



Name: Everett Davis

Job: Director, Founding Board Member, Network for Sustainable Solutions

College Major: Sustainability

Graduation Year: 2016

What is the day in the life like at your job?

I am a staff of one, therefore my daily tasks range dramatically to run daily operations and expand the organization strategically. It comes in waves, some weeks I need to focus on donor/sponsorship relations, other weeks there is a need to work on our digital platform. The consistent theme here is flexibility and constant learning of new skills. The website has a bug, preventing users from being able to access our resources? Time to learn some coding. A major corporation is interested in sponsoring our organization. Need to learn some graphic design techniques to put new marketing materials together.

What do you love about your job?

Flexibility. Because I founded this organization and ultimately lead its strategic direction, I have many options to both grow and engage the organization with. This also translates to a good work-life balance. I am the only thing holding myself back from time off, etc. I also love the limitless possibility. No one else in the country is doing the work we are doing, which means we are growing fast.

What is challenging about your role?

What I love is also the most challenging piece. With that much flexibility, comes stress and anxiety around funding, costs, and time management. I am getting progressively better at managing these things every day, but it will be a constant struggle in the near future.

What are the benefits of working in this field?

Nonprofits are inherently amorphous. The only consistent structure of nonprofits is that your org is tax-exempt under the eyes of the IRS. However, saying you work for a nonprofit is like saying you work for a business, it could be anything. In my particular case, I have the opportunity to meet and connect with vast amounts of people. This is a benefit to our organization's growth as well as my own personal development. This work keeps me questioning the world's standards and expectations. This is a benefit in of itself as I never want to stagnate my mindset or ideology.

What experiences did you have that prepared you for this role?

All of them. I have been a student, line cook, server, mountain guide, science teacher, arborist, canoe instructor, baker, field data collector, construction project manager, city employee, etc. Each one has given me further insight on how to engage and manage people. If you are successful in engaging with and working alongside others in a positive manner, that will lead you most of the way to the places you want to go. Also self-love, I

Spring 2024

was not taught this growing up, but if you can't love yourself how can you have the confidence to work on large professional projects?

What do you see happening in the future for these types of careers?

I believe that we are entering a new wild west era for organizations and businesses. Titles and structures are being torn down because populations demand it. Government is working with private businesses. Businesses are becoming more associated with social responsibility campaigns. Nonprofits have to compete like businesses. Eventually, all of these classifications become meaningless. In order to address the 21st century's immediate crises, we need to adapt our structures to more effectively serve people, restore our planet, and create economic equity.

What should a student know about your field?

It is difficult, but not impossible, and you will be happy that you tried rather than not at all.

What advice do you have for a student considering a career in your profession? I suppose this would be advisable for anyone wanting to start their own organization or work for a small team that is challenging the status quo: Listen first, talk later. Observation is my superpower, but it turns out that everyone has access to it, but few people utilize it.