Fulfilling Requirements for ENVS 4920—Special Projects in Recreation Resources Management Through Internships, Volunteering, and Summer Jobs/Seasonal Positions

Internships, volunteering, and summer jobs/seasonal positions with potential future employers are an increasingly important opportunity for students seeking careers in natural resources management and specifically recreation resources management. These can provide invaluable work experiences as well as important opportunities to network with professionals working in the management of natural resources. More and more employers use these experiences as a way to distinguish among job applicants who otherwise appear to be equally qualified based on course work in the undergraduate major.

In order to encourage the participation by students in such positions and to reassure potential employers that such an experience has been rigorously supervised, the Department of Environment and Society offers credit for such experiences (usually 3 semester-hours of credit although other arrangements may be made if necessary). For students whose educational emphasis and career goals focus on outdoor recreation, natural resources-based tourism, environmental education and communication, and/or protected area management, the best way to accomplish an internship, volunteering, or a summer job/seasonal position for credit is to enroll in ENVS 4920—Special Projects in Recreation Management (3 credits). If the student is participating in a summer experience, s/he may prefer to enroll for the credits during the subsequent fall semester rather than in summer in order to take advantage of “plateau tuition” rates.

Basic Requirements:

1. **Student Proposal for ENVS 4920**
   A student should begin by gaining the course instructor’s approval to serve as faculty advisor and supervise the academic portion of the internship, volunteering, or a summer job/seasonal position, as well as securing the on-site supervisor’s/employer’s agreement to oversee the on-site aspects of the experience. This is especially important as the credit requirements and the course instructor’s and supervisor’s/employer’s expectations must coincide.

   After securing a “position,” the student must then complete and submit the **Student Proposal for ENVS 4920** to the course instructor via the ENVS 4920 Course Canvas for review and approval. The course instructor will contact the on-site supervisor/employer for confirmation. Once approved the student must:

2. **Develop Goals and Objectives**
   Identify four to five broad **Goals** related to the internship, volunteer experience, or summer job/seasonal position, and three to four more specific **Learning Objectives** associated with each goal that are SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-sensitive (see some examples following). These goals and objectives will form the basis for both the course instructor’s and on-site supervisor’s/employer’s evaluation of the experience.

   - Student should initially contact the course instructor for information on developing draft goals and objectives.
   - Student should then meet with the on-site supervisor/employer to develop and finalize goals and objectives specific to the internship/volunteer/job experience.
   - Student should then submit the final goals and objectives to course instructor via the **ENVS 4920 Course Canvas** for feedback and final approval.
Following are some examples of broad Goals with associated SMART Learning Objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-sensitive:

- **Goal:** To increase my knowledge and skills in the area of natural resources and environmental interpretation.
  - **Objective 1:** By June 26\(^{th}\), I will develop three Junior Ranger programs for children age 7-12 by researching activities, games, day hikes, etc. with an objective of increasing environmental awareness among these youth.
  - **Objective 2:** By July 4\(^{th}\), I will have presented three Junior Ranger programs for children age 7-12 with an objective of increasing environmental awareness among these youth.
  - **Objective 3:** Each week of my experience I will design and deliver attractive and informational flyers to promote that week’s Junior Ranger programs; this will be evaluated by the number of children camped at the park who participate in the Saturday Junior Ranger program.
  - **Objective 4:** By July 20\(^{th}\), I will design three interpretive panels for a nature trail, addressing the topics of local geology, wildlife, and wetlands; I will conduct research on these topics and present the design to my supervisor for feedback and evaluation.

- **Goal:** To increase my knowledge and skills in the area of trails management and maintenance.
  - **Objective 1:** By June 30, I will have reviewed the Forest Service’s Trails Manual.
  - **Objective 2:** By July 15, I will have spent seven days working on trails maintenance with the trails crew; my work activity will be evaluated by my crew leader.
  - **Objective 3:** By August 1, I will have rehabilitated the High Meadow trail by installing needed water bars and boardwalks; this activity will be evaluated by my supervisor.

- **Goal:** To increase my understanding of working as a professional for Utah State Parks.
  - **Objective 1:** By June 30, I will have reviewed Utah State Park’s Personnel and Standard Operating Procedures Manual.
  - **Objective 2:** By July 15, I will have conducted interviews with three State Park professionals in order to learn about their career paths.
  - **Objective 3:** By July 30, I will have “shadowed” two State Park professionals in their daily duties to learn more about their work responsibilities.

3. Working with the on-site supervisor/employer, **develop a Timeline** for the internship/volunteer/job experience and **identify any Special Projects** the student will be expected to complete in consultation with the on-site supervisor/employer.
   - Student should then submit the Timeline and identification of Special Projects to the course instructor via the **ENVS 4920 Course Canvas** for feedback and final approval.

