

The Environmental Vocation Internship

Central Valley Report
Santa Clara University
2004-2005



Introduction, and gratitude

The Environmental Vocation Internship brings the best of Jesuit education at Santa Clara University to bear on California's regional environmental challenges. It integrates classroom learning, community based environmental education, and personal vocational development. Interns from this first year have spoken to hundreds of youth, adults and seniors in local faith communities about Environmental Justice in the Central Valley and marine biodiversity stewardship on the Central Coast. With this report, we describe the accomplishments of the first year's efforts, and prospects for future efforts.

We thank all who have made this first year possible. Senior Associate Dean Amy Shachter provided the leadership, initial direction and inspiration for this internship, and it would not exist without her. She was critical to raising the internal funds at SCU to make this first year possible. The College

of Arts & Sciences provided the majority of funding this year through a Dean's office grant. The Bannan Center for Jesuit Education was particularly generous in funding this internship through a Bannan Grant. SCU's Food and Agribusiness Institute, under Dr. Greg Baker's leadership, also provided essential support.

This internship evolved in partnership with the Environmental Justice Project of the Diocese of Stockton. I am most grateful to the leadership of Cecilia Titizano, Social Ministry Director; Rich Fowler, Catholic Charities Executive Director; and ultimately, Bishop Stephen Blaire. These leaders all of manifest Gospel compassion for those suffering, but also a desire to promote a biblical vision of justice. Betsy Reifsnider, the field supervisor for the Central Valley region, worked extremely hard to coordinate SCU's efforts with this.

Numerous pastors, parishes, and diocesan and parish leaders opened their doors to our interns, and helped make this internship a success. Members of the diocese's EJ Committee helped introduce student interns to the environmental justice issues of the Central Valley, especially Susan and Bill Loyko and Loretta Baker. I am specifically grateful to: Sr. Antoinetta of the ministry to farmworkers; Sr. Gloria de Jesus Sanchez of the diocesan office of religious education; Karin Hennings, Sally Mears and Sandy Uyeshiro of St. Joseph's parish in Modesto; Vicki Lamana of Our Lady of Fatima in Modesto; Linda Henkel of St. Luke's parish; Deacon Mike Wofford at the Cathedral of the Annunciation.

The photos that make this report more visually pleasing are courtesy of Cathy Harknes, Emily Eng, and yours truly. A genuine thanks to all!

---Keith Warner OFM and the interns





Uniting social justice and environmental protection

What is Environmental Justice?

The first steps toward environmental justice were taken by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968, the very week he was assassinated. He had traveled to Memphis to express solidarity with Black garbage workers, who were striking for equal pay and equitable working conditions. During subsequent years, community members and researchers began noticing a consistent pattern: negative environmental impacts disproportionately impact low income people and communities of color.

During the 1980s, the environmental justice movement emerged as a distinct expression of environmentalism, focused more on where people live, work and play than on wild nature. It draws more from civil rights, labor, and community organizing efforts than traditional environmentalism. Its focus is the intersection between environmental protection, and social and racial justice. This movement devotes itself to the unfair distribution of environmental risk, and efforts to achieve pollution prevention. It

complements traditional environmentalism by making the poor and marginalized the object of special concern.

The movement for environmental justice has been strongest when community based organizations have partnered with university researchers. Local groups have more knowledge of neighborhood environmental issues, but academics have contributed by bringing their scientific, analytical, and legal expertise to bear on local problems. The environmental justice movement has been most successful when it has advanced its agenda simultaneously through legal proceedings as well as the court of public opinion.

During the early 1990s, Christian theologians and national church leadership began to recognize the similarities between environmental justice and a biblical vision of humans-in-nature. Scripture scholars articulated a broader vision of justice in the Hebrew Scriptures with stewardship and care for the poor and marginalized. Moral theologians related contemporary

environmental ethics to the Catholic social teaching tradition. Pope John Paul II repeatedly emphasized a moral vision integrating environmental protection and solidarity with the poorest people on the planet. He has issued three major addresses on the environment, and incorporated environmental concerns into over 30 other teachings. He joins the Dalai Lama and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew II as the most prominent religious leaders calling for environmental protection.

