**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. Kent Messer

Graduate Student Mentor:

Professional Staff Mentor: Maddi Valinski

**Project Title:** Randomized controlled trial related to recruiting diverse students (Social Dimensions)

**Research Description:**

Across the US, 30% of the population are underrepresented minorities (URM), with Delaware’s demographics very similar (32% URM). However, when examining the enrollment demographics at the University of Delaware, URM are disproportionately represented in the school’s population, with only 10% of the undergraduate population and 13% of the graduate population in the fall 2017, though the URM population is increasing at UD (20% increase for undergraduate students from 2013-2018). This project will seek to understand if it is possible to increase the number of qualified applicants to UD academic programs through behavioral economics techniques, including “nudges”, through a randomized controlled trial. We will explore feasibility of embedded nudges into existing admissions procedures to increase institutional diversity.

**Research Questions:**

1. Can simple changes to the application process make it more likely for URM to apply to undergraduate or graduate programs in STEM fields?
2. Are there qualified URM applicants who begin the application, yet are less likely to submit the application due to barriers in the application process? Can behavioral ‘nudges’ increase the likelihood of these students successfully submitting their application?

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
* Homeowners’ willingness-to-pay for stormwater best management practices in Delaware

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

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

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| 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 |

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| 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) preferred.

**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>