4. **Complete the internship, volunteer experience, or summer job/seasonal position for ENVS 4920.**
   - Strongly suggested the student keep a daily logbook or journal throughout the experience in order to assist him/her in the completion of the final report.
   - Student should check in and work closely with the on-site supervisor/employer throughout the experience.
   - Student should check in periodically with the course instructor to keep him apprised of the student’s progress in the internship, volunteering, or job experience.
   - The on-site supervisor/employer should feel free to contact the course instructor in case any concerns or problems arise.
5. The Final Report for the Completion of the ENVS 4920 Experience

The student’s final grade for the experience will be based on the on-site supervisor’s evaluation of the student’s overall work and progress in accomplishing identified goals and objectives, as well as the course instructor’s and the student’s own evaluation of the experience. After the completion of the ENVS 4920 experience, the student must complete a Final Report on the experience (typically 8-10 pages in length) and submit this to the course instructor for review and evaluation. In the final report, the student will describe: 1) his/her assessment of the experience related to the accomplishment of Goals and Objectives; 2) his/her assessment of how the experience fits with the student’s university experience; and 3) his/her assessment of the relationship between the experience and larger societal forces. Additionally, 4) the student should ask the on-site supervisor/employer for a Letter of Performance Evaluation and meet with the supervisor/employer to review this prior to submitting this to the course instructor as an addendum to the Final Report.

For most students who are doing a summer ENVS 4920 experience, the Final Report will need to be completed and submitted by the end of the following fall semester. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the Final Report as soon as possible after the completion of the ENVS 4920 experience and the student should confirm an expected completion date with the course instructor. It is also strongly recommended the student keep a daily logbook or journal throughout the experience in order to log and describe activities and issues the student will need to address in the final report. Following are specific topics the student must address in the Final Report (utilizing the outline format below is acceptable for the Final Report):

1. Assessment of the Experience:
   a. Describe the internship, volunteer experience, or summer job/seasonal position by explaining what the experience was and what it entailed.
   b. Discuss each of your broad Goals and related SMART Learning Objectives by answering these questions:
      i. Why/How did you and your supervisor select the goals/objectives?
      ii. How did you originally plan to accomplish the goals/objectives?
      iii. What aspects of your original plan worked?
      iv. What changes did you make to the original plan?
      v. What criteria were used to evaluate the goals/objectives?
      vi. How effectively did you accomplish each goal/objective?
      vii. How useful were the goals/objectives to your own skill development? (Consider the full range of skills here—manual, cognitive, technical, communication, human relations, etc.)
      viii. How useful were the goals/objectives to your on-site supervisor/employer?
   c. Describe any special projects or other accomplishments in which you were involved that were not a part of your identified goals/objectives.
   d. Develop a statement that describes how the overall experience was beneficial (or not) related to your career interests. (Some students find that the work environment itself provides as many educational benefits as the tasks performed; note this evaluation may be positive or negative.)
   e. Include any other information you feel pertinent to the experience.

2. Assessment of How the Experience Fits with the Student’s University Experience
   a. Discuss the relationship between the knowledge and skills gained in your university courses to the work you performed during the internship, volunteer experience, or summer job/seasonal position. How was your academic experience applicable (or not applicable) to your ENVS 4920 experience?
   b. How has the experience confirmed or modified your ideas about a career?
   c. How has this experience affected your attitudes toward yourself or others?
   d. What suggestions would you make to another student who has your major, specialization area, and career goals?
e. What suggestions do you have for your course instructor and on-site supervisor/employer to improve the ENVS 4920 experience?

3. Assessment of the Relationship Between the Experience and Larger Societal Forces
   a. Students may find the expression of their individuality comes into conflict with how they are expected to behave in the work environment. Think carefully and describe any such conflict(s) you might have encountered, and how you were able (or unable) to manage these.
   b. A struggle for political power occurs in various types of public and private organizations as well as in government. What examples, if any, of this phenomenon did you observe in your experience? How did it affect you personally during the experience?
   c. What examples of cooperation, collaboration, and/or “partnering” did you observe in your experience? Were you personally involved? If so, in what ways?
   d. What did you observe in the “work society” that relates to public concern or public good for conserving and protecting the environment, improving the economy, or protecting the welfare of individuals, groups, and society? (This is your opportunity to “philosophize” about how things are in contrast to how you think things should be!)

   - At the completion of the ENVS 4920 experience, the student should ask the on-site supervisor/employer for a Letter of Performance Evaluation and meet with the supervisor to review this.
   - This Letter of Performance Evaluation should then be submitted to the course instructor, either directly from the supervisor/employer via e-mail or as an addendum of the Final Report.

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