In 1991, the US Catholic Bishops issued "Renewing the Face of the Earth," a pastoral letter calling on US Catholics to engage in environmental protection activities. They

have emphasized environmental justice because it is so clearly consistent with the Catholic vision of economic justice. Bishops in Appalachia, the Pacific Northwest, and the New England states have issued their own regional pastoral letters.

Churches and local faith communities have typically been part of the coalition speaking out for environmental justice, but they have been noticeably absent from these efforts in California. Fortunately that is beginning to change. The Catholic Diocese of Stockton has launched a multiyear project to educate itself, its members and ministries, about the environmental justice challenges facing this region.

The Diocese of Stockton

Environmental Justice Leadership

In 2004, under the leadership of Bishop Stephen Blaire, the Diocese launched an Environmental Justice Project to foster care for God's Creation among Catholics, and to bring a uniquely Catholic voice to the environmental policy discussions in the Central Valley and Sierra Foothills. This project's goal has been to educate and motivate Catholics to a deeper reverence and respect for God's creation, and to engage local parishes in activities aimed at dealing with environmental problems, particularly as they affect the poor. During the first year, the project convened three town hall meetings to consult with Catholics across the diocese, which SCU students were able to observe. Based on these meetings, the entire diocese will celebrate Environmental Justice Sunday on October 30, 2005, as a part of Respect Life Month.

The Diocesan Environmental Justice Project is directed by the Social Ministry Office of Catholic Charities in the Stockton Diocese. The Social Ministry Office engages parishioners in a variety of service and advocacy activities, including Migrant Farm



Worker, Peace Building, Advocacy, Prison Ministry, Community Organizing, and Environmental Justice.

This diocese has integrated its social service and social justice work by locating the Office of Social Ministries within Catholic Charities, which allows the diocese to better coordinate its justice advocacy and direct social service activities

