



## 2008 Wesleyan University Summer Experience Grant Application

*When completed, save this application as a Word document and submit through MyCRC by Tuesday, March 4, 2008, at 11:59 p.m. See the Quick Start Sheet for submittal instructions. Please be aware that this is a firm deadline: you will not be able to apply after this date and time. Hard-copy applications will not be accepted.*

Your Name:	Arielle Berrick		
Campus Box:		Campus Phone:	
E-mail Address:		Are you a U.S. Citizen?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>
Major(s):	History and Religion		
Home Address:			
Home Phone:			
Organization Name:	Aprovecho		
Sponsor Name & Title:	Rosemary Kirincic, Internship Coordinator		
Address:			
Sponsor Phone:		Sponsor Fax:	na
Sponsor E-mail:			
Dates of Employment:	June 16 – August 8		

Preface: Since I have taken a leave of absence, I have not completed four full semesters at Wesleyan. However, I am receiving credit during my leave, and will have the full sixteen credits by the end of the spring semester. When I return to Wesleyan, I intend to graduate with my original class, 2010. I have checked with the CRC, the registrar, and my class dean, Noel Garrett (who has offered to vouch for my credits) about my eligibility for the Wesleyan Summer Experience Grant.

1. Provide a brief overview of the organization for which you will intern or program/project you are developing.

The Aprovecho Research and Education Centers are non-profit organizations committed to a hands-on sustainable lifestyle. The Research Center is dedicated to designing and improving energy efficient, environmentally friendly or “appropriate” technologies. Best known for their innovative stove designs, the center seeks low-cost, low-maintenance technological solutions for third world countries with limited available building materials. Additionally, they serve as consultants to NGOs and help develop projects worldwide. Concurrently, the Educational Center promotes useful research and analysis in sustainability for students of all ages. The primary function of the center is to offer ten week long internships that combine four key subjects: appropriate technology, sustainable forestry, organic agriculture and permaculture, into one curriculum. The Permaculture Certification, which has recently become a part of every internship experience at Aprovecho, allows interns to integrate the principles of permaculture with the three other key subjects. Permaculture is defined by both centers as the study of natural systems and how they can inform construction and community. Located between the Oregon Cascades and Coastal Ranges, Aprovecho is forty-acres of forest, garden, and campus protected by the Agricultural and Community Trust.

2. Briefly provide details of the internship or experience, including responsibilities and tasks.

Aprovecho offers spring, summer, and fall live-in internships, each with a seasonal focus. The summer internship combines a permaculture certification with general sustainable living skills. Each newly acquired skill is put into practice in an everyday routine. The classroom atmosphere is a mix of outdoor activities and indoor lecture/discussion. Students are expected to complete an independent project of their choice that may revolve around any of the four core subjects. Interns also travel to neighboring sites, meeting and learning from local community farmers, artists, and craftsmen. Living arrangements include straw bale insulated dormitories and the expectation that students participate regularly in all varieties of food production. Weekends are unscheduled, allowing interns to explore natural surroundings, work on alternative projects, or create programming for a local radio station. The Aprovecho internship is unconventional in relation to other undergraduate internships available. I will not be working in an office running clerical errands and networking for my summer. Instead, I will be totally immersed in an experiential and educational venture specifically geared towards knowledge and application of practical skills in sustainable living.

3. How have you communicated with the employer and determined mutual interest?

I received an acceptance letter and packet on February 9. The packet included a course syllabus, a suggested reading list, a publication, and a form requesting a refundable deposit reserving my space in the program. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, I called the Aprovecho Education Center and spoke to Josh Fattal, an appropriate technologies teacher, who agreed to give me details about the internship instead of the internship coordinator, Rosemary Kirincic. I explained that I am applying for a grant and that my enrollment depends on financial aid. He suggested that I send in the deposit form to hold my place and specify that I could only pay the lowest tuition rate. He also offered to write a letter to the grant committee about Aprovecho. According to Josh, fourteen summer interns, in addition to the detailed coursework, devise independent projects that in the past have ranged from building bread ovens and bike-powered washing machines to researching crop cultivation and composting. Projects are chiefly in the intern's area of interest and generally require hands-on commitment. Most coursework happens on campus, but weekends allow recreational exploration in the surrounding areas, including the city of Eugene. After the internship, Josh Fattal explained that students apply their knowledge to their area of interest, whether it is a sustainable profession or a college campus. He expressed his belief that the internship gives students a different outlook and the ability to educate others. Finally, we spoke about two Haitian students who are trying to arrange sponsorship for the program so that they can attend. I told him I would be excited to continue speaking Kreyol into the summer.

4. How will this experience enhance or broaden your career goals?

In Michael Roth's inaugural address at Wesleyan, he stresses the institution's obligation to provide opportunities to promote student participation in local, national and global endeavors. I believe that this is the essence of the Wesleyan Summer Experience Grant: to transport and transform students, granting them a new perspective and perhaps a defined path. Roth's statements also make the connection between Academia and activism. While college campuses were once catalysts for change, contemporary sources report an alarming degree of apathy among student bodies. I share Roth's ambition to reintegrate higher education with worldly awareness as part of the Wesleyan experience. This summer, I wish to combine my academic commitments with my interest in environmental advocacy by enrolling in the Aprovecho program, learning practical skills and expanding upon my semester abroad.

