SUSTAINABILITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Summer 2020

The UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) is pleased to offer current UBC graduate students the opportunity to work on funded sustainability internship projects. Successful candidates work under the mentorship of a partner organization, and are immersed in real world learning where they can apply their research skills and contribute to advancing sustainability across the region.

- Visit the Sustainability Scholars Program website to learn how the program works and to apply.
- Be sure to review the application guide to confirm your eligibility before applying.
- **Applications close at midnight on Sunday February 2, 2020.**

Research project title: Understanding the best way to advance natural capital valuation (economic / social / and health benefits) of Vancouver's parks and open spaces

Research supports the following policies -

☒ Healthy City Strategy
Specific goal area (s): Active Living and Getting outside, Environments to Thrive In
☒ Other: VanPlay, Biodiversity Strategy, Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan

Outline scope of project and why it is of value to the City of Vancouver and describe how and when the scholar's work will be actionable

Vancouver is a rapidly growing city, with high demands for municipal land, and some of the lowest urban park provision amongst Canadian cities. For a variety of reasons, informed valuations of the benefits provided by existing municipal parks would be beneficial.

Scope of work:

- Undertake a literature review of the best practices used to value the services and benefits provided by park spaces, primarily at municipal scale, but also provincial and national;
- Meet other local agencies that have demonstrated interest or have experience in natural capital valuation including the Vancouver Economic Commission, District of West Vancouver, David Suzuki Foundation, and Smart Prosperity Institute;
- Recommend a Vancouver-specific methodology to quantify valuation that can be applied to various recreational park open spaces and natural areas in the system;
- If time permits, test the methodology with an example valuation of a few Vancouver parks, noting measurable factors where data is available, such as: size, elements, sunlight shading by buildings, transportation noise tranquility, tree canopy cover, unnatural light level, etc.

Why this work is of value:

- The recently adopted VanPlay overarching strategy asks the Park Board to consider an equity lens in park provision, and the value of the services provided by parks is an important consideration in equitable provision.
- While green infrastructure benefits such as air purification, shading, and stormwater filtration are relatively known, other benefits of parks and open spaces such as deferred healthcare costs, and business talent recruitment could be explored
- According to a recent UK study produced by eftec "the cost of managing the 200 open spaces in the [London] borough of [Barnet] is less than 10% of the benefits they provide"
- Assigning and valuing tangible benefits could spark more support for park land acquisitions, public access, green infrastructure, and biodiversity projects and aid in the design of future parks, and park redevelopments

Deliverables

- An inventory of regional and other municipal approaches to valuing natural capital, their strengths and weaknesses for this specific application (the number of regions/municipalities will be determined based on the project time window and in discussion with the Scholar)
- A report which analyses aspects of natural capital valuation value and recommends one that is most suitable for the Vancouver Park Board
- If time permits, example comparisons of Vancouver's parks, noting measurable factors where data is available, such as: size, elements, sunlight shading by buildings, transportation noise tranquility, tree canopy cover, unnatural light level, etc.
- A shape file/GIS layer showing "natural capital value" of the methodology applied to a few parks in this city
- A public facing final report (or executive summary) for the UBC USI website

Time Commitment

- This project will take 250 hours to complete.
- This project must be completed between May 4 and August 14, 2020
- The scholar is to complete hours between 9am and 5pm, weekdays, approximately 22 hours per week.

Skill set/background required/preferred

☒ Excellent research and writing skills.
☒ Demonstrated interest in nature experiences in urban environments, the health and wellness value of feeling connected to nature.
☒ Strong technical writing skills
☒ Familiarity with research methodologies and survey techniques
☒ Strong analytical skills
☒ Ability to work independently
☒ Project management and organizational skills
☒ GIS training or experience.
☒ Familiarity with qualitative research methodologies and implementation
☒ Familiarity with quantitative research methodologies and implementation
☒ Comfortable interacting with strangers to conduct public/in person surveys
☒ Familiarity with economics
☒ Familiarity with urban planning
☒ Familiarity with natural capital valuation an asset

Applications close **midnight Sunday February 2, 2020**.

Apply here: http://sustain.ubc.ca/scholarsapply

Contact Karen Taylor at sustainability.scholars@ubc.ca if you have questions

Useful Resources

Below are some links to useful resources to help you with your resume and cover letter (there are many more online). Some of these resources also provide information on preparing for your interview.

https://students.ubc.ca/career/career-resources/resumes-cover-letters-curricula-vitae

https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-pathways-success

https://www.grad.ubc.ca/cover-letter-cv-resume-templates-ubc-career-services

The Centre for Student Involvement & Careers will host a resume & cover letter webinar tailored for graduate students on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 from 12:00-1:30. Registration will open approximately two weeks before the webinar, and can be accessed at Careers Online.