Preparing leaders of conscience, competence and compassion

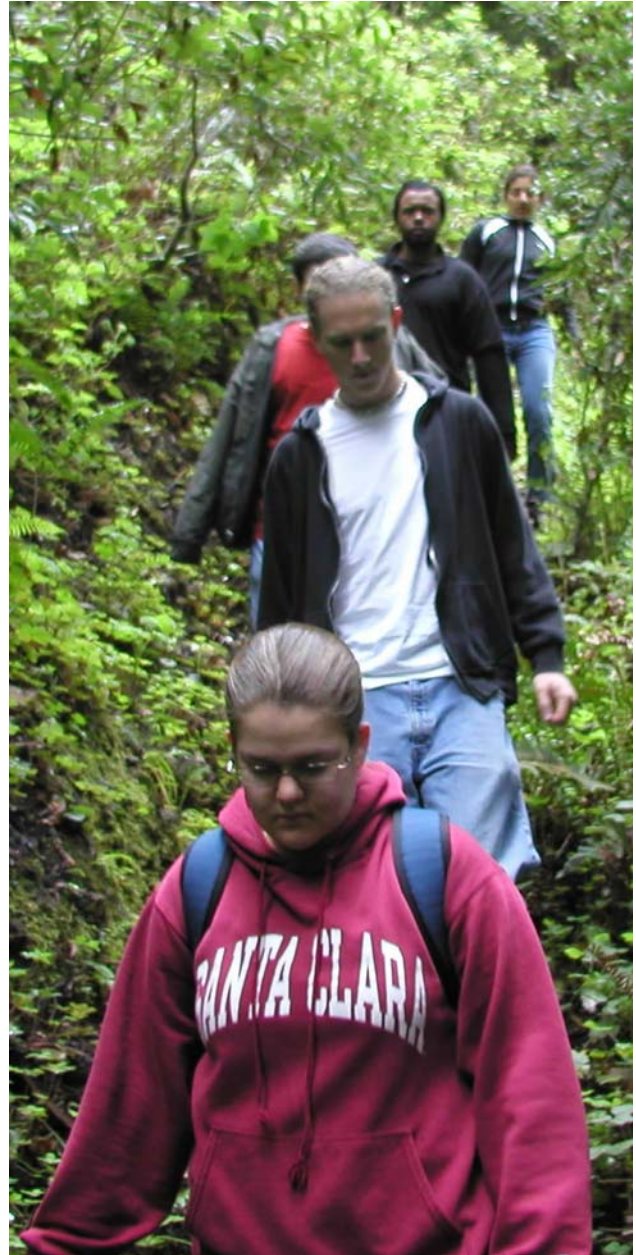
The Environmental Vocation Internship

This program offers undergraduate students at Santa Clara University the opportunity to develop environmental leadership skills through community based education and participatory research, combined with spiritual development and personal mentoring. Students take two courses, “Faith, Ethics, and the Biodiversity Crisis” and “Environmental Justice Practicum,” and then enroll in the internship to extend what they learn in the classroom out to local faith communities. This offers students a theologically-grounded vision of stewardship that embraces social justice as well as advocacy for the intrinsic value of Creation, and a comprehensive introduction to religious and ethical resources to address environmental problems.

The internship spans winter and spring quarters, and includes immersion trips, vocational reflection retreats, mentoring in leadership for civic engagement, and reflection on our vocational gifts. The internship requires regular travel (once or twice a month), since most community events take place on weekends.

Interns select a region for their internship, based on their preference for concentrating on marine biodiversity (Monterey and the Central Coast) or Environmental Justice (Stockton and the Central Valley). This year, 3 coast interns worked primarily with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and 4 valley interns with the Diocese of Stockton.

During this our first year, 7 interns conducted 14 educational events, reaching a total 822 people (416 youth and 406 adults). Of these, 10 were formal presentations, and 4 were educational fairs/events. Examples



include: presentations to confirmation classes, their sponsors, and youth groups; participation in the Diocese of Stockton Ministry Day with the Office of Social Ministry; organizing sustainable fish dinners; and conducting outreach to parishioners after mass. The interns created a total of 13 educational tools, including 3

posters and 7 electronic slide shows. Five of these can be found at the project website: itrs.scu.edu/kwarner/EJresources.html. We hoped to be able to gather more data about the environmental values and views of the people in the churches we served, but ran out of time. Next year we hope to conduct more social science research, and engage more multi-cultural communities in environmental education. We also plan to add a farmworker/sustainable agriculture track to the internship.

The Environmental Vocation Internship fosters a new kind of environmental leadership, reflecting Santa Clara

University's Jesuit educational ideals. The internship builds on the continuing SCU campus-wide conversation about vocation (see page 7), providing interns the opportunity to deepen their awareness of their gifts, what gives them joy, and the world's needs. It integrates academic learning, environmental research, community outreach, spiritual mentoring, and ethical development.

Solutions to our environmental crises now require collaborative partnerships built on values and ethics. Your support and interest in this internship helps bring forward just this kind of leadership.



Partner profile

The Catholic Diocese of Stockton

The Diocese of Stockton includes the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Alpine, and Mono. The Catholic population of the diocese is 217,000, about 19% of the total population. Eighty-four priests, of whom thirty-six are foreign born, serve in thirty-two parishes and twelve missions. The diocese is geographically, ethnically, and economically diverse. About 50% of the diocesan population is Hispanic. The majority of the population lives in the San

Joaquin Valley. The two major population cities are Stockton and Modesto. San Joaquin County's population has grown by 50% over the past ten years. The majority of San Joaquin Valley is farming, and there are many migrant camps in which the Church has a presence. Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties are located on the western side of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Mono County is on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada, and is usually cut off from the rest of the diocese during winter.



DISCOVERing our environmental vocations

“What ought I to do?” is the Socratic question at the heart of the liberal arts educational tradition. Christian spirituality frames that question in terms of vocation: “What am I called to become?” The Jesuit tradition offers wonderful resources for vocational discernment. It counsels us to discover our personal calling by aligning our gifts and aspirations with what we see as the deepest needs of our world.

Santa Clara University is actively developing resources to help students, faculty and staff with vocational discernment. With major funding from the Lilly Foundation, SCU launched the DISCOVER project, which stands for “Developing and Inspiring Scholarly Communities Oriented toward Vocational Engagement and Reflection.” Our Jesuit tradition emphasizes that education has a moral purpose beyond career preparation. The DISCOVER project combines scholarly reflection with our Ignatian tradition of discernment and social engagement to support students as they prepare for their vocation, not just a job.

The Environmental Vocation Internship was inspired – but not funded – by the DISCOVER project. It builds on the campus conversations and support for helping students discern their own vocational gifts and potential contribution to society. The internship provides students the skills, sustained contact in a community, and reflection tools to foster their vocational discernment.





