

## Community Partnership Opportunities in the Rubenstein School

The [Office of Experiential Learning \(OEL\)](#) in the Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources (RSENR) at UVM helps students build skills and experience by providing a diversity of learning opportunities. Our goal is to integrate reflective career development, course, and co-curricular activities to foster competencies that will make RSENR graduates highly competitive professionals and engaged, effective citizens. More information about our office and services can be found at [https://www.uvm.edu/rsenr/experiential\\_learning\\_rubenstein\\_school](https://www.uvm.edu/rsenr/experiential_learning_rubenstein_school)

Hundreds of community partners have been involved in RSENR internships and service-learning courses, and include non-profit organizations, local businesses, municipalities, schools, churches, museums, state and federal agencies, and UVM departments.

This document is intended to clarify the different ways that community partners can interact with RSENR students and aid in determining the appropriate type of student collaboration.

### Internships

The Rubenstein School Internship Program awards academic credit for internship and research experiences and provides a formal structure for students pursuing career related experiences. Annually, approximately 50 students pursue internships for credit, with the majority of internships taking place over the summer months. Rubenstein School Internships:

- ✓ Are open to students all four years of their undergraduate education;
- ✓ Can account for 1-6 credits, or for no credits
- ✓ Should account for 45-270 hours of work for a semester (45 hours for each credit)
- ✓ Can be paid or unpaid
- ✓ Should be skill-based for student growth; and
- ✓ Require a formal Experiential Learning Plan (a 4-way agreement between the Rubenstein School Internship Coordinator, a faculty advisor, the students and the community partner).

*For more information on RSENR internships, contact Anna Smiles-Becker, Rubenstein School Internship Coordinator and Career Counselor, at [Anna.Smiles-Becker@uvm.edu](mailto:Anna.Smiles-Becker@uvm.edu) or (802)656-3002*

### Environmental Studies

RSENR undergraduates that are Environmental Studies majors must meet the requirements of the Environmental Studies Program (ENVS) at UVM. ENVS majors have two options for internships: an ENVS Practicum Internship or and ENVS Senior Capstone Internship. ENVS internships are intended for students who would like to apply their interdisciplinary environmental skills and knowledge in an organizational setting.

- ✓ ENVS Practicum Internships:
  - Are intended for activities done at the intermediate level
  - Allow students to earn a minimum of a 0.5 credit to a maximum of 9 credits
  - Require a minimum of 45 hours of effort for each credit hour earned
  - Can be paid or unpaid
  - Are directly overseen by a Field Site Supervisor who is asked to provide written comments and an evaluation or grade that will be incorporated into the final grade assigned to the student by his or her Faculty Sponsor; and

- Require a formal Learning Contract at the onset of the Internship, after the student's Project Plan has been submitted and approved
- ✓ ENVIS Senior Capstone Internships:
  - Are for senior or advanced level activities
  - Counts for 6 credits of upper level senior work, and is partnered with an upper-level environmentally relevant course
  - Should account for at least 200 hours of work with the sponsoring organization (approximately 45 hours for each credit earned)
  - Can be paid or unpaid
  - Requires students to write an in-depth senior internship capstone proposal and a final write- up documenting and evaluating internship experience; and
  - Is directly overseen by a Field Site Supervisor who is asked to provide written comments and an evaluation or grade (grade sheet is provided by student).

*For more information on ENVIS internships please feel free to contact the Senior Capstone Internship Coordinator, Amy Seidl, at [Amy.Seidl@uvm.edu](mailto:Amy.Seidl@uvm.edu) or (802)656-4055, or the ENVIS Professional Academic Advisor, Benjamin Langton, at [Benjamin.Langton@uvm.edu](mailto:Benjamin.Langton@uvm.edu).*

### Service Learning Courses

Service-learning is a teaching pedagogy that combines service in the community with classroom instruction, with a focus on personal reflection and the development of civic and personal responsibility. Up to 30 courses have been taught by RSENR faculty each academic year in collaboration with upwards of 75 different community partners. The majority of service-learning courses are taught during the fall and spring semesters. Service-learning projects:

- ✓ Can vary in scale and scope from small, focused, one-time projects to semester-long, broad, and ongoing projects that adapt and allow for collaboration between students and community partners
- ✓ Are unpaid
- ✓ Are associated with a specific UVM course and credit hours
- ✓ Should define a specific need identified by a community partner
- ✓ Can involve small groups of students or entire classes in addition to individual students; and
- ✓ By definition should incorporate a mechanism to allow the student(s) to reflect on the importance of the project and its applicability to the course and their own life.

*For more information on service-learning partnerships, contact Nadeje Alexandre, OEL Service Learning Coordinator at [Nadeje.Alexandre@uvm.edu](mailto:Nadeje.Alexandre@uvm.edu) or (802)656-2713.*

### Volunteer Opportunities

Community partners may also be interested in recruiting volunteers for one-time events or ongoing support through the OEL. Our capacity for organization volunteer opportunities is limited, though we can spread the word through our student listserv and can post announcements in the Aiken Building, home to RSENR. There also may be potential opportunities to coordinate with the Rubenstein Stewards ([RSENRstewards@uvm.edu](mailto:RSENRstewards@uvm.edu)), a group of students who strive to build community throughout the school by organizing events and supporting undergraduates.

Community partners interested in recruiting volunteers might also find it more appropriate to reach a broader student base by contacting [UVM Student Life Civic Engagement](#).