Asa Smith

Sustainability Seminar

TR 9:30 am

4/28/19

Final Reflection

 Throughout the course of this semester, I have thoroughly enjoyed the sustainability seminar and truly believe that it has deepened my understanding of what sustainability truly is. Despite only meeting once a week, I constantly found myself looking forward to the class each week and felt like it was much more than just a seminar. The new relationships and perspectives that I have gained through this course are extremely valuable to me and I know that I will carry them throughout my last year of college.

 Although I really appreciated all the guest speakers that we had this semester, there were a couple that impacted me more deeply. Dr. Dan Everett from the Department of Computer Science was someone that had a great influence on me. I found his life story to be extremely interesting and thought that his career path was strange yet fascinating. I remember thinking that his story about how he fasted in the Colorado wilderness for a month to avoid being sent to Vietnam was awesome. It was easy to tell how passionate he truly was about his work and how strong his morals are. I also really liked listening to his ideas on how to turn Athens into a more sustainable city through things like the solarize Athens movement. It is clear how intelligent of a person he is and I definitely think that he’s someone that I would like to hear speak again. In addition, Dr. Mark Farmers lecture on overpopulation was something that I will never forget. He is an extremely eloquent speaker and does a fantastic job of presenting data in a way that really moves people. I already knew Dr. Farmer before the class so it was awesome to see him lecture in a classroom setting for the first time. The work that Dr. Farmer and Trapnell are involved in is actually making a difference in the world and motivates me to make changes in my life for the better. Furthermore, I thought that Matt Stevens lecture about the ways that he is trying to make Creature Comforts a more sustainable company was very impressive. As a business major also interested in sustainability, I often struggle with finding a balance between viewing a company from a profitability perspective or from a sustainability perspective. It is hard to find examples of businesses that operate with both perspectives in mind but I think that Creature Comforts is a perfect example of this. It is clear that they are a rapidly growing company that generates enough revenue to employ the best people, but they are also able to operate in a way that mitigates their impact on the environment. I think that this is extremely unique in our modern society but the need for companies like Creature comforts will only continue to grow in the future.

 In terms of incorporating sustainability into my career and personal life, I think that this seminar course has been crucial in illustrating how easily this can be done. I’ve never known exactly what I wanted to do for a career but I chose to involve myself in real estate because I knew that Terry had a reputable program and that there are lots of job opportunities. However, through my experience with the Sustainability and Entrepreneurship certificate programs, I now know that regardless of what facet of business I work in I will always make decisions with sustainability in mind. I am excited for what my future holds and think that working for a B Corp certified company would be a great fit for me. In addition, I recently found out that Tulane is now offering a joint MBA/Master’s program in sustainable real estate development. I believe that this could be a great opportunity for me and I know that the need for sustainable development will only continue to grow in the future. The seminar has also been extremely valuable in showing me little things that I can do in my personal life to change the world for the better. I look forward to involving myself in some of the produce co-ops next semester whether its collective harvest or farm share. I have also really enjoyed getting the sustainability department emails each week that show opportunities to get involved around campus. I fully plan on taking advantage of more of these opportunities next semester when my course load is not as heavy. Furthermore, after engaging in discussions about overpopulation sparked by the seminar, I know that I will carefully consider how many children that I want later in life to reduce my footprint as much as possible. I am excited to continue learning through the certificate and look forward to future opportunities to involve myself in the sustainability community in Athens.

 Overall, this seminar has been extremely valuable to my education and I look forward to taking it again before I graduate. Being surrounded by peers that are doing so many incredible and interesting things at our university and for our planet is truly motivating. I am excited to continue to make connections and build my network in the sustainability community at UGA and throughout Athens.