



DUKEENGAGE IN PORTLAND, OR

Conservation and urban environmentalism

Dates: June 21 – August 16, 2019

(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

Service Themes

- Environment & Conservation
- Community Development & Outreach
- Public Policy

Program Focus

Working with nonprofit organizations in the Portland area that focus on issues ranging from environmental law to urban planning and habitat conservation.

Curricular Connections: While all students are welcome to apply, this program may be of particular interest to students studying the connections between urban-based environmental sustainability practices and policies and the communities, ecologies, and environments on which those practices and policies depend. Students studying conservation, food, social and environmental justice, or community service offered through the Nicholas School and the Sanford School of Public Policy, as well as in the Departments of Sociology, Biology, Anthropology, History, or other relevant disciplines will benefit from this program. (See below for additional details about connecting this program to your academic work.)

Program Leader(s)

- Lindsey Smith, a Lecturing Fellow in the Thompson Writing Program, is a biological anthropologist whose work explores various aspects of ecology, conservation, social behavior, and cognition in primates. She teaches writing-intensive courses at Duke that explore human uniqueness and urban wildlife conservation, and tropical ecology and conservation field courses in Mexico and Nicaragua.
- Matt Whitt, a Lecturing Fellow in the Thompson Writing Program, teaches courses on justice, ethics, and incarceration. As a DukeEngage director, he is especially interested in big questions about what we owe to each other, to future generations, and to the environment itself.

Program Overview

Students will work full time with nonprofit organizations in the Portland area that focus on issues ranging from environmental law to urban planning and habitat conservation. Community service work and weekend enrichment trips will enable students to connect the work of these organizations to broader demands to conserve resources, “be green,” or change personal or shared habits in deference to the demands of environmental conservation goals. This program is interested in how people and organizations in Portland approach questions of community engagement and social justice through different – and often conflicting – ideas about nature and the environment. Through weekly activities, assigned readings, and group reflection sessions, students will learn to critically engage with related issues from a variety of perspectives. DukeEngage-Portland seeks students who are committed to service and the environment, and who want to build stronger connections between their own conservation practices and the demands of environmental justice in local communities while living in a vibrant, environmentally-focused city.

DukeEngage has sustained partnerships with local Portland agencies focused on environmental issues for several years. The robust nonprofit sector, commitment to sustainable living, and local universities focused on service-learning and local volunteerism makes Portland a welcoming place to those interested in a community-wide immersive civic engagement experience.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students participating in the Portland program will:

- Learn from nonprofit professionals about a broad range of environmental and conservation issues facing Portland residents and local wildlife
- Explore the connection between their academic and personal interests related to the environment and the challenge of developing and implementing practical, real-world solutions to environmental problems
- Practice self-sufficiency in a community committed to public transportation, local business, and sustainable practices

Partnership Opportunities

The following is a list of Portland-based organizations DukeEngage-Portland has partnered with in recent years:

- **The Nature Conservancy** seeks to protect wild places and conserve wilderness, environmentally significant areas and species. Recent students have worked on fundraising – evaluating online fundraising tools, managing donor databases, and conducting endowment research – and on government relations – assessing technology and communication tools, researching politicians, and connecting their interests to conservation. Past students have done policy research on Oregon transportation projects gone out into the field with staff, and sat in on Executive Board meetings learning how large environmental organizations are structured.
- **Crag Environmental Law Center** is a public interest law firm that provides “legal aid for the environment,” providing legal resources for individuals and communities adversely affected by environmental practices; filing suit to enforce regulations; and publishing legal resources. Students have worked on a variety of tasks related to fundraising, donor recognition, and communications (newsletter, website, social media), translated case summaries for public consumption, created presentations on planning processes, reviewed videos for a fall film festival, written blog posts, called radio stations to do outreach, and sat in on court hearings.
- **1000 Friends of Oregon** is a land-use advocacy organization that seeks to enhance quality of life by building livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms, and conserving natural areas. Students have redesigned their website, writing original content based on research and interviews.
- **Metro**, the elected regional government for the Portland metropolitan area, works with communities, businesses and residents to create a vibrant and sustainable region for all. Students have reached out to environmental organizations to educate them about a newly formed conservation council, taken photos of street features and evaluated and organized Metro’s street photo library, evaluated potential policy updates, and proposed updates to transportation design guidelines in preparation for the 2018 Regional Transit Plan.
- **Friends of Trees** is an organization dedicated to building community while planting and caring for urban trees and green spaces in and around Portland. Volunteer groups plant native trees and shrubs in natural areas around the area, and Friends of Trees helps homeowners care for their trees after they are planted. Students have performed invasive species removal, monitored and maintained a database of young street trees, and prepared information packets for distribution to tree-owners.
- **OPAL Environmental Justice** is a community-based organization that empowers residents to advocate for social and environmental justice. Students have done graphic design, video editing, and grant-writing work alongside OPAL staff, and have facilitated community-based workshops related to economic inequality and environmental impact.

Students at each community partner will follow a similar work schedule: Monday-Friday from 9 or 10am until 4 or 5pm. Some placements will consist of more office-based work, while others will require students to be outdoors the majority of the time. Even office placements occasionally participate in office enrichment activities like “clean up” parties where a team from the office participates in local restoration efforts or colleagues go on a hike together in the surrounding areas.

While each student will work directly with one organization, DukeEngage-Portland has also partnered with additional organizations to participate in community service activities around environmental or conservation themes. These group volunteer activities give students the opportunity to do service work together, meet members of the Portland community, and learn more about different issues and projects in Portland. Past activities have included volunteering Operation Nightwatch, an organization that provides social services for the houseless community, and harvesting vegetables at the Oregon Food Bank’s garden.

