



2023

## LEAD Web Development and Outreach Intern

Mate Pasztor

*Western Washington University*

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# I. CONTRACT

## COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



**Internship Title:** Web Development and Outreach Intern

**Organization Worked For:** L.E.A.D.

**Student Name:** Mate Z. Pasztor

**Internship Dates:** 10/05/2022 06/09/2023

**Faculty Advisor Name:** Rebekah Paci-Green

**Department:** ENVS

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**STUDENT SIGNATURE** Mate Zoltan Gabor Pasztor

**DATE:** 05/0/2023

## II. CONTRACT

# COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT



## Internship/Learning Agreement

Sec on 1 – Student Identification			
Last Name, First Name:	Pasztor Mate	Western ID:	W01573556
Email Address	pasztom@wwu.edu	Major/PreMajor	Environmental Studies Community Resilience and Justice Emphasis
Sec on 2 – Registration Information			
Total Credits:	4	Faculty Advisor:	Rebekah Paci-Green
Internship Start Date:	10/05/2022	Internship End Date:	06/09/2023
Number Credits Per Quarter (F/W/S/Sum)	1 Fall 2 Winter 1 Spring		
<p><i>Note: You must be registered for credits during quarters you perform <b>any part</b> of the internship work (Including Summer Session) to include writing of reports...this can be spread over multiple quarters. You are expected to register an appropriate number of credits based on anticipated hours worked BY Quarter (Example: Working 120 hours during Summer = 4 Credits Summer Enrollment)</i></p>			
Sec on 3 – Organization for Internship			
Organization Name:	LEAD		
Intern Supervisor Name	Ava Stone and Brandon McWilliams		

Mailing Address:	516 E College Way, Bellingham, WA 98225
Email Address:	Lead@wwu.edu
Phone Number:	

Descrip on of Du es (Or A ach Job Descrip on): I am to assist to web development and also outreach. Outreach will consist of contac ng local organiza ons and businesses that the LEAD program will be able to partner with.

**Sec on 4 – Learning Objec ves**

What do I intend to learn from this experience: I hope to learn about naviga ng systems that I’m not accustomed to. I’ve been working in the field since I was 8 years old but the majority of my work was with my family. I also hope to gain experience in loca ng and communica ng with organiza ons and developing a network. I intend to learn more about the environmental issues that are prevalent in both our community and in general and then work on communica ng those issues to the public. As for web development. I would like to learn what it can take to get a web page up and the bureaucracy around that.

How does this experience contribute to my educational goals: I want to work in crisis response and management, and the most important thing in a crisis is to network. I want to develop skills in building a network. The web development skills will get me more accustomed to building an interface that the public will be able to interact with. Training in crisis response and management is extremely crucial in the field. I expect to learn and gain experience in training and leading groups through LEAD.

If Faculty require any additional Learning Objectives, they should be listed here:

**Sec on 5 - Deadlines, Evaluation, and Assessment (Completed by faculty advisor)**

<p>Meet with Advisor: Once a Quarter</p> <p>First Draft Due: Week 8 of final quarter of internship</p> <p>Final Draft Due: Monday of Finals week of final quarter of internship</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">Yes No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Additional Learning Objectives no (as assigned by faculty)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oral Presentation Required no</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Daily/Weekly Log Required yes</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Yes No	Additional Learning Objectives no (as assigned by faculty)		Oral Presentation Required no		Daily/Weekly Log Required yes	
	Yes No								
Additional Learning Objectives no (as assigned by faculty)									
Oral Presentation Required no									
Daily/Weekly Log Required yes									

**Sec on 6 – Students Certification**

I certify that I have read the University Policy on Risk Management Considerations for Student Internships and I will report any injuries suffered while performing internship promptly to WWU. [http://www.wvu.edu/bfa/Risk\\_Mgmt/documents/Internship%20Considerations%20\(14\).pdf](http://www.wvu.edu/bfa/Risk_Mgmt/documents/Internship%20Considerations%20(14).pdf)

I will endeavor to represent myself and my college well and will abide by the relevant policies, procedures and ethical standards of the university and the internship organization.

I understand that **30-hours of work per credit earned is expected** for an internship. I understand that I am expected to enroll in a number of credits commensurate with hours worked each quarter.