The challenge

Promoting environmental justice in California's Great Valley

The Environmental Vocation Interns tackled Environmental Justice issues in the Central Valley. This region is not well known by residents of the state's populous coastal areas, but it is exceptionally rich in resources, even as it struggles with environmental problems. Over half the nation's fruit, vegetables and nuts are grown here, yet farm workers and rural communities suffer from the effects of pesticides. Two-thirds of the state's water passes through the Sacramento Delta on its way to irrigate farms and quench the thirst of Southern California. Changes in land use or water management here could impact many at a distance. The same mountain ranges that define the valley also contribute to its environmental problems by containing air pollution. This region often has the dubious honor of air quality that seasonally can be the worst in the nation. Rapid suburban sprawl threatens to exacerbate all

of these problems. The internship provided an opportunity for students to engage faith communities in the effort to promote environmental justice here.

Beginning in January 2005, four interns from Santa Clara University were asked to work with parishes in Modesto, Oakdale, and Stockton. Melvin Gaines and Waide Hicks worked with St. Joseph's parish and Our Lady of Fatima parish in Modesto and St. Mary of the Annunciation in Oakdale, a Sierra foothill parish. They created a digital slide presentation on Environmental Justice, and led a series of parish confirmation classes. Peter Sullivan and Jocelyn Stauffer developed educational tools for the Diocese's Social Ministry Office, and conducted outreach to two parishes in Stockton.

Waide and Melvin had the opportunity to speak to 400 youth and 200 adults about Environmental Justice through this

internship. Their efforts demonstrated the terrific potential for incorporating Environmental Justice into the ordinary religious education activities of a parish. As one confirmation program director explained, "it's wonderful for the kids to see young men interested in their faith and God in the world. They were a big hit with the kids." The interns led a confirmation retreat at Our Lady of Fatima parish, using Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* as a teaching tool. At St. Joseph's parish, the interns spoke to over 400 people, including a child who had been directly affected by a devastating tire fire that the interns were using as an environmental justice case study on asthma risks.

In Stockton, Peter and Jocelyn created displays that were used to illustrate environmental justice and Catholic Social Teaching at the Diocesan Ministry Day, and at tables after Mass at two parishes: St. Luke, and the Cathedral of the Annunciation. They also created educational tools for use by the Diocesan Office of Social Ministry. Members of the Environmental Justice Committee asked for

permission to reproduce these displays and use them in their own parishes for future events and meetings, such as Environmental Justice Sunday October, 30 2005.

Parish leaders saw that college-age interns were more successful at conveying a faith-and-environment message than were older adults. Parish leaders were also grateful for the in-depth knowledge that interns displayed on Catholic social teaching and on Environmental Justice. One of the interns said, "You don't often get to apply what you learn outside of class. This was the only outlet available to make ethics and education come together."

This internship is not without its challenges, however. Everyone agreed the most significant impediment was distance: the 75 miles from SCU campus to the parishes created a barrier to easy access for the interns. This being the first year, much improvisation took place, and future efforts will demand greater advance planning. Students take on internship responsibilities above and beyond their regular course load, and this experience exposes them to the need for effective time management.



The Central Valley Interns 2004-5



Melvin Gaines

Hometown: East Palo Alto

Majors: Political Science and Environmental Studies

Class of 2006

Certain scents bring tears to my eyes. I am not referring to pleasant smells, such as those of fresh baked apple pies that are reminiscent of grandmother's cooking. I'm referring to sinus penetrating stench, such as those of toxic fumes, and the rotten egg stench that accompanies sulfur. It's not the harshness of these scents that brings tears to my eyes; truthfully, my nose has become insensitive to them over the years. It's my knowledge of the results of such stench that brings tears to my eyes. Working for social and environmental justice for the past 5 years, and living in a community plagued by environmental injustices for the past 21 years has made me overly aware of the harsh circumstances, such as cancer and asthma that accompany exposure to such scents. People die as a result of exposure to toxic fumes; this saddens me greatly...but tears alone do not bring about change.

My love for people, and desire to end their suffering has led me to on a quest for change. This quest has urged me to further my education, be it in the classroom, or in the field working in the community. The Environmental Vocation Internship provided an excellent opportunity to expand my education through both vehicles. It also afforded me with the opportunity to work in the Central Valley, an area highly affected by environmental justice issues that has historically received little attention.

