

Project Title

Adaptability Internship: On-Campus Garment Waste Mitigation

Person who proposed it

Emma Wardell

Decision

Fully Funded

Budget

\$1,654

Project explanation

The fashion industry stands as the third largest manufacturing industry, following both the automotive and technology industries. Furthermore, textile production contributes more towards climate change than international aviation and shipping do, combined (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, 2019). In summation, the impact generated from this industry is extremely impactful on environmental and organism wellbeing. Currently, less than 1% of material used in clothing production is recycled at the end of its life into new garments (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, 2019). Many assume that the solution to this miserable statistic are secondhand stores. However, 85% of clothing donations end up in landfills, never even making it to the consignment racks (ForDays). This proposal is to fund Phase I of II: an internship exploring general adaptability to further inform Phase II, which pursues the implementation of an education and consignment store. The completion of this project has the potential to educate members on the global environmental impacts of textile waste and how they can mitigate those impacts within their own lives moving forward.

The current fashion industrial model has resulted in extreme environmental damage through water and textile waste, high carbon emissions, and fostering poor working conditions. Thus, this project stands in the center of the social justice-environmental intersection. Each of these negative impacts severely affects the quality-of-life of current generations, along with our responsibility as future ancestors. This proposal introduces Phase I of II which aims to explore the current infrastructure in place at UVM regarding garment waste mitigation and develop future infrastructure that will support the implementation of an on-campus thrift store. The store's purpose will be twofold: 1) a consignment center and 2) an educational hub that fosters inclusion and collective action in the face of an increasingly wasteful industry which threatens the life and longevity of my peers and me.

During this "adaptability internship", I have three overarching areas for exploration, each with their own points for clarification. My points of "connection" include other universities across the U.S., like UC Berkeley and Bard College, who currently have on-campus thrift store infrastructure in place. This will help me determine how best to adapt a thrift store to UVM's campus and community. Further connections include faculty and staff that may be able to help me reach my internship goal, to bring campus

community awareness to a heavily influenced yet scarcely recognized waste stream, as well as UVM's VSTEP, who currently operate a weekly pop-up thrift store on-campus.

My next category, "action", entails the completion of prototype experiments, which will allow me to gauge student interest and collect observations that will aid in Phase II of this project. Phase I will require funds for printing costs and a SurveyMonkey subscription, both allowing me to spread awareness and garner student interest. Additionally, the development of a process flow map will help me determine what works and what doesn't, based on information gathered from prototypes, during the Phase I period.

Lastly, the "adaptation" category encompasses Phase I's final actions and goals necessary to proceed forward to Phase II. The determination of a shop location, finalization of the project's structure (an extension of the process flow map), and a summary report are all accomplishable actions necessary to move on to the project's second phase. Each broad category within Phase I will require my time and energy. Thus, the internship wage highlighted in the budget will allow me to engage with and maintain this project over the course of the 14-week spring semester.

The intention of this project is to be built by students, for students. Next to the provision of accessible garments, education is a main component for completion of this project. Throughout Phase I, assemblage of student interest and volunteers, to aid in the management and upkeep of the physical thrift store, are crucial aspects to be completed via awareness and education. My ultimate goal is to provide my peers with a physical promise that the mitigation of our individual footprints is possible. The deliverance of this information is crucial as students enter post-college life with the consciousness to apply sustainability to their closets.

Budget table

| This Money will Supply | Requested funds | Justification |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Internship wage | \$1,547 | \$13/hr for me to be able to work 9 hrs/wk over the 14-week spring semester equals \$1,547. |
| Printing costs | \$75 | The printing of 200-500 business cards (to aid the spread of education and information) costs \$20-\$75, equaling \$75 in total. |
| Survey Monkey account | \$32 | A month-long subscription to SurveyMonkey is \$32, which covers the creation and circulation of student interest surveys. |