

Texas A&M Office of Sustainability

The Office of Sustainability was established in March 2008 and works to respect, protect and preserve all of our consumable resources.

Our mission is to educate the campus and local community about the importance of sustainability. This is accomplished by promoting sustainable practices both on and off campus in academic and non-academic settings, providing resources and support for people who wish to incorporate sustainable practices into their work and life, and advocating for sustainable programs and initiatives.

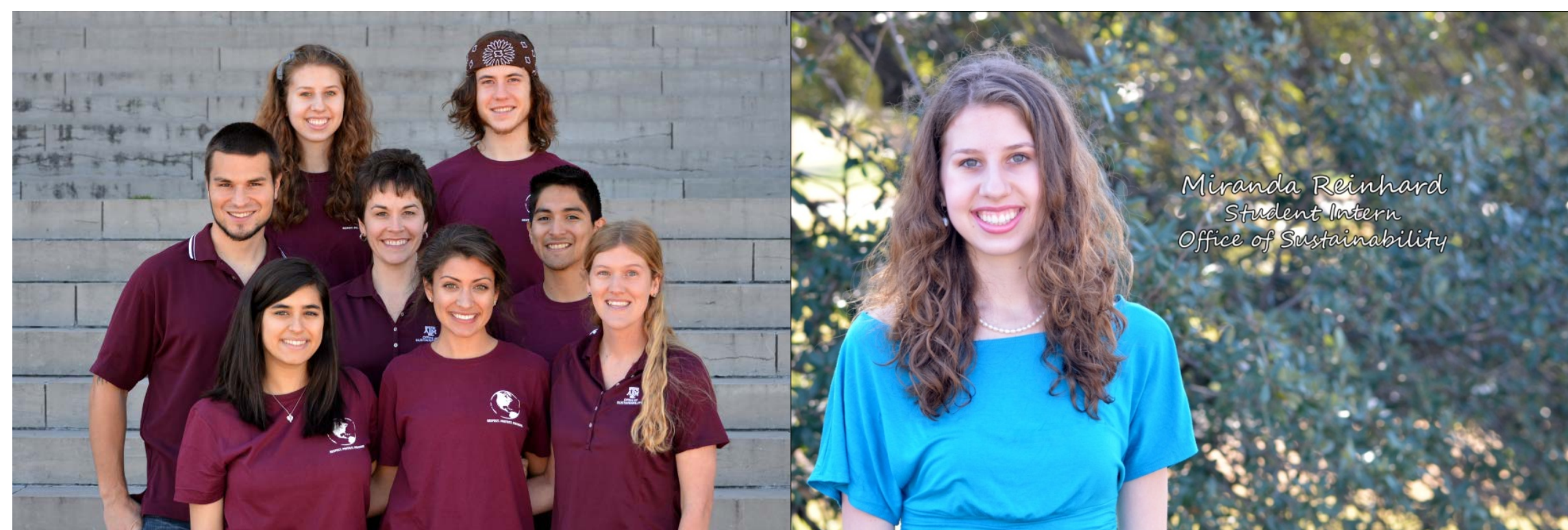
Our vision is to strive to respect, protect, and preserve the financial, environmental, and people resources that make Texas A&M so great, not only for today, but also for future generations of Aggies. When Aggies commit to a sustainable lifestyle, we bring Texas A&M's core values to life.

The Office of Sustainability utilizes many different avenues to increase knowledge and implementation of sustainability. These include participation in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS), creation of the Sustainability Pledge, advisement to the Aggie Green Fund Advisory Board, organization of campus outreach through various student organizations, campus-wide events, and social media.



Internship Objectives

My fundamental goal for this internship was increasing awareness of sustainability and how individuals can make an impact through their daily actions. I hoped to affect change by reducing waste in food services especially through education on proper disposal of recyclable, compostable, and waste materials. Another objective was to increase sustainable efforts on campus, particularly in transportation services and energy usage. I also desired to learn more sustainable practices that I could enact in my daily life and to continue to share my newfound knowledge with others. Gaining experience in an environmental internship position was another important goal. I was excited by the idea of learning the hands-on aspects of how the Office of Sustainability functions and the types of assignments or projects interns assist with.



