**DENIN Environmental Scholars Internships**

Dates of internship: November 1, 2019 – May 1, 2020

Location: Townsend Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19711

Number of positions available: 1

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Leah Palm-Forster

Graduate Student Mentor:

Professional Staff Mentor:

**Project Title:** Homeowners’ willingness-to-pay for stormwater best management practices in Delaware (Social Dimensions)

**Research Description:**

Managing stormwater is critical in urban and suburban landscapes in order to reduce pollution entering our waterways. Homeowners can help manage stormwater by adopting residential practices that slow the flow of stormwater and improve filtration via natural processes. We will use a survey and economic field experiment to analyze household willingness-to-pay for stormwater management practices —such as rain gardens and conservation landscaping—with assistance from regional grant programs that share in the costs of adoption. This study will also examine the impact of hypothetical bias (the tendency to overstate willingness-to-pay in hypothetical scenarios) in stated preference research. We will work with local watershed associations to introduce consequentiality to the survey and experimental design. Consequentiality includes both following-up with residents who state a willingness to adopt and implementing a subset of stormwater management practices among selected households.

**Research Questions:**

1. How much are households willing-to-pay to implement stormwater management practices such as installing rain gardens and conservation landscaping?
2. Does willingness-to-pay for stormwater best management practices differ when homeowners answer hypothetical questions about implementation versus questions that may lead to real implementation of residential management practices?

Research Interns will be engaged primarily with the research project described above, but interns will have opportunities to be involved in other projects that are part of the Social Dimensions research for Project WiCCED (projectwicced.org); See Internship Descriptions for the following projects to learn about other Social Dimensions research opportunities:

* Cover crop persistence by Delaware farmers: A GIS investigation
* Continued participation in citizen ccience
* Examining the adoption of oyster farming in Delaware
* Experimental economics study of groundwater management
* Randomized controlled trial related to recruiting diverse students

**Student Learning Objectives: Professional and Research Skills**

This internship focuses on the development of the following professional and scientific skills.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Broad Professional Skills | Specific Skills |
| Planning and time management | Ability to set and complete specific foals of varying scope |
| Express ideas in writing | Write descriptions of research procedures, create a poster of your research, communicate via email professionally and in a timely and consistent fashion |
| Express ideas verbally | Discuss research activity in lab meetings, present poster at symposium |
| Work independently | Independent work ethic – work independently or with peers to problem solve |
| Develop professional network | Work with lab team and broader Social Dimensions and Project WiCCED team to develop professional network, and utilize peer-groups to problem solve. |
| Maintain professional attitude and work principles (i.e. integrity, responsibility, diligence, following ethical standards) | Be on time, learn procedures, ask questions if unsure, respect everyone you work with, complete and maintain Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification to work with human subjects in research |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Broad Scientific Research Skills | Specific Skills |
| Understand scientific terms | Behavioral, experimental and environmental economics |
| Locate scientific articles and resources | Conduct searches for literature on environmental valuation |
| Understand research questions |  |
| Read and understand research articles |  |
| Apply research tools and techniques in research experiments | Participate in the development of and data collection of surveys to quantify willingness to pay for water quality improvements. |
| Understand, apply, and explain scientific concepts and theories | In lab meetings, with lab personnel, and during research symposium |

**Prerequisites:**

Introductory experience with economics (e.g., successful completion of APEC 100, APEC 150, ECON 101, or similar course)

**Work Environment and Expectations:**

Laboratory environment: Work will primarily take place in 025 Townsend Hall. Hours are flexibly determined between student and mentor. Students will work part time during the fall and spring semesters, and full time during UD Winter Session, January 6-February 8, 2020. Students will also participate in a retreat, communications workshop and end of internship spring symposium.

**Stipend:**

$3,500 Direct deposit is required.

**Funding Source:**

National Science Foundation, Delaware EPSCoR Track I

**How to apply:** <https://ugresearch.udel.edu/PUB_Program.aspx>