Anna Smiles-Becker began her professional life at UVM in 2005. She currently serves as Career Counselor and Internship Coordinator, a joint appointment in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and the UVM Career Center. In her daily work Anna assists students with high impact learning opportunities, but her service to students is much greater than that. Students meet with her to tackle larger questions about purpose and direction, topics that go beyond a single appointment. Anna is a skillful listener, advisor, cheerleader, and touchstone to our students, many of whom attribute their success to Anna’s care and mentorship.

Anna’s ability to execute her vision in a logical, systematic way has helped to build the Rubenstein School’s reputation as a highly engaged school of natural resources where students graduate with both leadership and technical skills. In 2012, Anna launched the innovative Rubenstein School Perennial Internship Program, where employers and the Rubenstein School cost-share an intern’s summer salary. The program has had far-reaching success thanks to Anna’s energy and attention.

Anna’s commitment to justice is demonstrated through the quality of her individual connections, her engagement in multicultural communities, and her commitment to systemic change. She has served as a Next Step facilitator, a member of the Rubenstein School Diversity Task Force, and as a co-facilitator in “Race and Culture in Natural Resources.” She is gifted in knowing exactly when to stand in solidarity, when to step forward and gently lead, and when to make space for others to shine.

Anna is deeply reflective on her own awareness journey around power and privilege. She navigates these conversations courageously, compassionately, and with humility. As the Advisor to the Rubenstein School Stewards Leadership Program, Anna shares herself with students in the most authentic ways as a social justice advocate and mentor.

Anna lives her life in the same way that she approaches her work and relationships at UVM. She shows up with strength, warmth, and an open heart, in every way that she can. Anna’s life and work is a study in service to individual and collective well-being and to the values of Our Common Ground.