

Guest Blogger: Terra Pace

12/07/2018

Guest Blogger: Terra Pace

Terra Pace Young



USU Extension Sustainability helps people live more healthy, happy, and sustainable lives. This is the 27th of a series of posts which feature real people who are making real changes in their lives to be more sustainable.

This month, we are featuring Terra Pace Young. Terra is an Environmental Studies major at Utah State University who is also pursuing a minor in Sustainable Systems and Horticulture.

What are your roles and responsibilities as a UTF?

I am an Undergraduate Teaching Fellow for Roslynn McCann's course, ENVS 4700: Communicating Sustainability. Being a UTF means that I help with day-to-day tasks in the classroom, whether that is helping students or the professor. This class is unique in the fact that it is a service learning course and Ros is based in Moab while the majority of the class is in Logan. As a previous student of this class, I can draw from my experience of applying course content to help other students, as well as be present for any technical issues in the classroom. Thus, my role is to be an extra aid in

helping connect student groups to campus and community resources that could be of benefit to their projects.

What projects and/or research are you currently working on?

Aside from my work as a UTF, I am currently working with Ros as her undergraduate intern for a project called Ripple Effects Mapping (REM). This project is based on the REM framework to illustrate the long term impacts of student service learning projects from the course ENVS 4700. In our project we have put together focus groups and asked students, as well as the community partners they worked with, to share the positive impacts that resulted from the projects, thus the term ripple effects. At the end of our work with these focus groups we hope to publish our methods and findings in the *Journal of Service Learning in Higher Education* or the *Journal of Empowering Teaching Excellence* to help others measure positive outcomes from service learning courses.

What is SSO? How have you been involved?



The Student Sustainability Office (SSO) is an organization on campus that actively works to create a more sustainable campus here at Utah State University. For the last two years in school I have worked closely with the SSO and the USU Sustainability Council to help develop the Green Office Program and USU Earth Day. The Green Office program is an initiative for faculty on campus to develop more sustainable practices in the office by addressing resource use, campus engagement, energy, and more. Those involved in the program create an office Green Team which are a group of like minded individuals who advocate for sustainability around the office. As they complete their goals with the help of the Green Office Program coordinator, they are recognized with either a bronze, silver, or gold certification. It's an excellent way for offices and departments to create sustainable change on campus and connect with others.

I have also been involved with the development of USU's Earth Day celebration for the last two years. Working as a part of team of dedicated interns, we developed a plan and wrote a macro grant to really engage and educate students about Earth Day. This plan initially involved a festival on the Quad with more than 40 community partners tabling for sustainable causes, keynote speaker Stacy Bare from the Sierra Club, 4 different service project locations, and a celebration at First Dam with local music and food. What really pulled all the elements together though was the sustainability themed scavenger hunt called the "EcoHunt." This scavenger hunt involved a variety of earth friendly challenges that students in teams of 2-6 compete to accomplish. With challenges being worth varying point values, the top teams are winners of over \$3,000 of donated prizes from local businesses. Since our first event in 2017, USU Earth Day has improved and grown. It has been a huge success and is now being planned to happen again in 2019.

Where would you like to work in the future? What field?

Ideally, I would like to work with local government to implement sustainability initiatives. I love the idea of being involved in a variety of efforts to increase city sustainability. I feel that my experience in project management and community involvement would fit perfectly in some little city somewhere trying to make a difference! Can you describe the award you received regarding SSO and what it meant? I received the Utah Compact Presidential Student Award for Community Engagement for my work with the planning and implementation of USU Earth Day. Only one student in the state of Utah receives this award each year and I feel very honored to have been chosen. It is meaningful to me because of everything I learned in the process of planning Earth Day. I think of the skills and experience I learned to enact community change from this project and I feel very grateful. As well, I am working toward becoming a Community Engaged Scholar which also encompasses a lot of the sustainability work I have been involved with on campus.

How do you think students, specifically at USU, can live more sustainable lives?

I think a lot of students at USU live sustainably without even realizing it! There are so many resources on campus that are accessible to students, faculty and staff that make

it so easy to make the more sustainable choice. A few examples come to mind. I think of Aggie Blue Bikes that makes riding bikes accessible to students, all the water bottle refill stations around campus, the campus Farmer's Market, clearly labeled recycling, and energy efficient buildings. Although there is so much more that can be utilized by USU students, I think we are definitely moving in the right direction! We are so fortunate to have people on campus that are dedicated to creating innovative solutions to help people live more sustainably.

Have you been involved with any other projects or organizations in terms of sustainability?

I think my passion for sustainability began in high school when I worked with Wasatch Community Gardens in their office. I learned about their work in engaging the community with growing organic food and how they serve the underserved populations of SLC by providing opportunities to get outside and garden. My interest grew from there as I came to USU and got involved with EcoReps which is a class where students become sustainability representatives on campus and teach their peers. I have also worked with the Student Organic Farm in the practicum class and solidified my love for plants and organic produce. Overall, these experiences helped me take advantage of new opportunities that shaped me into the person I am today. My hope is to continue forward in life, as I did when I came to college, with an eye open to new experiences that can help me to make the world a better, more sustainable place.

In what ways do you practice sustainability in your own life?



As someone passionate about sustainability and surrounded by other like minded people, it's hard not to be thinking about the resources we use every day. In my life I try to be mindful of the little things I do on a daily basis. I am working toward zero waste in my home, I choose to buy local and organic produce as much as possible (and on a college student budget), I am careful about how much

water I use to wash dishes and in taking showers, I turn the lights off when I don't need them, and I bike or walk to school. Even though I'm not always perfect, that doesn't mean I'll stop trying. And I recommend that to everyone else; don't stop trying! Overall, I believe that these things are important in all of our individual lives and so I also strive to do things that can help others. I try to volunteer at the Student Organic Farm so others can have organic produce, I explain to my friends about the impacts of single use plastics, I go out and vote for people and policies that will protect the environment. In the end I think it's not only important to live sustainably by ourselves, but to shift the values of our communities and build a culture of sustainability wherever we live.

Recent Posts

`$('.justify-content-end').removeClass('justify-content-end');`