Relationship to Career Goals

This experience at the Office of Sustainability has helped me have a better grasp on what occupations would be a good fit for me in the future. I am still unsure of exactly what profession I would like to pursue. However, I know that my two passions in life are service and the environment. Finding a profession that combines these is my aim. This internship opportunity has facilitated my understanding of how employer/employee or intern relationship dynamics in the real world play out and has built my people skills. Working as an intern has allowed me to appreciate the work accomplished daily by the Office of Sustainability as well as many other divisions and departments on campus. The information and skills I have learned and continue to develop will aid me in my studies at Texas A&M University as well. My passions for conserving the environment, serving others, and social justice perfectly align with the description of this position. By making individuals aware of how their daily choices and lifestyle impacts the environment, we can make a positive difference in the environmental realm. I believe this internship has been a wonderful learning and growing experience for me as a person, future employee, and student.

Internship Experience

My internship experience at the Office of Sustainability has been even better than I imagined. I have gained extensive knowledge in terms of what sustainability is and how it impacts all aspects of life. I have learned how to live a more sustainable life as well as how to reach out to others. The ability to make a positive difference in sustainability on Texas A&M's campus cannot be compared. I have been incredibly blessed with a multitude of opportunities. The major areas of focus are as follows:

Water Bottle Filling Station Grand Opening Presentations: We held four presentations about water sustainability on campus and one at a private school called Allen Academy. Camelbak® water bottles enticed people to attend. Our goal was to educate students on the importance of water sustainability, specifically the switch to reusable water bottles, while publicizing our newly installed water bottle filling stations. Presenting to audiences of over 100 students on multiple occasions was invigorating. It was wonderful to know that I was influencing other Aggies.

Sustainability Video: We filmed a video about what sustainability is, how people can be more sustainable, how Texas A&M as a campus is being sustainable, and how sustainability ties into the Aggie Core Values. The video follows a plastic water bottle being passed by people using different modes of transportation until it is finally spiked into a recycling bin by a volleyball player. At the end of the video the purchase of another plastic water bottle is prevented and the student is handed a reusable one. This video will function as publicity for the Office of Sustainability and will spread the message of sustainability as an Aggie tradition. It was exciting to meet the participants in the video and to see first-hand how Texas A&M is being sustainable.

Sustainability Cam: We would find and commend students, faculty, or staff performing sustainable actions on campus. Then we asked if we could take their picture and upload it to our Facebook page. This was a great way to outreach to individuals, to spread our message, and to receive publicity.

Tours: We toured the Combined Heat and Power Plant on campus as well as one of the Wastewater Treatment Plants in the Bryan/College Station area. I benefited from understanding how the processes at these plants function.

Texas Regional Alliance of Campus Sustainability Summit: We traveled to Austin, Texas to meet with other Texas Sustainability Higher Education professionals. The discussions were interactive and enlightening. I loved being able to give my input and learning from more knowledgeable people in the field of sustainability.

Not only did I have an amazing experience professionally as an intern, but I also created long-lasting friendships with my fellow interns. We provided each other with a wonderful support team. Our supervisors gave us the freedom to come up with new ideas while fulfilling our goals for the semester. My internship provided me with an increased knowledge of sustainability, lifestyle of sustainability, and an Aggie family of sustainability.



References

"Sustainability." *TAMU Office of Sustainability*. Texas A&M University, 2008. Web. 28 Mar. 2013. <<http://sustainability.tamu.edu/home.aspx>>.

Office of Sustainability. Water Bottle Refilling Stations - Monthly Readings. Mar. 2013. Raw data. Texas A&M University, College Station, TX.

Acknowledgements

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