Students will learn more about community partner placement opportunities during the interview process for the program. The placement matching process and final decisions are made after students are selected and have committed to the DukeEngage-Portland program.

Program Requirements

Language: None

Coursework: Introductory courses in environmental studies, social science (anthropology, sociology, etc.), and/or public policy would be useful but are not required.

Other Skills: Good written and oral communication skills are essential for all placements. Additionally, experience with outdoor work, conservation and restoration work, community outreach, event planning and implementation, social media marketing, community gardening, research, general office work, and working with youth have been useful skills for students to have, depending on their placements.

Curricular Connections

The themes of this program are relevant to any courses related to sustainability, conservation, food, environmental and social justice, or community service offered through the Departments of Sociology, Anthropology, History, and Biology, the Nicholas School, and the Sanford School of Public Policy, including:

- Biology 262 – People, Plants, and Pollution
- CulAnth 236S – Farmworkers in NC: Poverty
- CulAnth 389S – Food, Culture, and Society
- Environ 102 – Intro to Environ Sci/Pol
- Environ 569 – Should I Eat Fish?
- Environ 646 – Urban Ecology
- Environ 740 – Water Resources Planning and Management
- PubPol 206S – Engaged Citizens/Social Change
- PubPol 290S – Rights and the Environment

You do not need to have taken these courses prior to DukeEngage, but you may consider enrolling in these and other relevant courses and engaging in other research and internship opportunities after the program to connect your work in Duke Engage Portland with your academic work on campus.

Program Details

Description of Community: The state of Oregon is home to some of the most diverse and well-preserved ecosystems in the nation, including old growth forest, volcanoes, beaches, dunes, wetlands, meadows, shrub steppe, savanna, deserts. The city of Portland is also home to migratory birds, endangered fish species, and macroinvertebrates that are actively being protected through conservation efforts and citywide water

management initiatives. Oregon and Portland are known for being supportive of environmental organizations, and as a result, are home to many of the nation's largest and most influential environmental organizations. The Portland program will partner with organizations that have a variety of political perspectives on environmental issues.

Housing and Meals: Students will live in residence halls at Portland State University, which is located in vibrant downtown Portland. The residence halls are within walking distance of public transportation, restaurants, stores, the campus fitness center, and parks. Each student will share a room with another DukeEngage student of the same gender. The rooms include two beds, desks, closets, kitchenette, and a bathroom. Students will have the ability to cook in their kitchenette. Laundry facilities are conveniently located in the dormitory.

Students will be given a stipend to cover the costs of purchasing food and preparing meals during the summer. Portland is known for a strong local and organic food movement. There are weekly farmer's markets in Portland where students are able to buy fresh produce and baked goods. There is also a grocery store within walking distance of the housing. Additionally, students and program leaders share a group meal once per week.

If you do not eat certain types of food for cultural, religious or personal reasons, please contact the DukeEngage office, dukeengage@duke.edu, to discuss whether or not your dietary needs can be reasonably accommodated at this program site.

Transportation: DukeEngage provides a stipend for or arranges transportation to and from community partner placements and all program activities, utilizing public transportation wherever feasible. Students will be given a public transportation pass to use during the duration of their time in Portland, which covers transportation on the light rail, bus, and streetcar. Because PSU is located so centrally within the city, students are able to get around the city with relative ease. Students will commute individually or in pairs to their work sites each day. Most commutes are between 10-25 minutes, though one or two students will have slightly longer commutes. Portland is also very bike- and pedestrian-friendly. If you bike, you will be required to wear a helmet. For program enrichment activities where public transportation is not an option, students will be driven in rental vans by program staff.

Communication: We assume all students will have a personal cell phone for program-related and emergency communication. Students will have internet access through Portland State University.

Local Safety and Security; Cultural Norms, Mores and Practices: DukeEngage strongly advises all applicants to familiarize themselves with the challenges travelers commonly encounter at this program site in order to make an informed application decision. We recommend starting with the [Diversity, Identity and Global Travel section](#) of the DukeEngage website.

Opportunities for Reflection: There will be weekly reflection sessions to which students will be expected to actively contribute. In preparation for these reflection sessions, students will often be asked to complete assigned readings and, in some cases, to respond/reflect in writing. In addition to contributing to and attending the weekly reflection sessions, students will be expected to post frequently on the program blog. Students will have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on both the program themes and specific topics that connect to their placements or life in Portland. More generally, there will be a chance to reflect such questions as: What is service? What is privilege? What is the relationship between poverty, service, community and the environment? What is sustainability, and what are we sustaining? What is the relationship between the work I am doing with my community partner organization and the broader goals of environment and conservation? What are the roles of the government, nonprofit sector, corporations, and the informal sector in achieving environmental sustainability goals?

Other Opportunities: Students will be at their service placements from 9 or 10am until 4 or 5pm each workday.

During the work week, students will usually have two group commitments in the evening, generally from about 6:30-8:30pm. On the weekends, students will have more free time, but approximately one full day per weekend will involve a group enrichment activity designed to deepen students' understanding of Oregon's diverse natural and social landscape. Examples include immersion in urban neighborhoods and protected rural areas, hiking trips to nearby mountains and parks, a weekend trip to an old growth forest, and perhaps a camping trip to one of the state's famed natural areas. While there will be some down time, students should not anticipate a great deal of autonomy. Open water swimming is not a sponsored activity in any DukeEngage program.

More Information

- *City Limits: Walking Portland's Boundary*, by David Oates
- *Fugitives and Refugees: A Walk in Portland Oregon* by Chuck Palahniuk
- *Zinester's Guide to Portland: A Low/No Budget Guide to the Rose City* by Shawn Granton
- <https://www.outsideonline.com/2142326/environmentalism-must-confront-its-social-justice-sins>