My goals in participating in this internship were ultimately to raise awareness of environmental justice, and promote a faith that does justice among affected constituents of the Diocese of Stockton. My hope for the future is that members of the diocese will be engaged in working for positive change in their communities.



Over the course of the internship, Waide Hicks and I were able to speak to over 600 people, create educational tools, and most importantly, engage constituents of the diocese of Stockton in dialogue regarding environmental justice, and promote a faith that does justice. Assessing the impact of our efforts, I am definitely satisfied. Much work remains to be done, but we have laid the groundwork for future efforts, through establishing relationships between Santa Clara University and members of different parishes in the Stockton diocese.

Waide Hicks and I were able to speak to over 600 people, create educational tools, and most importantly, engage the Diocese of Stockton regarding environmental justice, and promote a faith that does justice

More so than anything I have given to this internship, I have gained valuable experience. I have been challenged to search out integrations between my own Christian faith and justice, as well as to work with a faith that differs slightly from my own. I also have gained the experience of organizing a community, as an outsider to that community. My past organizing efforts have been either as a member of a community, or in solidarity with organizers from another community. I am highly grateful for the opportunity to have worked with this internship. Grateful to its financial supporters, grateful to its staff, grateful to Dr. Warner, and grateful to the community of the Diocese of Stockton.



Waide Hicks

Hometown: San Jose

Majors: Environmental Science and Biology
Class of 2006

I have been afforded few opportunities for personal growth and professional development in the way the Environmental Vocation Internship did. Although I've certainly challenged myself academically, I had yet to utilize my knowledge and skills in a truly productive way. In addition to acquiring scientific knowledge at SCU, I had a strong desire to develop my skills in interpersonal communication and, as was tested at times in the internship, negotiation and conflict resolution.

I was deepening my own understanding of how I am called as a Catholic to recognize, reflect, and act upon these injustices

Despite the many opportunities offered by various campus programs, I felt no outlet existed for me to combine my love for nature and creation, skills and knowledge as an undergraduate scientist, and identity



as an ethically-minded Catholic. Becoming an intern with Dr. Warner was the next logical step in the continuing development of my own environmental ethic.

One Latino student no more than 12 years old raised his hand in the middle of 300 of his peers and said, “my doctor told me I got asthma from that fire”

Perhaps most importantly the Environmental Vocation Internship helped me make the connection between my Catholic identity and practice of environmental stewardship; two aspects of my life that were equally important but lacked integration. When Melvin and I were out educating youth about pressing issues of environmental justice in the California’s Central Valley, the connection couldn’t have been more apparent. While explaining some of the basic tenets of Catholic social teaching (e.g., option for the poor, concern for the common good) to these students, and their relationship to environmental injustices in their own neighborhoods, I was also

deepening my own understanding of how I am called as a Catholic to recognize, reflect, and act upon these injustices.

The locality of the topics in our discussion to those in the audience also helped the students relate to what we were saying, and willful audience participation showed how familiar and interested most students were about environmental justice. However, nothing could have prepared me for what I heard from one student at that same night at St. Joseph’s. When referring to the Westley tire fire of 1999 and the impact it had on the health of nearby residents, one Latino student no more than 12 years old raised his hand in the middle of 300 of his peers and said, “my doctor told me I got asthma from that fire.”

I choked up, and had to struggle not to drop my microphone. The human impact of environmental injustice had never been made more personal to me. Although it worked in facilitating dialogue between Melvin, me, and the audience, environmental catastrophes like the Westley tire fire are something I felt no child should ever be familiar with.

In Oakdale, Melvin and I gave a talk about Environmental Justice to a group of confirmation sponsors. We encountered an audience with a few members who did not

support the Church's involvement with Environmental Justice issues. Some of them sharply questioned us, but many other members of the audience spoke in favor of social justice and environmental protection.

The internship helped me make the connection between my Catholic identity and practice of environmental stewardship

Although this experience was very stressful, I recognized that disagreements about the environment are normal, unlike the typical situation in classrooms. Dealing with environmental issues and people's personal and financial well-being outside of the university is more like what I experienced in Oakdale that afternoon. This idea stayed with me for every subsequent educational talk I gave, and is sure to influence the way I approach environmental issues for the rest of my life.