<p>Student's Signature/Date</p>	<p>Máté Pásztor</p>
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**Sec on 7 – Internship Site Supervisor Cer fication**

I have reviewed the student's indicated learning objectives and on behalf of my organization agree:

- To enrich the Student's knowledge by orienting him/her to the occupation, the work setting, and the responsibilities relating to the assignment
- To regularly evaluate/provide feedback to student on progress, projects and areas of growth
- At or near the completion of the assignment to provide an evaluation of the student's performance
- To review and approve the Student's Learning Plan and communicate with the college if areas are not going to be met.
- To supply the student with, and abide by the organization's policy against discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace
- To contact the instructor or the College of the Environment Internship Coordinator (360) 650-3646, [ed.weber@wwu.edu](mailto:ed.weber@wwu.edu) should any problems arise

<p>Internship Site Supervisor Signature/Date</p>	<p><i>Brandon McWilliams</i> 5/30/2023</p>
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**Sec on 8 – Faculty Advisor Cer fication**

I certify that the student intern and I have reached agreement on the learning objectives and academic expectations for this experience. These objectives are challenging and enriching to the student's academic and/or career goals. I will award grades a satisfactory completion of all learning objectives/tasks/reports assigned.

<p>Faculty Advisor's Signature/Date</p>	
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**Sec on 9 – College of the Environment Internship Coordinator**

Actions:

1. Review Agreement
2. Update Course Override
3. File Agreement in Student Records
4. Communicate with Employers as necessary during internship

### III. INTRODUCTION

I worked for L.E.A.D. over the course of the school year. I worked approximately an average of four hours a week throughout, working a total of somewhere around 120 to 130 hours for the internship. L.E.A.D., Learning Environment Action & Discovery, is a program through the College of Environment started by Steven Hollenhorst, a professor at the College of Environment. The program has two graduate student co-directors, Ava Stone, second year, and Brandon McWilliams, first year. At the end of the year the first year will have to find a replacement as the second year graduates. There are weekly work parties that are open to the public to participate in, but the majority of our volunteers are undergraduate students who are either seeking out extra credit or just want to be outside. L.E.A.D. is almost entirely student-run, with faculty engagement at a minimum. Our major partnerships were with the grounds departments, who collected our weeds, provided us tools, and would also provide us work-sites to work at when we needed me to plan; various conservation agencies and organizations, where we received volunteers, labor, and donated plants; the Sustainability, Justice, and Equity Fund (SEJF), who provided us with a grant to purchase plants and tools; as well as the City of Bellingham who sponsored our Earth Day event. Prior to this year, L.E.A.D. was a program that didn't have any major project to slowly work on, but instead would just weed around campus and have small work parties. Stone, and McWilliams, wanted to change L.E.A.D.'s purpose, and this year the program became project-based and worked on an abandoned site near Western Washington University's student dorm Higginson parking lot. At this site, we weeded out different invasive species and then used the Miyawaki method to reforest and revitalize the space. My role as an intern didn't have me working with the Miyawaki method much, so my knowledge is limited, but essentially, roughly a foot of soil is taken from the site, mixed with biomaterial, and put back into the environment. Afterward, there are four groups of plants, high canopy, mid-canopy, bush, and ferns, planted in high density, which aims to rapidly create a climax forest. My role was to attend weekly work parties, redevelop the website, and conduct community outreach.

### IV. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This year was a major transformation for L.E.A.D. Prior to this year, according to co-director of L.E.A.D., Ava Stone, interns had few responsibilities. Interns would go to work parties every week but had almost nothing to do outside of that. This was likely a result of L.E.A.D.'s old format of going from site to site, and not investing in a space to improve and develop it. With shifting to a project-based program, Ava Stone and Brandon McWilliams wanted specialized interns who would still participate in the work parties, but also fulfill specific roles. I was hired as the Web Development and Outreach Intern.

My responsibility for web development was tedious, requiring a lot of research and training. I had to learn how to navigate the school's bureaucracy to update our old website, which resulted in me

having to make a new website. The tasks that were required of me evolved as I learned about the web development department of the College of the Environment. I underwent a course through the fall to be authorized as a web developer at Western Washington University. This process took longer than I had anticipated which inhibited my ability to a end to some of my other tasks. I had expected this process to be done halfway through the quarter, and then McWilliams and I were planning to build the skeleton of the new website. This process instead took the entirety of the fall quarter because the College of the Environment was also redesigning its website at the same time, and I had to be trained on how to make L.E.A.D. compatible with this new design direction.

Following the authorizing process, I worked closely with Jean Nissen whose help was crucial throughout the development of L.E.A.D.'s new website. I frequently conversed with my team who are not literate in web design and coding and had to translate the team's needs to Jean, as well as the capabilities of web tech to the team. Much of this time was spent emailing back and forth and having repeated meetings with my team as we all came to a cumulative understanding of what we wanted and needed. This concluded in the base of the website being built by Jean, with myself following through and fleshing out the content and adding the necessary information that properly described L.E.A.D. and how to get involved.

