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MPA Student Profile

October 29, 2015



Scott Blair



My name is Scott Blair, and I am a [Masters of Public Administration](#) Candidate in the Institute for Public and Nonprofit Studies (IPNS). I have been interested in public service ever since I graduated from Georgia Southern with my undergraduate degree in Recreation Management. Since that time I have had the privilege of working for public and nonprofit organizations such as the USDA Forest Service and the Western Colorado Conservation Corps. I have helped manage public lands for outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation. Upon completion of my degree, I intend to work for a public organization that acts as a steward for natural resources or advocates for sustainable practices.

The IPNS's MPA program is providing me with the opportunity to advance my knowledge of how public organizations are managed and gain the skills necessary to manage them. It has been very enlightening to work for public and nonprofit organizations and then return to an academic setting to study them. I have been able to understand the concepts we learn about through my previous professional experiences and experiences shared by other students. The professors in our department do everything they can to make our courses as applicable to real life as possible. Theoretical knowledge is often coupled with tasks and exercises outside the classroom. With courses such as Grant Writing and the Local Government Practicum I have been able to provide public and nonprofit organizations with real services and products while further developing my own skills. These experiences have been valuable to me as both a student and a professional.

I chose to work for the Center for Sustainability at Georgia Southern University to complete the MPA internship requirement. The Center for Sustainability is responsible for promoting and implementing sustainable practices across campus and in the community. I have had many valuable experiences working with the center throughout the summer. I have supervised the creation of a campus garden, and collaboratively coordinated a pilot campus composting program. There are a lot of details involved in trying to launch programs or initiatives that affect multiple units in a large public organization like Georgia Southern University. My experiences in the MPA program have prepared me for the responsibilities my internship has required. I have had to coordinate with multiple departments at Georgia Southern to plan and implement the Campus Garden and Campus Composting Programs. The planning and coordination of the programs has involved setting up meetings, preparing agendas, considering what each department can offer, and organizing plans to implement the programs.

Implementing the programs has been a lot fun! Managing the creation of a sustainable vegetable garden on campus has involved the recruiting and supervision of volunteers to help build and maintain the garden. I get to play in the dirt from time to time, which is a big perk for me because I enjoy gardening and being outdoors. It's been an exciting adventure watching the garden come alive and experiencing the enthusiasm of the student volunteers. I feel honored to be part of these new initiatives at our University, and I am looking forward to continuing my employment with the Center for Sustainability this coming school year.

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