Although that specific event was stressful, I recognized that disagreements about the environment are normal

In my conversations with other students about their own internships at Santa Clara University, it seems apparent that the Environmental Vocation Internship is much more enriching, and offers a greater sense of vocation to its participants. I can't help but feel that few other opportunities exist for undergraduate students in the sciences to make a connection between faith, ethics, and their field of study. I am grateful to have such an opportunity; I doubt any experience I have while at Santa Clara will be its equal.



Jocelyn Stauffer

Hometown: Allentown, Pennsylvania
Major: Political Science
Minor: Catholic Studies
Class of 2005

Prior to the Environmental Vocation Internship, I had little knowledge of environmental issues. Working with the Stockton Diocese attracted me, despite the little background I had with environmental issues. The summer before my senior year at Santa Clara I did an internship with Congregations United for Neighborhood Action (CUNA) in Allentown, Pennsylvania, an organization that does faith-based community organizing. Working with CUNA gave me the opportunity to combine my interests in political and social issues with faith.

After that internship, I wanted more opportunities in which I could combine these interests. The Environmental Vocation Internship gave me such an opportunity. Because faith is such an important part of my own life, I am able to look at different issues in the context of faith. I enjoy working with faith communities because I am able to do that. Not only was I able to work on faith and social issues in this



internship, but I was also able to learn about and become aware of environmental issues. This internship helped me to recognize that there are many reasons why people suffer from injustices; environmental issues are one component of social justice.

This internship allowed me to explore my own spirituality and awareness of environmental issues

This internship allowed me to explore my own spirituality and awareness of environmental issues. I now know what environmental justice is and I can be aware of it in my own life and in working with other faith communities. Although I had very little knowledge of what environmental justice is, through teaching others about it, I have become dedicated to it as well. I have always considered myself to be someone who is concerned about environmental issues, but now I have a greater respect for those issues and their impact on people. Faith and social justice have the greatest impact on my concern for the environment. I am concerned about issues such as air quality because I believe that as a Christian, I have a responsibility to

care for God's creation because God created it. I am also concerned about this because of its impact upon people. Issues such as air quality are not just bad for the environment, but also have many health implications for people.

The Environmental Vocation Internship helped me recognize that I want to continue to work with faith communities. I enjoy working with them because I am able to understand them.

The American Lung Association's State of the Air Report gave four out of the six counties in the Stockton Diocese a grade of "F"

I believe the knowledge and awareness I have gained from this internship will be useful in whatever I choose to do. It will be helpful whether I pursue a vocation in some kind of ministry, non-profit work, or the government sector because I will be able to bring an understanding of the connection between environmental problems and issues of faith and social justice.

An excerpt from

Why Catholics should care about the Environment

by Jocelyn Stauffer

Environmental justice is one of many ways to live out the Catholic faith. This is particularly important for Catholics in the Central Valley, where one of several environmental issues is air quality. In 2003, the American Lung Association's State of the Air Report gave four out of the six counties in the Stockton Diocese a grade of "F." Pope John Paul II and Bishop Blaire have emphasized the need for Catholics to respond to the call of environmental justice.

God created us in God's image, and therefore we must love creation as God does.

The Book of Genesis sets a foundation for the Catholic belief in environmental justice. God tells us that we must be stewards to creation. Earth and all of the species are not ours to own, rather something of which we are a part among many. God created us in God's image, and therefore we must love creation as God does. Such a love for creation is also a way to worship and love God.

Catholic social teaching emphasizes a respect for all life – this includes all of creation.

Environmental justice is not separate from traditional ideas of social justice; we do not have to choose between helping people and helping the environment.

(To find the full version of this essay and others, go to the SCU EJ resources website: itrs.scu.edu/kwarner/EJresources.html.)



Peter Sullivan

Hometown: Boston

Graduate studies: conservation biology

After working as a business researcher for seven years, I decided to go back to school to study science. My business experience helped me to realize that I loved doing applied research, but I needed a research focus on something I cared about. When my wife and others helped me to realize that I was spending all of my spare time hiking and reading books about the environment, the prospect of researching environmental issues as a scientist seemed like a natural choice.