One of my other responsibilities was initially to also reach out to the community and try to integrate L.E.A.D. into the community of Bellingham as well as the student body. This responsibility felt redundant as team members would unnecessarily go through me for communications with our community. Additionally, we had a social media and communications manager who was actively trying to engage our student body. This coupled with the amount of time that the website development demanded resulted in this responsibility becoming null and dissolved across the L.E.A.D. team.

Lastly, all interns were to be involved with the work parties. At our work parties, we were mostly working at our project site. We also had two other tertiary sites when we needed more time to plan, or the grounds department needed assistance in clearing out the tertiary sites. At these events, it was my responsibility to help guide the volunteers and be an effective team member in the removal of a variety of invasive species and trash.

There was also an Earth Day event, where we all took strong leadership roles.

## V. OUTCOMES

The results of my work varied in the 3 different categories of my responsibilities. Outreach was unsuccessful due to the poor understanding our team had of what our needs were and how that role would actualize. Initially, I was able to build some connections. I had reached out to Miracle Food Network (MFN) and established a contact who would provide us with rescued food and snacks to offer at the work parties, to try and incentivize volunteers. It seemed to be a successful network established until my contact lost her job with MFN and walked away from the project. I was not able to rebuild the connection with MFN. I briefly conducted negotiations with Fourth Corners Nursery to try and acquire free plants in exchange for tax relief for their company. That was eventually picked up by L.E.A.D.

co-director Ava Stone and our Environmental Education Intern, Eva Araujo, who were better equipped to take on that conversation as they were in charge of planning the project. There were a few other things we wanted to do outreach but I found myself not having enough time with how taxing the website was.

The website took up the brunt of my work, outside of the standard work party responsibilities.



Planning and training to build the website was a tedious undertaking but I was able to complete the [L.E.A.D. website](#). To be authorized as a web designer I had to go through an extensive and highly educational accessibility training course. I learned about how websites need to be made accessible and how by making them accessible for differently abled people, they are equally accessible to abled people. I tried to incorporate these lessons into the design process of the website. Planning was complicated because we were trying to restructure the organization compared to its old vision, and the website reflected that. However, we wanted to ensure that we were able to preserve the old work of L.E.A.D. Partnering with Jean and the rest of my team resulted in us finding satisfactory resolutions. A major design element was to structure the website in a way that the person who follows after me next year is able to easily pick it up and continue our work. We were able to overcome these challenges and built a website that we as a team all feel proud of.

I worked at the L.E.A.D. work parties almost every week. In winter I was only able to catch the latter half of them because I had a class that went into half of the work party time. I spent my time pulling out ivy, blackberry, clematis, and holly. I frequently utilized various landscaping tools to overcome the vegetation. I came to be known as the holly cutter, as I would use a hand saw to cut down large holly trees, with the largest being roughly 6 to 7 inches in diameter. I would also assist in demonstrating tool safety and vegetation removal at the start of the work parties. Outside of that, I worked to maintain an upbeat attitude during the parties by trying to keep my spirits high and assist in a joyous environment. I feel this was successful because we frequently had 10-20 volunteers every week with many of them being regulars.

The Earth Day event was a large work project that we were all preparing for since the fall. This was to be the event that would nearly conclude the project, with our team wrapping up the finishing touches afterward. This was an extensive project that required a lot of planning and organization between the partnerships with a lot of agencies, programs, and organizations. We expected to have roughly 500 volunteers, and while I never got the official head count, it definitely looked like that many people. The vast majority of them weren't working specifically on our site, however. We had 50 people throughout the day. Our team of volunteers spent their time planting trees and brush as well as spreading mulch. At first, my role was to lead one of the quadrants that we had broken the site into. Eventually, my role evolved to run the team of wheel borrowers who were spreading mulch throughout the site. This was to ensure that everyone had mulch to use whilst planting and also was able to evenly spread it across the site.







## VI. ASSESSMENT

Overall I would say that the project was successful because we achieved nearly all of our objectives. There were certain dynamics that might not have been as successful as we would have hoped but in the end, the site is roughly 90-95% complete and we have a fully working website. I'm impressed by the effectiveness of L.E.A.D. and how we were a small team who all were limited by our hours but that didn't prevent us from achieving our objectives. My colleagues were knowledgeable and effective in their ability to plan the use of the Miyawaki method and now the most important element will be to wait and see how effective the practice is in the Pacific Northwest.

My contributions to the project sometimes felt minimal in comparison to the grander project however that was likely a result of imposter syndrome. Consciously I understand the importance of a website and the amount of experience and foundational knowledge required to achieve the task. However, when I spoke to my colleagues, it often felt so cool what they were all doing in relation to my work. This appeared to be the same way they felt when they would talk about what I was working on though, which really helped combat the imposter syndrome. I'm pleased with my work considering most of the objectives that were discussed at the start of the internship were successfully completed by the end of the year. It isn't often that you have projects that wrap up so neatly with a cute little bow.

