

In STEP with students: Angela Picotte

by Audralynn See - Friday, April 08, 2011

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/10606/in-step-with-students-angela-picotte/>

As part of the Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, art education major Angela Picotte takes her love of animals to a new level by working as the caretaker for a colony of almost 100 ground squirrels.

Name: Angie Picotte

Role: Animal caretaker

Department: Halsey biology department

Major: Art education

Year: Senior

What specific tasks do you do for your internship?

“In the Halsey colony, there are around 100 Ground Squirrels (which look like big chipmunks) that are bred and sold around the world to different research facilities. There are also white rats, Mongolian gerbils and occasionally mice. And in the Clow colony there are voles. As an animal caretaker for the Halsey biology department, I am responsible for many jobs. I clean animal cages, feed and water animals, monitor animal health, keep up with mandatory sanitary conditions within the colony, as well as help with paperwork dealing with the colony.”

How is the internship benefiting your education?

“Due to the fact that I am an art education major, this job really doesn't have any connection with my education, but I have learned a great deal from it. I have always been an animal lover and being so, I've been against sacrificing animals for scientific research. During my time spent within the colony, I have learned the importance of studying animals and the benefits that go with using animals for science research.”

How is the internship benefiting your future?

“I may want to eventually get a job at a humane society so working with animals gives me a lot of experience with caring for animals.”

How is the internship benefiting your department?

“Having a STEP student around to help out has made the life of everyone involved in the colony a lot easier. There are only two main people working in the Halsey animal colony, not counting myself. The animals need to get checked on every twenty four hours, so one of us needs to be in Oshkosh at all times. With the growing animal population within the colony, the caretaking can get pretty hectic at times which is why it makes it a lot easier to have a STEP student to help out.”

What has been your favorite part of the internship?

“My favorite part about this job has most certainly been working with animals. This job is great for a full-time college student because it is extremely flexible with my schedule, and it allows me to gain a sense of responsibility with my work. The added benefit with getting to see and interact with the animals is just a perk.”

Have you faced any challenges?

“At first it was a little difficult learning all of the routines within the colony but as time went on it became easier and easier. As long as I made lots and lots of notes for myself, I overcame these challenges fairly quickly.”

Supervisor Comments

“Angela has been a great asset to the department of biology and microbiology,” said Kelly Schill, manager of the animal laboratory. “Our animal program has nearly doubled in size over the last three years, so having a STEP student has allowed us to maintain a high standard of animal care excellence. Angela has been assisting in our animal husbandry program, which achieved AAALAC accreditation in 2008. Her duties include feeding and watering animals, changing and washing cages and observing animal health and behavior. She has an upbeat personality and is a very dedicated and reliable worker.”

The Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) offers students quality educational experiences while providing faculty and staff members with needed assistance in areas such as media services, student-faculty research, supplemental instruction, library assistance, instructional technology and academic computing support, and Web page development and maintenance. The program is funded through a one-time investment of \$500,000. More than 110 students are funded through STEP.

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