

# UT Dallas Eco Reps

Utilizing Student Employees as Vehicles for Sustainability Success

#### **Avery McKitrick**

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### UT Austin

- B.S. Environmental Science '21
- Campus Environmental Center
  - 2017-2019: Half-Pint Urban Prairie (Little Blue Prairie) Project Team Lead
  - o 2019-2020: Director
- Student leadership and empowerment







### UT Dallas







- Began August 2021
- Operations
  - Water efficiency
  - EV infrastructure
  - Composting
- Engagement
  - Eco Reps (8)
  - Sustainable service
  - Campus farm
  - Certifications



# Eco Reps History

- Began at Tufts in 2001
- Active at UT Dallas since 2017
  - Paid part-time student employees in the Office of Sustainability
  - Replaced informal internship program
  - Originally operations-focused







# Eco Reps Today

- 8 Eco Reps working 10-19 hours per week (up from 3 in August 2021)
- Each have a project area focus
  - Microfarm (2)
  - Bike programs (1)
  - Bee programs (1)
  - Environmental justice (1)
  - Sustainable service (1)
  - Zero waste (1)
  - Marketing (1)
- Goals: Student leadership and professional development

### Training Process

#### **Onboarding Packet**

- About the office
- Expectations (general, weekly, monthly)
- Communication
- Scheduling
- Resources and index
- Title IX

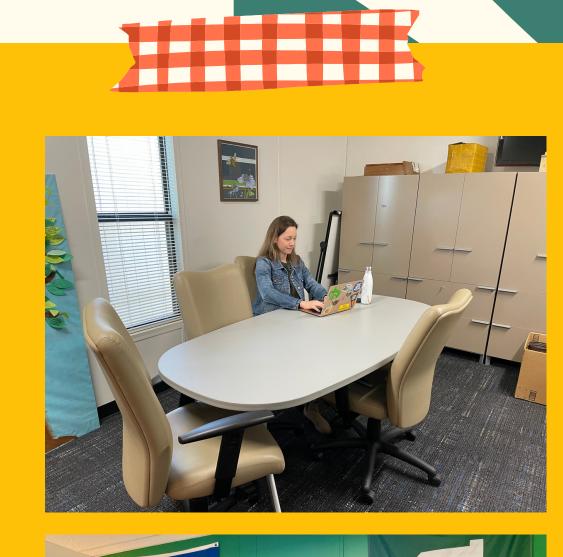
### Office Tour and Campus Sustainability Tour

- Location of supplies
- Location of various campus projects and points of interest



# Management

- Assign your own hours
- Bi-weekly team meetings
- Weekly one on ones with Avery
- Flexibility Remote work
- Open door policy





### The Greenhouse Blog

#### **The Greenhouse Blog**



#### What Did the Inflation Reduction Act Do?

Caleb Perez. Capital Hill.

<a href="https://unsplash.com/photos/a6h5e59r">https://unsplash.com/photos/a6h5e59r</a>

150 Written by Alisa Model

(Sustainable Service Honors Eco Rep)

You may have heard that the...

Keep reading  $\rightarrow$ 



#### Mushrooms: The Unsung Heroes of the Climate Crisis

Image by Thanh Soledas, Unsplash Written by Ida Ghorbani Portobello, shiitake, porcini...mushrooms are a delicious and healthy addition to pizza,...

Keep reading  $\rightarrow$ 



#### Justice at the Heart of Environmentalism

Artwork by Ricardo Levins Morales Art Studio Written by Gwen Schaulis Traditional approaches to environmentalism often fail to see the...

