

Sustainability Internship Blog

Hulliams Kamlem, Tree Campus

My summer has been eventful thus far, going around UIC campus equipped with a clinometer, a Biltmore stick, a GPS device and a diameter loggers tape. With my colleague Alyssa, we stop at various locations and take tree measurements. Our task is to update the UIC tree inventory and also use a software named I-Tree to assess the economic and ecological benefits of trees on and around UIC campus. Furthermore, one specific aspect of the software seems particularly appealing to me as a public health undergraduate going in my senior year: the ability to calculate the health benefits provided by trees. This approach was fairly new to me when I started my internship at the Office of Sustainability this June. I found it interesting to have the possibility to come up with actual numbers expressing the direct impact of trees on the health of individuals and communities.

From my African heritage, I have learned to value issues related to sustainability; I have learned to be conscious about the environment and live in ways that do not undermine the ability of future generations to enjoy healthy and safe living conditions. So, when I learned about the possibility of working as an intern during the summer at the Office of Sustainability, I did not hesitate to apply. After five weeks in the program, I'm convinced to have made the right decision, modestly contributing to uphold the status of UIC as a proud member of Tree Campus USA, a program designed by the Arbor Foundation to encourage the development of healthy community forests in colleges and universities across the U.S.

Overall, my internship at the UIC Office of Sustainability has helped me to develop practical and technical skills around tree assessment, while getting exposure to a wide range of subjects related to sustainability. Moreover, I'm expanding my knowledge on subjects like water management, food recovery, recycling, climate change while interacting with students and faculty who bring commendable expertise to our weekly seminars.

Some of you might see Alyssa and I soon somewhere around campus, measuring trees. Please, feel free to stop by and start a conversation. We are always happy to exchange about tree species, canopies, and how to assess trees' economic and ecological value.

And just so you know, I will remind you that these trees play a vital role in keeping all of us healthy!