

The Furman University Sustainable Agriculture Project

Introduction

The Furman University Sustainable Agriculture Project is underway. A quarter acre on-campus garden has been prepared, beds built and amended, and planting began in early April 2008.

The garden provides the campus community with an environment in which students, faculty, and staff can study, research, and practice small-scale food production. The garden will strengthen physical, mental, and spiritual connections to the land through the practice of sustainable, organic agriculture. The garden is an experiential and working example of Furman's commitment to sustainability. In conjunction with the adjacent Cliffs Cottage, a model green residence that will become the university's Center for Sustainability in summer 2009, the garden is integral to the university's sustainability goals.

The question of how to create a beautiful and productive campus garden with maximum student involvement and leadership is a natural offshoot of Furman's "engaged learning" philosophy, and using the campus as a classroom for the study of sustainability. Food prices are rising and the environmental and social problems inherent in the conventional food system are becoming widely known. People are hungry for not just for fresh, healthy and fair food, but for knowledge and experience of participating in solutions.

Job Description

We propose to engage 2 students for 10 weeks (June 9th – August 17th) for the following work.

Make decisions and work in every aspect of the garden including: continual site and soil development, garden design, planting, maintenance, and harvesting, plan and operation of the Furman Farm stand, and other programming issues related to the garden and The Cliff's Cottage (Center for Sustainability at Furman). The Interns will also submit at least 2 essays to the Cliffs Cottage blog with experiences and reflections on working in the garden.

With the Sustainability Coordinator, the interns will support the integration of the garden into campus life and activities, including successful event(s) that connect the campus to the garden. Interns will also help coordinate and support events and tours for the upstate SC community and other visitors to campus.

All of the students' work will be documented on the garden's website and be the foundation for the ongoing development of the Sustainable Agriculture Project at Furman.

Personal Statement

James Wilkins, sustainability coordinator and garden manager will supervise the interns with assistance from the Director of Sustainability and Environmental Education at

Furman. In his third year at Furman, James works with various student groups and campus departments on environmental initiatives and projects. He chairs the organic garden steering committee, and is a member of Furman's Environmental Sustainability Committee and the Sustainability Planning Group. A native of Greenville, James received a bachelors degree in mathematics and forestry from Clemson University and a masters degree in environmental studies with a concentration in environmental education from Antioch New England Graduate School. James has been involved with and committed to supporting the myriad of sustainability efforts in the local community and the southeast.

Budget

The salary cost for two interns at \$1,000 each will be \$2,000. Furman University has committed funds for the operational costs of the garden and some of the housing costs for the students. We ask that funds for interns be transferred to Furman University and students will be hired once the money becomes available. Students will be paid by the university at a rate of \$100 a week for the 10 weeks of work.

Submitted by
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