



PROGRAM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITIES: HOW EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INTERNSHIPS CAN IMPROVE DIVERSITY

Session A, Breakout Room #: 12

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The diversity of the environmental field is lacking and recruitment efforts do not currently appeal to minorities due to there being no focus on their needs and interests. However, a diverse set of perspectives is essential to generating creative solutions to environmental problems. The purpose of this study was to find out what recruitment strategies appeal to different demographics so that changes in tactics could be made. Through my internship with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), I administered surveys to investigate the question of what factors students consider when searching for an internship. I also conducted interviews to get a more in-depth look at individual experiences with NOAA and internships. In addition to that, I performed a literature review to find information on strategies that had not previously been considered. I found that students are mainly looking for work experience through internships and have fairly little knowledge of opportunities with NOAA outside of environmental majors. They also expressed difficulty with finding opportunities that applied to them. So to increase diversity in recruitment, more students should be made aware of opportunities, even those outside of environmental majors. The opportunities should also focus more on the specific features that minorities search for in internships, such as pay, particular work experience, and focus on issues related to communities they are part of, rather than more generalized projects that may not appeal to them specifically.