My initial motivation for this internship came out of an independent study course I took with Dr. Michelle Marvier. Our focus for the study was biological conservation in El Salvador. The El Salvador we studied was a complicated place, still raw from a bitter civil war that had ended just ten years ago. The more I learned about the threats to biodiversity in El Salvador, the more I saw how difficult it was to change the ways people treated their environment. In addition, as we learned more about the Salvadoran culture, the more the Catholic

Church's influence seemed to matter. It was an unexpected turn of inquiry for me. In my own mind, I had typically separated my tradition as a Catholic with my vocation as a biologist. But scientists are always turned on by new ideas and I was interested to explore the connection between conservation efforts and Catholic social teaching.

I took the EJ class and was exposed to some seminal readings in EJ, but more importantly, as a class we took a field trip to the Central Valley to meet with people in the community who were heavily involved with EJ issues. The field trip was amazing. It energized me to commit to the internship.

As interns, we also completed some on-site outreach activities in parishes. Part of our goal was to "get the word out" about EJ. First, at Ministry Day, we set up a table and described some of the Diocesan EJ activities to anyone who would listen. The response to Stockton's Ministry day is impressive. People line up at 8AM on a Saturday morning to see what opportunities exist for additional involvement in the Diocese. A fellow intern and I created informative posters and op-ed pieces to display some of the more salient points about EJ. The response was mixed, but the most frequent

response to what we had to say was surprise. People really didn't expect the Church, especially the local Church, to have anything to say about the environment. Next, we traveled to St. Luke's with the same info and tried to meet and talk with folks as they entered/exited the parish. There, we met with a similar reactions. People don't think that the Church has anything to say about the environment and when they hear that it does, especially when communicated by Pope John Paul II, they tend to listen.

I truly enjoyed meeting and working with many of the Central Valley folks. While there can be challenges when a group of busy volunteers get together to accomplish a task, there was never a sense that nothing could be done. People in the Stockton Diocese truly care about their environment and they want to see the Church make a difference. In fostering this sentiment, Bishop Blaire's efforts have been noteworthy. His leadership has provided the spark to move people to begin thinking more about their role in EJ issues. Seeing the Church struggle and come to grips with its environmental responsibility can be difficult, but there is also a strong sense of hope for future efforts.





Fruit of the earth and work of human hands

Catholic perspectives on sustainable agriculture

Agriculture is the primary metabolic relationship between human society and nature. Without it, human culture would not be possible. Yet modern agriculture is degrading the environmental resource base upon which it -- indeed all of us -- depend.

Theological reflection on sustainable agriculture in the Catholic tradition draws on its rich tradition of social teaching. It balances two key values: economic justice and integrity of Creation. The church clearly states the need to protect the economic rights of each human person. This requires access to sufficient resources to live a life of dignity. Farmers are deserving of special respect because their work is growing food and working with Creation, yet we as a society are failing to adequately compensate growers and farm workers for the service they provide to society. At the same time, the US Bishops have spoken very clearly on society's responsibility to ensure agricultural practices protect workers and the environment today and into the future.

They emphasized this most recently in their pastoral letter, "For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food" (<http://www.usccb.org/bishops/agricultural.shtml>).

Catholics believe God's generosity is expressed through Creation, that God created sufficient resources on Earth for all human beings to meet their needs, and that we are called to steward the abundant diversity of God's creatures. Air pollution, contaminated waterways, and pesticide drift incidents are evidence of practices that do not reflect Catholic values.

Addressing these problems is not solely the responsibility of growers, because agriculture has a greatly inferior economic position in our economy. Farmgate prices continue to decline, California's cities continue to sprawl out onto farmland, and farm workers cannot garner a just wage in this context. Many farmers are caught in a bind between economic forces and their desire to be better stewards.

(From testimony offered by Keith Douglass Warner OFM to the US Catholic Conference of Bishops in Sacramento; see www.ncrlc.com/AgStewardship.html.)



Leadership profile

Keith Douglass Warner OFM

The creation of this internship has given me the opportunity to draw from virtually all the talents and skills God has given me. I spent five years picking fruit and planting trees in the Pacific Northwest, and this animated me to follow St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology. I became a Franciscan Friar fifteen years ago because of my love of nature and prayer, and a passion for sharing these with others. Living in migrant labor camps, Amerindian reservations, and Latin American shantytowns deepened by solidarity with the poor and politically marginalized.

