As one of the two Graphic Designers for the Office for Sustainability at Western Michigan University, it was my co-responsibility to create, edit and update certain jobs such as posters, banners, maps and brochures. With Sam Deloof as the other designer, we worked both together and independently to keep design-work going and to come up with the best possible solution. The office has a high demand for graphic design with their online presence and advertising of certain events and opportunities, so I was glad to be of assistance to that need.

The process involved a lot of collaboration and closely working with others, which was very helpful for everyone. This way, I was able to understand and find what I needed for the job and the managers were able to have what they were looking for in the project. It was also very beneficial to work with other students of varying focuses and learn more about sustainability and how to better communicate what the office values. With graphic design, it is very important to know the subject well so that you can better communicate the message.

Fortunately, with an organized system of files and photos, I was easily able to access things that I needed and share files of my own with others. A lot of the time, I used photographs owned by the office taken from certain events and activities held previously. I would then use programs such as Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign to edit photos if necessary for the design, create vector images, edit existing elements, create layouts, set text and more. Sometimes information can vary from year to year, so it was important that I kept things updated and available to be edited and easily accessible for future use.
With each project I was given, it was my goal to create organized and unified systems while still maintaining an interesting and surprising look. I made an effort to stay away from clichés, especially ones that surround the topic of sustainability, in order to keep things new and eye-catching. It was inspiring to just be in the office working, surrounded by plants and bikes and posters previously made by other students. With the positive work environment and team effort, I was able to see good results in the jobs that I was given to work on.

Even though I already had an existing and strong knowledge of the graphic design process, I learned more than I even thought I would through actually putting it to real life experience with something that I have such an interest in. I was also able to learn much more about sustainability, what that means and what we can do to help. I am very positive and thankful for my experience working for WMU’s Office for Sustainability and hope to take what I learned into my future career and lifestyle.