At Wesleyan, I was offered the opportunity to study a diverse range of subjects and materials. Taking full advantage, I have taken classes in experimental music, West African dance, astronomy, philosophy, medieval history, and finally religion. Owing to a fondness for the curriculum and a belief that both courses of study permeate into all branches of the social sciences, I have chosen to declare a major in Religion and History. In addition to my studies at school, I decided to join the Live Wolves Coop, devoted to community dinners made with healthy, local, vegan food. Though I am not vegan, my coop membership afforded a welcome respite from the academic rigor (and often unhealthy lifestyle) of college: an opportunity for me to find some much needed community. Twice a week, the coop cooked meals together, sharing recipes and stories from our assorted backgrounds. Amid the controversial change in food provider, I felt comfortable working with other students towards a school sponsored alternative, a guaranteed good meal. I also felt inspired by this simple example of the communal resourcefulness inherent in sustainable living.

With sustainability and my major in mind, I elected to travel to Haiti twice this spring to pursue independent research on religion and community. The decision to go on an educational leave was difficult but necessary. I wanted to work towards acquiring practical skills and broaden my perspective through travel. The education in the field program granted me the ability to create a hands-on venture from the resources available. I arranged to receive credit in conjunction with my RELI

273 (Vodou in Haiti, Voodoo in Hollywood) professor for a lengthy paper detailing my experiences and relating them to my in-class research.

Since December, I have been teaching myself Haitian Kreyol with the assistance of three Haitian students from my community. On February 18<sup>th</sup> and again on April 18<sup>th</sup>, I will travel with a group of artists, teachers, and students to Matenwa in Haiti to assist in a progressive school and arts center. The Starfish Arts and Vocational Center works alongside Matenwa Community Learning Center to promote education and artisan training, easing local socioeconomic strains. Both the arts center and the school set a regional example for change in the Haitian educational system, which remains largely either religiously affiliated or nonexistent.

In Matenwa, as in all of Haiti, everything is put to some use: nothing is wasted. There is no electricity (the school computers are either solar powered or have a crank) nor running water and food is grown, harvested, and consumed in the community. Upon arrival, I will live with a host family, teach English (while continuing to learn Kreyol), assist my companions, and conduct a series of interviews on Vodou and Christianity. In April I will also help build a kiln from available materials, enabling a project to process local clay producing simple refrigeration systems from two pots and wet sand. Haiti is absolutely the most impoverished nation in the world. I look forward to being forced to live outside of what feels “comfortable”. I anticipate that I will be shocked by what I find.

After moving from a university setting to the opposite pole of a real-life setting, this summer experience would offer me the missing piece: an enhanced connection between learning and living. Becoming more educated about sustainability would complement my experience in Haiti and grant me the ability to continue an educational exchange. Within the last few months, I have become very interested in working towards a permaculture certification. Permaculture is an agricultural design technique that works to minimize human-caused damage to the environment and increase energy efficient productivity to the point of self-sufficiency. Typically, groups of people that practice permaculture fall under the category of “intentional communities” and stress a lifestyle guided by ethics. The Aprovecho Education Center not only offers a permaculture program as part of its summer internship, but expands its scope to include appropriate technology, forestry, and agriculture. Each field interacts and collaborates with the others, stressing interdependency and mutual purpose. I am particularly intrigued by the forestry program because Haiti is a country devastated by deforestation. Once a tropical island (much like its neighbor the Dominican Republic), Haiti was stripped of all its trees, causing erosion and nutrient-poor soil. This continues to be a persistent issue that perpetuates poverty and environmental risks.

The internship is a live-in full-time educational commitment. I will be exploring another perspective and a very specific way of life. I am drawn to the idea of purposeful and thoughtful living: living that inspires other people to do the same by example. However I feel a conflict between the reputation of seclusion associated with “intentional community” and broader environmental work that seeks to improve conditions through active recruitment and worldly involvement. I would hope for a happy medium and am seeking the knowledge base to begin that kind of philosophical and realistic search. The essence of my attraction to the Aprovecho program is its dual functions as an educational outlet and an immersion experience in sustainability.

With the insight and skills acquired in the program, I would carry with me the tools to transition from the theoretical to the practical. I have read about major food-related issues: genetic modification, agribusiness, and trade agreements. Consumerism, renewable energy, and fuel efficiency have all become hot button topics, especially in this election year. But so far my personal exposure to these subjects has been limited. The Aprovecho internship in conjunction with my travels to Haiti would bring sustainability out of the news and into my life, educationally and professionally. After Wesleyan, I would like to become involved with the Peace Corps, or another form of relief organization, where my work in Haiti and sustainability can be put to use. I also feel a deep commitment to education; both my parents are teachers, and I have always felt comfortable in a classroom. Graduate school is a sincere objective and teaching a future possibility.

I have been so fortunate to be able to attend Wesleyan University and take advantage of opportunities like these. This will become especially clear, I am sure, when I travel to Haiti. If I can attend the internship, this will be the first time in six years that I have not held several summer jobs on Cape Cod, where I live. My earnings from last summer, previously allotted to my second semester student contribution and car insurance payments, are financing my two trips to Haiti. When this is gone, I have no other savings. My parents have always done their best to get me where I need to be but some things are simply unaffordable. An opportunity like Aprovecho would not be a viable option unless I receive much needed assistance.