I learned a lot through this program. I've been working since I was eight for the same organization and with some variations of the team over the years. It was very different to work with a team of different people who had different objectives. In the past, I've mostly worked in landscaping and food justice, and the construction of food gardens. This was a reforestation and restoration internship that involved a very different approach and mindset. I learned a lot about navigating existing bureaucracy to construct a website and enact the goals of a program. It was fascinating to observe how differently the planning process was approached through this organization. I've led large work parties before through my old workplace but the work parties with L.E.A.D. always felt more intense and personal than the work I did with volunteers, who would frequently just volunteer once.

I learned a lot about working in a more urban landscape with people who are unfamiliar with getting dirty. Sometimes it was amusing to me how L.E.A.D. approached tool safety and tool use, pointing out what I often felt to be obvious. However, during these moments I would look around and realize it wasn't as common sense as I thought. That was always apparent in relation to how to pull out vegetation. Most of the weeds we pulled I may not have really known by name, but I knew they were invasive. Having worked in the Pacific Northwest for nearly my whole life, I've taken a lot of how I understand space for granted.

## VI. REFLECTION

Having worked for 13 years now and for mostly the same organization, it's hard to know how I adjust to a different work environment. I often used to worry that my ability to accomplish my work was contingent on who I worked with. While, this may still be true to some extent, as I've never worked with people I don't like, working with L.E.A.D. instilled a lot of confidence. It helped me relearn my capabilities

and added to my repertoire. With my desire to work in emergency management in one capacity or another, I feel a need to have an understanding of a diverse set of fields. Restoration work has always been a weakness of mine. Working with L.E.A.D. was also great for my mental health also because, in my first year at Western, I was really missing the aspect of working outside.

L.E.A.D. fulfilled all of these objectives for me. I had to work with a very different dynamic of people than my norm which helped me broaden my understanding of the field's workplace dynamics. This further aids me in my ability to navigate these relationships in the future and broadens my professional network as my colleagues and myself further ourselves in our careers.

We had weekly meetings that made me engage with the work and constantly think about my involvement and place within the internship. This made me think critically about the abilities I had available to the team. What I learned the most was how to handle working with people who may have differing world understandings and how to push them aside to conduct the work at hand. It was an interesting experience where the work relationships I had built felt very akin to those I had growing up. This further reinforced my confidence in the workplace and the previous experience that I have.

Most of what I did were things that I have already done, outside of website development. Many of my previous skills of landscaping, team participation, management, and project development, were able to be developed and flexed through this internship. However, the website development was the most insightful. While I didn't particularly build one from scratch, I feel a lot more confident in my ability to build a website should I find myself in the position to do so.

Thinking about this experience 15 years from now will be interesting. Already having 13 years in my career, I am able to make a bit of a comparison from how I felt then, how I feel about then now, and in turn this experience. I started when I was roughly 8 or 9 and I hardly cared for the work I was doing. I was voluntold to work at the small little school garden which I thought was really boring and ring. Looking at it today, I'm very grateful for that experience and proud of my work as it blossomed into an organization servicing millions. I imagine that L.E.A.D. might be somewhat of a similar experience. Considering L.E.A.D. is undergoing a transition into a more project-based program seeking to make larger changes across campus, it was really beautiful to be at the start. A constant concern about my work was structuring it in a way that my position could easily be succeeded by the next intern. It was an empowering experience to be the designer to build a format that hopefully will carry on for who knows how long. Being on campus, it often feels as though it's so hard to make real change on campus for the better, but it was undeniable while working with L.E.A.D. that we were a force of good building a space that our community could enjoy and benefit from.

The internship was honestly run perfectly for my workload and what I wanted to do. I feel as though if I were to run an internship program one day that I would hope it is run as successfully as Ava Stone and Brandon McWilliams ran this one. The one thing I wish we were able to do was how some of the other interns and I wanted to partner with indigenous programs as we conducted restoration. This was nearly impossible to establish though due to the ephemeral quality of our positions.

## IX. APPENDICES

To whom it concerns,

Mate Pasztor completed 120 hours of work with LEAD from October 5, 2022 to June 1, 2023. They worked on a number of projects, including fully redesigning and updating the LEAD website to meet WWU's new web standards, tackling outreach to new and continuing community partners, assisting with regular work parties, and contributing to the planning and implementation of the Miyawaki mini-forest project. They excelled at their work and completed their tasks very satisfactorily.

Please contact me if there are any further questions or clarification I can provide.

5/30/2023

X *Brandon McWilliams*

Signed by: Brandon McWilliams

LEAD Co-Director