Front Desk Administration and Communications at the Office for Sustainability

Executive Summary

This semester, I have altered my position from the Research/Writer Intern to the Lead Front Desk & Administrative Assistant. By transitioning to this position, I had to be retrained in order to fulfill the responsibilities this position entails. My responsibilities include: editing the basic pages on the Office for Sustainability website as an author, manage the office calendar, check and answer the office email, assist with office purchasing, update and manage the front desk check list, assist with the execution of the film hosted by the Office for Sustainability, “Most Likely to Succeed” and finally, I am attempting to re-promote social media such as Facebook. These responsibilities are essential to provide the office with an organized, easily accessible environment. The approach for this new position was being trained by my supervisor, Anne Copeland. I learn new things every day since I complete different tasks every day. Because I was transferred from my position in Solid Waste Reduction, which was very specific, short term, and unique compared to many of the other projects completed in the office. I have gained new skills on how the Office for Sustainability works as a whole and continue to learn every day.

Introduction

As a front desk member, this position has transformed from basic duties of a front desk employee to a leadership and administrative assistant position. At the start of spring semester, I was promoted to “lead” front desk and administrative assistant. Absorbing new administrative responsibilities, I am now an author for basic pages on the Office for Sustainability website, I manage the office calendar, check and answer the office email, assist with office purchasing, update and manage the front desk check list, assist with the execution of the film hosted by the Office for Sustainability, “Most Likely to Succeed” and finally, I am attempting to re-promote social media such as Facebook. I was uniquely positioned to take this responsibility because of my previous experience working in Solid Waste Management as well as my studies in Marketing.

Methods and Results

The primary projects that I am working on this semester have been:

- Monitor personal webmail for tasks, calendar and website updates directed by the leadership team
- Monitor department webmail weekly and direct information to the appropriate channels
- Track progress of front desk team daily activities and request follow up as needed
• Perform administrative tasks as needed by the leadership team and the Office for Sustainability

Along with the various responsibilities all front desk team members have in common, my primary focuses this semester have been managing and updating website edits. At the beginning of the semester I completed the CMS online training to become a content contributor, which gives me permission to perform website updates. I gather information for updates via AASHE for job openings, the WMU calendar for any events, MLive for various things such as news or job opportunities, and finally I receive multiple emails per week from the leadership team with flier attachments or links to any of these sites. Depending on how many activities occur each week, I can make as many as 15 updates per week or as little as two.

Another role that I have been playing as the lead front desk administrator has been assisting with the spring event film hosted by the Office for Sustainability “Most Likely to Succeed”. The film offers an inspiring look at what students and teachers are capable of and explores compelling new approaches that aim to revolutionize education. I assisted with poster and event flier creation and distribution on campus and in the Kalamazoo community. Additionally, I assisted with social media and website promotion for the event as well as event execution.
Graphics, Charts, & Pictures

EVENTS

Kalamazoo Foodways Symposium
The Kalamazoo Foodways Symposium is hosting a free community event, offering programs and activities that provide historical, cultural, and practical insights into food and food systems in Southwest Michigan. More info
WHERE: Kalamazoo Valley Museum & Arcadia Bronson Healthy Living Campus, Kalamazoo
WHEN: Friday, April 7 and Saturday, April 8
COST: FREE

Strike Out Hunger: WMU
Communication students are holding a "Strike Out Hunger" bowling fundraiser to support WMU's Invisible Need Project. More info
WHERE: Pima, 4500 Stadium Dr., Kalamazoo
WHEN: Sunday, April 9, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
COST: $5

Save the Bees and Butterflies
All are welcomed to attend an informative workshop about pollinators and native plants. More info
WHERE: Lee Honors College Lounge, WMU
WHEN: Friday, April 10, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
COST: FREE

