Background

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center (OSUWMC) in Columbus, Ohio provides health care services in a variety of specialties in medicine as one of the nation’s best academic health centers.

Mission Statement: To improve health in Ohio and across the world through innovations and transformation in research, education, patient care and community engagement.

How did I get the job?

- I interned with Facilities Operations and Development (FOD) in the summer of 2022 focused on their Zero Waste Initiatives.
- Through this experience, I worked with The Wexner Medical Center’s sustainability program to implement better recycling infrastructure throughout the hospitals and outpatient care centers. This connected me to the internship I had this summer.

Focus Areas

The challenge: On average, hospitals produce an average of 29 pounds of waste per patient stay.

Interest Areas:
- Carbon and Energy Reduction
- Zero Waste
- Greening the Operating Room
- Sustainable Procurement
- Green Building
- Employee Engagement and Education

Daily Operations

This role was primarily remote with some days requiring on site assistance.

- On-site: Days where I was needed in person, I would work with my supervisor across facilities. These days were spent traveling to different sites and this required flexibility and a hands-on attitude.
- Hybrid: When I worked from home, I would meet with my supervisor on the goals for the week and attend any necessary meetings. The work was self-paced.

Projects

- Completed a value analysis of operating room materials. We evaluated the benefits and costs of reusable and disposable items.
- Created a PowerPoint visualizing the scope of the Medical Center’s waste and recycling needs to educate our own staff.
- Rehomed and donated medical supplies no longer needed in each facility.
- Provided an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging analysis on Central Ohio businesses to identify how to better accommodate patients.
- LED retrofit across medical facilities to reduce energy consumption.
- Managed data for a waste dashboard to identify waste producing projects and materials across facilities.

Skills Learned

Over the course of the internship, I have learned and developed the following skills:
- Data organization (Excel, QGIS, Tableau, etc.)
- Decision making/problem solving
- Creating executive documents for leadership
- Time management
- Communicating with a variety of professionals

Reflection

My experience with The OSUWMC was incredible. I valued learning and collaborating with my supervisor and other employees. The Medical Center offers a unique perspective on sustainability efforts due to the scale of operations.

Acknowledgements

Special thank you to Lauren, my supervisor, who provided me with an environment that fostered learning and a drive to innovate. To Brian, thank you for continuously supporting my passion for a more sustainable future.