Keep reading  $\rightarrow$ 



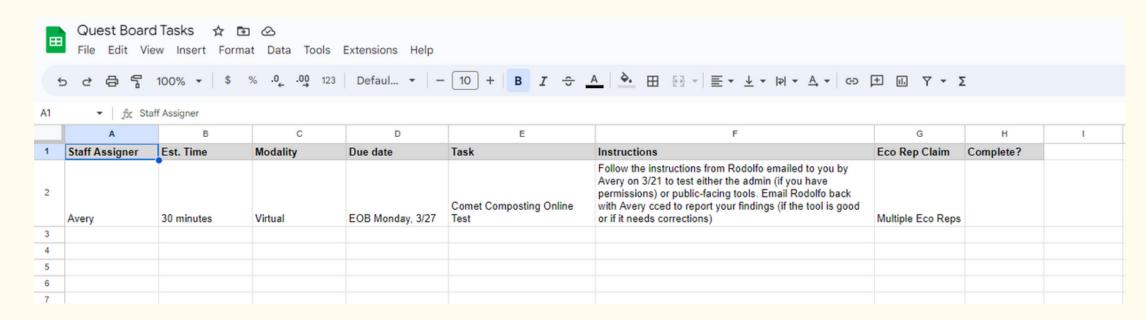
#### **About Us**

The Greenhouse Blog is a project by the Eco Reps working in the <u>UT</u> Dallas Office of Sustainability.

Eco Reps share ideas and education about sustainability from a wide variety of lenses each



### Ye Olde Quest Board



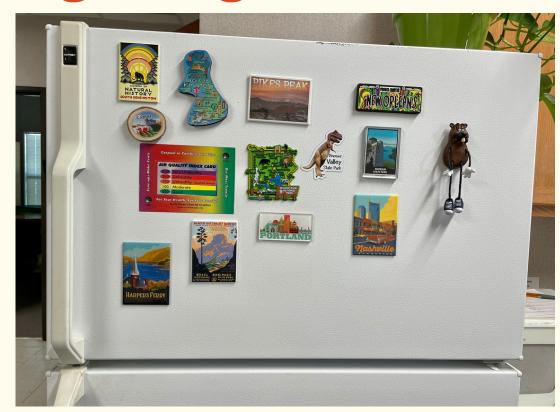
# Management

- Assign your own hours
- Bi-weekly team meetings
- Weekly one on ones with Avery
- Flexibility Remote work
- Open door policy
- Greenhouse Blog
- Ye Olde Quest Board
- Culture building
  - Respect of one another
  - Human-first
  - No stupid questions or ideas
  - Thinking outside the box
  - Fun

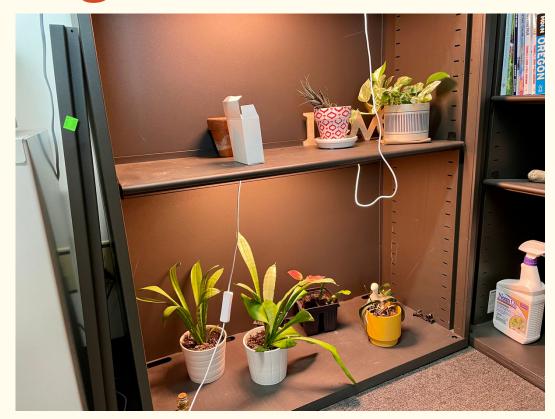




### Fridge Magnet Collection



### Bring-Your-Own Plants





Team Outing Spring 2022

## Eco Rep Feedback

Collected during off-boarding exit interviews.

"What skills did you develop as an Eco Rep?"

Leading a group, note-taking, event planning, marketing, public speaking, confidence, technical skills (machinery operation, etc.) "How has being an Eco Rep prepared you for future jobs?"

Project management, learning to work in an online format, learning to work with peers, accountability, responsibility

### "What traits make a good Eco Rep?"



consistency

creativity

navigating-ambiguity

communication quick-learner professionalism cooperation organization

systemic-thinking

flexibility

knowledge

confidence







- Add additional Eco Reps
   (biodiversity and restoration projects, other roles)
- More professional development opportunities
- Involving current Eco Reps in hiring process
- Improvements to work space

# Thank you!

#### **Avery McKitrick**

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