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Alum's Advice Helps Student Land Dream Internship in Washington, D.C.

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— When [environmental studies](#) major Lizzy Hawk '17 contacted Kyli Wagner '14 for career advice, little did she know she'd end up working at her dream internship with Wagner as her supervisor.

Hawk first reached out to Wagner on the advice of Environmental Studies Program Coordinator and Associate Professor Laurine Brown. Hawk said her emails to Wagner fell along the lines of "I don't have a sense of direction for what I want to do after graduation. Do you have any advice?" and that Wagner was "really helpful and informative," sharing information about her current job in Washington, D.C. at Greenpeace, the nongovernmental environmental organization.

Hawk's decision to participate in the [Washington Semester Program at American University](#) in D.C. rendered the chance for the two to connect in person. As part of the program, students have the opportunity to intern two and a half days each week at the organization of their choice.

"I dreamed of working for Greenpeace ever since I became interested in the environmental field," said Hawk, a native of Riverside, Ill. Searching online, Hawk found an internship in Wagner's department — Grassroots Administration. "I already knew that I liked her and I figured it would be a good idea to have a pre-established connection, so I applied," noted Hawk. When she was offered the position as Grassroots Administration intern after a phone interview with Wagner in December, she accepted it right away. "I was so excited," said Hawk.

Hawk's projects at Greenpeace range from compiling data for senior organizers to interviewing Greenpeace staff about their careers for her own professional development. She is also in charge of managing Greenwire, Greenpeace's online network. Through this network, Hawk explained that she helps new users get connected to local groups, leaders and events around them. "I act as a middleman and answer a lot of their questions and concerns," explained Hawk.

But it is Monday afternoons when Hawk has the chance to work on [#PositivityPost](#), a project that she designed herself. "Every Monday I write a blog on Greenwire about good things that are happening in the environmental world," said Hawk, who has written on topics ranging from manatees coming back from extinction to Earth Hour. "These posts are without a doubt my favorite. I seem to be reaching out to community members and brightening their days, which I love," she said.

It is having the ability to brighten peoples' days and inspire environmental change that is Hawk's favorite part of the work she does at Greenpeace. "All the work we do at Greenpeace really matters," said Hawk, who explained that it was surprising to see just how many Greenpeace employees are able to work remotely at locations around the U.S. "Someone could have an idea, they'll talk about it with the team, and then you get to see it unfold and become a reality, which has the potential to influence real world change," she said. "It's amazing."

Hawk said having Wagner as a supervisor has made her experience all the more incredible. "I've learned so much so far, and Kyli has been a great supervisor. I'm so happy the IWU connection helped me land this internship," said Hawk.

But Hawk's exploration of career possibilities in the environmental field doesn't just end on April 28 when her Greenpeace internship comes to a close. Hawk explained that Wagner has also been advising her on post-grad plans, even serving as a reference for another internship opportunity in Wyoming this summer.

"I am still exploring my options in the environmental field, but interning at Greenpeace has been an absolute dream come true," said Hawk. "I wouldn't have traded this semester for anything, even as a graduating senior."

Hawk is one of the 142 students interning at 76 different locations this semester. [Hart Career Center](#) Associate Director of Career Engagement Laurie Diekhoff noted most of those internships are in central Illinois, but many accounting students spend 10 weeks of the semester interning at firms in Chicago and one student is interning in Edinburgh, Scotland.

"These internships are as diverse as our students' interests and talents," said Diekhoff. "They include surgical nursing, engineering technology, reading interventionist, homeless services advocate, studio production/sound mixer and hockey team game day assistant. Seventy-eight of the interns are receiving academic credit for their internships from 12 different academic departments."

Recent data indicates 66 percent of Illinois Wesleyan graduates participate in at least one internship experience – just one of the experiential learning opportunities at Illinois Wesleyan.



Lizzy Hawk '17 (right) said having fellow Titan Kyli Wagner '14 as her supervisor has made her internship experience all the more incredible.