these individuals had separate roles in the progress of my project. My mentors provided guidance, advice and direction. The program faculty is crucial in strengthening the programs and in helping me spread the word about them. Faculty within other programs also assisted in the interdisciplinary connection of these programs.

**7. Measurable Results** *200-400 words*

I measured results through the quantity and quality of outreach that my tactics achieved. For example, a sign that my class presentations about the IDEASS programs were successful is the amount of students that sign up to obtain more information. Many presentations that I made in large lecture halls such as Classroom Unit 2 or the Earth Marine Lecture halls often allotted at least 35-40 sign-ups. I felt that I made very meaningful connections with students whenever I tabled which is an example of a qualitative deliverable.

The newsletter provided a tangible way of strengthening the programs and sustainability events within the community. I could quantitate achievement with the newsletter through Mailchimp’s services. They have information available on how many people opened my emails and how many people clicked on links I provided in the emails. The fact that I created this avenue of outreach for the programs and actively got more people to sign up for it throughout the year is an accomplishment within itself.

In order to turn these accomplishments in to tangible deliverables to improve these programs in the future, I have met with the future provost and person in charge of these programs. In light of there being no PSI program next year, but there still needing to be someone to help with outreach next year, I have also met with a graduate student, Dominique, who will be helping with various tasks that were under my jurisdiction this year. Hopefully they will learn from the work I have done in order for there to be consistency. I hope that they don’t see the need to reinvent the wheel.

**8. References:** (3-5 sources)

<https://projectclearinghouse.ucsc.edu/my-projects>

<https://sustainability.ucsc.edu/get-involved/jobs-internships/ideass/index.html>

<https://sustainability.ucsc.edu/get-involved/student-projects/psi/index.html>

<https://rachelcarson.ucsc.edu/academics/Minor/Index.html>

<https://us17.admin.mailchimp.com/templates/>

**9. Appendices:**

Mailchimp newsletters from this year:

<https://us17.admin.mailchimp.com/templates/>



