



2022

## Rick Larson Campaign Intern

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# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



**Internship Title:** Rick Larsen Campaign Intern

**Student Name:** Katie Blair

**Internship Dates:** June 6, 2022 - November 8, 2022

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**STUDENT SIGNATURE** 

**DATE:** November 18, 2022

Katie Blair

Internship Report

ENVS 498B

**Rick Larsen Campaign Intern (June-November 2022)**

For my internship, I was a campaign intern with Congressman Rick Larsen. I was interested in this internship initially because I knew that it would expose me to local politics and involve me directly with the community in Whatcom and Skagit counties. That was important to me because, while I am only from Snohomish county, I still did not know much about local politics in this area. I feel that in my Environmental Policy major and my Environmental Justice minor, it was very important to me to be exposed to local politics and understand what politically is happening in the community around me. For me, Environmental Justice can only be understood and accomplished if you understand the local implications and real-life happenings in the area you are trying to support. Additionally, for my Environmental Policy major I feel that understanding how politics directly affects communities is important to comprehend.

Rick Larsen drew me in as a candidate because one of the main issues that he focuses on and champions are environmental issues. Because he is a Washington local, he understands the cultural importance of keeping Washington's environment safe as well as keeping the people safe. Some ways that he is accomplishing this is that he is supporting alternative energy solutions as well as helping to preserve existing environmental standards. Since environmental issues are so crucial to me, I knew I could support him. Additionally, I was

excited about this internship and the opportunity to see the mechanics of politics up close from a Congressman.

One of the biggest parts of this internship that I enjoyed was going out and canvassing because that allowed me to have conversations with voters and community members. During the campaign, we canvassed in many different ways. We went door to door to inform voters of Rick Larsen specifically or general things about the election, we called voters to inform voters of Rick Larsen specifically or general things about the election, and we attended many different functions with other constituents and volunteers to garner support for the election.

During these events or calls, we would have the opportunity to hear voters in the community voice their opinions on how things in government were affecting them. Once, I was doorbelling with one of my supervisors in an apartment complex in Mount Vernon. On one of the doors, a single mom answered the door and began to talk to us about how she and her young son had moved around because housing had become far too expensive for just the two of them. She also talked about how her job, as a nurse, did not pay enough for just the two of them to live off.

Another time I was calling voters and a woman from Edmonds was talking to me about how the government should allocate funds to mental health services. She was a social worker and discussed this issue with me as well as the affordable housing issues that she sees in her line of work. Many people on calls would discuss with me their fears over the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. I enjoyed this aspect of my internship because it is so easy to turn on the news, hear what is going on, and then turn it off. But the people that are being

affected by all of this stuff are our neighbors or just someone walking down the street.

Everyone is impacted by what happens in politics whether they know it or not.

One class that prepared me for this internship was the ENVS 499D seminar I took last Spring with Kate Darby. In that class, we focused on the local issue of the lack of food access in the east foothills of Whatcom County. We spent a lot of time researching and thinking about solutions for a local issue. At the end of the class, we all went volunteering at the Foothills Food Bank to support the community and see the real implications of everything that we had been learning. This prepared me for my internship because the discussions I had in that class involving Environmental Justice as well as the actual work that we did allowed me to go into this internship with an understanding of the voters that I was talking to.

Another class that prepared me for this internship was ENVS 467: Power, Privilege, and the Environment that I also took last spring with Kate Darby. In this class, we spent a lot of time discussing how identity shapes the way that people interact with the environment as well as systems that are in place that oppress certain groups causing environmental injustice. This understanding of how identity affects the way that people view not only the environment but pretty much everything else in their lives prepared me to reach out to voters and truly understand where they were coming from. Learning the perspectives of others and taking time to understand why people might have certain concerns or questions was very impactful.

My learning objectives were adequately met by this internship. I intended to learn the ins and outs of politics through experience, which I did by asking questions to my supervisor who has been working in politics for years, and Rick Larsen himself who has been working in politics for years. By asking both them and other people involved in politics that I met

questions I learned a lot about politics on a local, state, and federal level. In that same vein, I was able to gain a better understanding of how the political system works in practice. And especially how politics works at the local level which was very important to me. This experience provided me with opportunities and experiences in politics that I could not learn in a classroom setting. Especially since I would be working closely with people that have been working in politics for their whole careers.

From this internship, I also hoped to gain experience in and learn about building relationships with communities and what that looks like from the perspective of people that work in government. I gained skills in interacting with politicians, local/ city governments, and community members, which was very exciting for me as this was my first experience doing so in a professional capacity. With my Environmental Justice minor, I am very passionate about community engagement and how I can use my degree to meaningfully help impact communities. I accomplished that through this internship as I spent a lot of time working with community members and hearing their concerns. Community engagement was one of the most impactful things that I accomplished in this internship, as well as one of my favorite things that I was able to do.

Overall, this internship met my needs to be meaningfully involved in local communities and learn more about politics. After this internship, I am excited to see where my degree takes me and what meaningful change I can help bring about in communities. I am also excited to see where my Environmental Policy degree will take me in the realm of politics and how I can fit into the space to make positive change for communities.

*Doorbelling  
in June*



*Fourth of July  
Parade*







*Sign waving with Congressman Rick Larsen*