

Reflections from a Fellow



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January 26, 2012

Reflecting back on my semester as a fellowship intern for the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit I know I'm concluding my service term with new ideas to generate new knowledge and challenge old perceptions. All of these components will help to make me a better student and ultimately a young professional. When I first applied I had some skepticism as to how this program would incorporate my interest into a natural science field. During my first phone interview with Dr. Tom Fish he explained to me the goals and the mission of the CESU network. In hindsight, when I had a chance to read the fact sheets about the CESU Network I was surprised how well Dr. Fish retains and can effectively communicate every single detail (this includes percentages, numbers, budget cost, federal agencies and universities). Verbatim he told me that the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units "provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners. The multi-disciplinary structure includes majors from Anthropology to Zoology. Methods and techniques included biological, physical, social, cultural and engineering disciplines needed to address the natural and cultural resource management issues "(CESU Fact Sheet). Furthermore, through my assigned projects, conference visits, meetings and interviews with past CESU fellows I was able to see how collective partnerships between thirteen federal agencies and host universities work with the seventeen CESU regions to achieve the following objectives:

- Providing usable knowledge to support informed decision making
- Ensure the independence and objectivity of research
- Create and maintain effective partnerships among federal agencies and universities to shape resources and expertise
- Take full advantage of university resources while benefiting faculty and students
- Encourage professional development of current and future federal scientist, resource managers and environmental leaders
- Manage federal resources effectively.

As a first hand observer and participant within the CESU Network I can attest that this program is true to its motto. One of my assignments was to highlight through a power point presentation the seventeen regions with the CESU Network. This assignment was an excellent introductory course to provide me with historical background and the current state of partnerships (federal agencies and universities) to manage federal resources effectively. As a student, one can become inspired of the potential gains of being a CESU student, because of the success through the mentor relationship between students and faculty. Although, I did not work closely with a faculty member of a university, Dr. Tom Fish and Cheri Yost provided me with helpful information that provided me with knowledge beyond the classroom. Upon entering this program my interest were very centralized in Public History and United States History. However through various assignments implemented by Dr. Fish and Cheri, I know I have become a well-rounded student. This semester has helped me to a higher resolve. Through this program I am familiar with stochastic studies of the ivory billed woodpecker, Lake Sturgeon fishes, climate control and forest health. Another example of diverse interest was my understanding of climate control. For instance, as I explore a career in Curatorial/Resource Management, it was important for me to understand climate control as it relates to the preservation of a historic house. Education and practical application has helped me to understand that the climate in Ohio v New Orleans, Louisiana would require a different method of preservation against the elements.

Another, highlight for me was to attend the Southeast Regional CESU conference in St. Petersburg, Florida. During the three day conference federal agencies' representatives, host universities (from the SE region) and partners met to discuss the state of the CESU Network. For me this opportunity acted as my chance to see the work that I do behind the scenes (at the headquarters location in DC) filter out to the federal agencies, universities and partners about the

pipeline process of the missions/goals for implementation of sustainable science. And lastly, this conference acted as great opportunity for networking.

In addition, to the projects and conferences I completed, this program is truly mindful of my student status. I am pleased to announce that this past semester I earned a 4.0 G.P.A. Dr. Fish and Cheri were ever mindful of my class schedule. Together they accommodated my work schedule so I could be a student first. This act means a lot to me, because I value my studies.

There are other many things I can say about the CESU program and my fellowship experience. However, I have gone over my maximum page requirement. I believe my excessive comments are a true testament to the benefits of this program. Furthermore, I hope this program is around for future generations because its mission, federal agencies, universities and partners can ensure some form of sustainability within their perspective departments, schools or professional goals. The benefit of the CESU program is not for one sole entity, but for multiple factors and the CESU program should enjoyed by all.