Sustainable City Year Program Student Guide *(or, what to expect from this term's SCYP course)*

Participating in a Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) project can be highly rewarding. It offers the opportunity to apply the disciplinary concepts and tools year are learning in class to a real issue in the City of Albany, Oregon. It provides a bridge between the neat problems at the back of a textbook and the real world that you will encounter after graduation. Students who have collaborated on SCYP have seen many benefits such as real experience in one's field and honing high demand employment competencies like teamwork and presentations. This preparation is extremely valuable for your next step after graduation: Your career.

However, these benefits come with **new challenges**. Because SCYP projects pull the messy real world into your classroom, you might be surprised how different it is from more traditional coursework. It may require more time than you're used to putting in, and there will be ambiguity to navigate. It will be less predictable than textbooks and pre-defined labs; this may feel confusing and seem disorganized. Be assured your professor, your SCYP partner city, and SCYP staff collaboratively developed this project in advance of the term. However, the dynamic nature of cities and projects are inherently unpredictable. Changing circumstances may alter the timeline, such as delays with accessing data, recruiting community members to attend student presentations, and unexpected changes in the lives and work of our SCYP partner. You have a roadmap, and it works most of the time, but plan to experience unexpected detours along the way. **We know that this can be frustrating. But it is worth the effort.**

While these challenges are largely inevitable in applied work, one thing that will help is to **ask questions.** Communicate with your instructor, SCYP partner (if you have established a direct relationship), and with SCYP staff. We all want you to succeed, and we can share our experience, strategies, and networks to assist with problem solving. Be assured that your work will move our SCYP partner's projects forward, helping them make progress toward their sustainability and planning goals. Even if you feel like your contribution is small, it is significant to our partner. **Remember these points to help you succeed and to encourage you along the way:**

- **Anticipate Complexity and Ambiguity**. The transition from solving textbook problems to working on real, complex project with no known solution is challenging. You will face real world data limitations and you will face a somewhat unpredictable problem solving process that requires creativity, initiative, and persistence. This is the world you'll encounter after graduation. Your instructor and SCYP partner expect ambiguity throughout the project – and you should too. Working with ambiguity is an important skill for your future career and life in general.

- **Practice Creativity, Initiative, Flexibility, and Patience.** Because you are being asked to work on project for which there is no known answer, you will need to think creativity, take the initiative to ask questions and seek out a variety of resources, and be persistent in your efforts. You will also need to be flexible – the information you want may not be available.

- **Communicate!** This could include your SCYP partner staff person (if your instructor has set up direct communication), additional project partners, or your instructor. Please be professional with this outreach. Be both patient and persistent. Local government and university timelines and operations are different, so communication may take longer than you are used to. Also, people are often out of the office, busy with other responsibilities, and may need multiple (yet polite) follow-up emails or phone calls.

- **Seek Assistance to Stay on Track.** Please don't hesitate to check-in with your instructor and/or SCYP staff. We are here to help.

Past SCYP Student Quotes:

"It's really neat to come out and get this real world training. We're getting this well-rounded experience. It's pretty awesome to have the city staff welcome us in and tell us that the work we're doing matters and that they are going to look at it. It feels meaningful."
> *Bjorn, PPPM Student*

"I thought it would be great to do this project because I'm from [Medford]. It has the potential to be my favorite project because I'm giving back to the community that has already given so much to me."
> *David, Architecture*

"I think more schools across the country should move in this direction in terms of collaborating with communities because both parties can benefit. Being able to work outside the classroom and take field trips and also have real benefit in the community is awesome and rare. I'd love for other colleges and other schools to be able to do this."
> *Jeffrey, PPPM Student*

Past SCYP Partner Quotes:

"I learned some things and they learned some things, so everyone won. I hope we get to do something similar in the future."
> *Larry Masterman, Emergency Preparedness Manager, City of Medford (2013-14)*

"It has really been successful — beyond my wildest dreams. I know we will be using this work for years and years to come; we are going to make as many of these projects reality as we can."
> *Linda Norris, City of Salem City Manager*

"Work by SCY students brought attention to long-standing transportation issues that impact livability. Ideas developed by students have since formed the basis for refinement planning, project development, and grant applications. Salem would not have made as much progress to address these issues without the focus and energy provided by the SCY students."
> *Julie Warncke, Transportation Planning Manager, City of Salem Public Works Department*