

## **DENIN Environmental Scholars Internships**

Dates of internship: June 10, 2019 – August 16, 2019

Location: University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19711

Number of positions available: 1

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kelly Davidson

Graduate Student Mentor: Melissa Langer

Professional Staff Mentor:

**Project Title:** Social Networks and Oyster Consumption (Social Dimensions)

### **Research Description:**

This study aims to understand the impact of social networks and peer influence on the consumption of oysters, an eco-friendly food. Using a framed experiment we will identify the extent to which individuals adjust consumption preferences based on peers' preferences for oysters. The social influence on oyster consumption will be measured against two other food commodities: a non-social food and a food subject to high social influence. In addition to revealing preferences for food items, participants will be asked to identify their relationships to other individuals in the experiment group and to rate the extent to which they trust those individuals' opinions. We hypothesize that oyster consumption is subject to social influence. This study will produce a web of influence for oyster demand. Furthermore, we will identify how factors such as relationship and trust within social groups influence individual consumer behavior.

### **Research Questions:**

1. To what extent do social networks influence oyster consumption?
2. Do individuals update consumption decisions based on the trust of others in a social group?

Research Interns will be engaged primarily with the research project described above, but interns will have opportunities to be involved in other projects that are part of the Social Dimensions research for Project WiCCED ([projectwicced.org](http://projectwicced.org)); See Internship Descriptions for the following projects to learn about other Social Dimensions research opportunities:

- Social Networks and Oyster Consumption
- Enhancing Farmers' Adoption of Decision Support Tools to Improve Irrigation Management in Delaware
- Experimental economics study of groundwater management

## Student Learning Objectives: Professional and Research Skills

The DENIN scholars program helps students develop skills that foster future research interest and professional success. This internship focuses on the development of the following professional and scientific skills.

| Broad Professional Skills   | Specific Skills   |
|---|---|
| Planning and time management  | Ability to set and complete specific foals of varying scope   |
| Express ideas in writing  | Write descriptions of research procedures, create a poster of your research, communicate via email professionally and in a timely and consistent fashion  |
| Express ideas verbally  | Discuss research activity in lab meetings, present poster at symposium  |
| Work independently  | Independent work ethic – work independently or with peers to problem solve  |
| Develop professional network  | Work with lab team and broader Social Dimensions and Project WiCCED team to develop professional network, and utilize peer-groups to problem solve.   |
| Maintain professional attitude and work principles (i.e. integrity, responsibility, diligence, following ethical standards) | Be on time, learn procedures, ask questions if unsure, respect everyone you work with, complete and maintain Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification to work with human subjects in research |

| Broad Scientific Research Skills                                | Specific Skills   |
|---|---|
| Understand scientific terms                                     | Behavioral, experimental and environmental economics  |
| Locate scientific articles and resources                        | Conduct searches for literature on environmental valuation  |
| Understand research questions                                   |   |
| Read and understand research articles                           |   |
| Apply research tools and techniques in research experiments     | Participate in the development of and data collection of surveys to quantify willingness to pay for water quality improvements. |
| Understand, apply, and explain scientific concepts and theories | In lab meetings, with lab personnel, and during research symposium  |

### Prerequisites:

Introductory experience with economics (e.g., successful completion of APEC 100, APEC 150, ECON 101, or similar course)

### Work Environment and Expectations:

Office/economics laboratory environment: Work will primarily take place in 025 Townsend Hall. Hours are flexibly determined between student and mentor.

Students will work part time during the fall and spring semesters, and full time during UD Winter Session, January 7-February 8, 2019. Students will also participate in a retreat, communications workshop, and end-of-internship spring symposium.

**Stipend:**

\$3,500 (Direct deposit is required.)

**Funding Source:**

National Science Foundation, Delaware EPSCoR Track I

**How to apply:**

[https://ugresearch.udel.edu/PUB\\_Program.aspx](https://ugresearch.udel.edu/PUB_Program.aspx)