During the late 1990s, I conducted social justice education - supervising volunteers and interns - at St. Anthony Foundation in San Francisco for three years. I became convinced that experiential, community based education had great transformative potential. I undertook doctoral level environmental studies at UC Santa Cruz because I wanted to extend this vision from social to environmental issues.

When Senior Associate Dean Amy Shachter asked me to create an internship, I was able to draw on a network of

professional colleagues. I had recently introduced Betsy Reifsnider to Rich Fowler of the Catholic Diocese of Stockton, and he hired her to become Environmental Justice Project Coordinator. I asked Rev. Deborah Streeter if she knew of any faith communities that would be interested in hosting interns. She described her community based environmental education on the Central Coast, and the template for this internship was born. By operating two field sites, interns are able to witness a diversity of environmental challenges facing California, and the range of possible responses on the part of faith communities.

This internship has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. It has given me the chance to share with others my belief that faith communities can and should be engaged in environmental concerns.

No lasting social change in American history has taken place without the active participation of the faith communities

I have dedicated my life to fostering the kind of leadership that can help the faith communities address our environmental crises. With the help of friends, family and my Franciscan brothers, I have discerned this as my vocation, and Santa Clara University offers me unparalleled opportunities to put my gifts at the service of others, and to help students learn how to do the same.

I am most grateful to the interns, Santa Clara University's leadership, Betsy Reifsnider, Rev. Deborah Streeter, and all our community partners for their active collaboration and creativity on this project. This experience truly has helped me deepen my own vocation. I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you.



Leadership profile

Betsy Reifsnider

My career in the environmental, non-profit, and public sectors spans a quarter century. In Los Angeles, I worked for the Sierra Club, Mono Lake Committee, and as a legislative deputy for Los Angeles City Councilmember Ruth Galanter. I moved to Sacramento to help initiate the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Office of Water Conservation in northern California, Nevada, and southern Oregon. In 1996, I returned to the private non-profit world and became the executive director of Friends of the River, California's statewide river conservation organization. In 2004, I decided to start my own business, specializing in environmental resources and water policy. I currently serve on the advisory board for the Sierra Nevada Alliance.

As a lifelong Catholic and the product of Catholic kindergarten, elementary and high school, I continue to learn about my faith through a variety of channels.

The Environmental Vocation Internship at Santa Clara University intrigued me. During my own college career, I was fortunate to participate in a National Land for People tour of the Central Valley. As wonderful and necessary as class time and academic research were, the experience of interacting with poor migrant farm workers, grassroots organizers, and farmers played a profound role in my life. That tour helped direct the course of my future work and gave me a new understanding of the nature of poverty in one of America's wealthiest environments.

I value the time I spent with the four students from Santa Clara University assigned to the Central Valley. As the Stockton, Modesto, and Oakdale parishioners described them, the students were "awesome," "bright," and "very personable." They were not only fun to be around, they deepened my understanding of Environmental Justice and gave me hope for the future.



Santa Clara University



The Environmental Studies Institute, home to...

The Faith, Ethics & Vocation Project

@ Santa Clara University

The Environmental Studies Institute is an interdisciplinary community of scholars - comprised of faculty, staff, and students - dedicated to understanding the interactions between humans and the natural world. We serve local and global communities by addressing environmental issues through education, research, and leadership. Our bachelors level degrees in Environmental

Science and Environmental Studies challenge undergraduates to integrate knowledge and research in the natural and social sciences with ethics, service and leadership to promote a sustainable world. The Institute provides a variety of campus and community programs including seminars, internships, and opportunities for research, service, and study abroad.



The Faith, Ethics & Vocation Project integrates the distinct features of Santa Clara University's mission into Environmental Studies educational activities, and provides opportunities for students to extend education beyond the classroom. These features are: promoting a faith that does justice; fostering leaders of conscience, compassion, and competence; and facilitating vocational discernment. Based on the inter-disciplinary practice of the ESI, the project pilots innovative pedagogies to better fulfill the university mission. It consists of four classes on the religious studies/environmental studies interface, the Environmental Vocation Internship, and the creation of exportable educational units about environmental, ethical, and faith issues.