Reimagined Waldo Library and Student Center
The University community is invited to attend a presentation and provide input for a new facility which will combine a reimagined Waldo Library with a Student Center to create an integrated learning and activity hub for the WMU campus. Students, faculty, staff and the community is invited. More info
WHERE: Demerdash Center, 1st Floor Lobby/Lounge, WMU
WHEN: Friday, April 14, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
COST: FREE

WSEA Presents: Dr. Christopher Edmén
Come hear Dr. Edmén discuss his two books, "Urban Education for the Hip Hop Generation" and "For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood and the Rest of Us Too", which is currently a New York Times best seller. Following the presentation there will be a Q&A session and a book signing. More info
WHERE: Sangren Hall, WMU
WHEN: Thursday, April 13, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
COST: FREE

OPPORTUNITIES

Gun Lake Tribe: Invasive Species Strike Team Member
The Strike Team Member will be responsible for detection and control of invasive species, focusing on forest pests. Main job duties will include manual and chemical control and removal efforts. More info

Varroc Lighting Systems: Operations Summer Intern
Currently seeking an individual pursuing a degree in environmental or manufacturing engineering and wanting to gain hands-on experience within the field. More info

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE): Scholarship Summer Study Program
ACEEE is proud to announce that they are accepting applications for Linda Latham Scholarships to attend our 2017 Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Industry in Denver, Colorado August 15-18, 2017. Deadline for Linda Latham Scholarships is April 10, 2017. More info

Wesustain Fall 2017 Internship Program
The Wesustain Internship Program is a semester-long, paid, and discovery driven opportunity for ambitious students looking to gain leadership experience while exploring both on- and off-campus sustainability projects. More info

WMU Landscape Services Student Groundskeeper
WMU Landscape Services currently has openings for student groundskeepers. Part-time (up to 20 hours a week) openings to help keep our campus beautiful. More info

Current Job Postings Through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
Frederick Douglass Institute Fellowships, University of Rochester Medical Center; Sustainability Specialist, Keast; Environmental Studies Assistant Professor, St. Mary's College of Maryland

Academic Coordinator III, ASI Student Farm Director
The Student Farm Director will guide a team of staff and students to provide intellectual, academic, and community leadership to the Student Farm. The director also has administrative responsibilities as well as the programs' educational, research, and public service functions. More info

Sustainable Farming Research Assistant
Work at the Kellogg Biological Station this summer studying sustainable vegetable production. More info

NEWS

Kalamazoo poverty report shows slow recovery after Great Recession
March 30, 2017 | MLive.com
City prioritizes fight against poverty as data shows increasing opportunities for all won't be an easy hurdle to clear.

Benefits of climate action plan worth the challenges
March 30, 2017 | MLive.com
Kalamazoo considers how to increase its resilience to extreme weather events tied to the Earth's changing climate, experts say a plan is essential to the city's sustainable future.

Grow your own mushrooms class
March 29, 2017 | MLive.com
Area gardeners, farmers and mushroom lovers will have the chance to learn how to grow an exciting array of other mushroom species in a new class offered at Kalamazoo Valley's Food Innovation Center.
Commentary and Reflection

Even though our social media presence has been on hiatus during communications planning, I am excited to see where the Office for Sustainability promotional efforts takes us. This transition has involved a large learning curve and I am grateful for my experience as the lead front desk and administrative assistant so far. I look forward to the development of these promotional efforts and strive to contribute as much as I can to the communications team.

As the Communications Committee develops content streams, I anticipate taking on a larger role with social media and communications. At this time, our scope is limited – but I am eager to advance the re-imagined Facebook presence when a path is made clear.

Next Steps

The next steps in further improving the Office for Sustainability website would be becoming familiar with Google Analytics. This is a service offered by Google to track and report website traffic. By using Google Analytics, I can determine who is viewing the website and how much traffic the site receives. This could benefit the office immensely on how we can improve to gain more traffic. During the last three months I have learned the annual cycle of the front desk workflow and will be using this experience to help refine front desk processes in the fall.