

# MELISSA BURLINGAME



## EDUCATION

### **Master of Science, Geography** (May 2010)

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Thesis title: *Spatial Analysis of Management Plan Impacts on Landscape Change for the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, IL.* (Advisor: Dr. David Goldblum)

### **Master of Public Administration, Urban Management & Development** (May 2004)

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Thesis title: *The Search for Community Opinion.* (Advisor: Dr. Heidi Koenig)

### **Bachelor of Science, Sociology** (May 2002)

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Magna cum laude and University Honors

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### **Outreach and Communications Specialist** (July 2011 – Present)

Northern Illinois University, Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, & Energy, DeKalb, IL

- **Project Planning and Implementation:** Propose, plan, and implement *Summit on Environmental Education* as means to bring faculty from two-year colleges to NIU to share best practices and to learn more about how their students could easily transfer to NIU and other four-year universities. Collaborate with several office and student volunteers to co-manage *Commiversity Gardens*. Work with faculty to mentor students coordinating environmental management projects that will be overseen by Environmental Studies and student volunteers.
- **Strategic Planning:** Lead Environmental Studies through strategic planning process including a half-day retreat, follow-up communication, and the final report. Continue to report at the one-, three-, and five-year milestones.
- **Communication Strategies:** Formulate, implement, and assess Institute communications goals to support and further the Institute's educational mission, outreach, and recruitment efforts. Direct the development of Institute website content and other social-media outlets. Devise the flow of email and social-media marketing into existing communications strategies. Act as liaison with outside media, Director, and faculty to maintain consistent communication of the Institute's educational, outreach, recruitment, and research goals.
- **Outreach:** Plan and execute regional, community, and university education, research, and networking opportunities and events for the Institute including the Environmental Film Festival, Give and Go partnership with Goodwill and Keep America Beautiful, the Native Garden installation, and the Green Office Certification. Assist Director and faculty to identify student service learning opportunities.
- **Supervision:** Responsible for supervision and training of 1-3 administrative graduate assistants, 1-3 undergraduate student employees, and 1-3 undergraduate student interns. Previously collaborated with the Huskie Service Scholar program to provide site supervision and mentorship for 3-4 undergraduate volunteer students.

- **Course Creation and Instruction:** Research and benchmark course content in topic areas related to food systems and agriculture. Create content and teach ENV5 210: *Introduction to Local Sustainable Food Systems*. Design interdisciplinary Certificate of Undergraduate Study in Sustainable Food Systems in collaboration with faculty from several academic departments. Partner with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs departments to offer various ways for students to enhance their education experience while taking the introduction course.
- **Academic Advising:** Produce advising checklists for the six undergraduate emphases and one minor program housed within Environmental Studies. Formally advise over 100 students each semester.
- **Recruitment:** Seek potential recruitment resources and partnerships. Develop all NIU and Institute Open House strategies, including materials and presentations; provide on-site support during these activities. Analyze recruitment strategies, track resultant enrollment, and suggest need-based change.

#### **Research Graduate Assistant** (September 2009 – June 2011)

Northern Illinois University, Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, & Energy, DeKalb, IL

- **Administration:** Assisted with administrative procedures required to establish a new academic department.
- **Communication:** Developed marketing strategies for fledgling program including an official website and social networking site (Facebook) to maximize web presence.
- **Project Management:** Organized and advertised speaker series focused on environmental issues. Implemented the annual Environmental Film Festival – secured films and donations, marketed and advertised, and managed all activities during the event.
- **Special Projects:** Performed benchmark analysis of environmental studies and sciences programs at other universities for information for grant proposals. Planned week-long environmental science summer camp for high school students.

#### **Research Graduate Assistant** (July 2008 – August 2009)

Northern Illinois University, Public Opinion Laboratory, DeKalb, IL

- **Data Management:** Developed coding schemes for survey responses. Assisted with survey writing and computer coding for phone and internet surveys. Provided support with sample management to maintain statistical integrity of research project. Used SPSS statistical software and MS Excel to manage data.
- **Communication:** Prepared written reports of survey statistics for public presentation. Composed technical reports that condensed large amounts of data. Maintained the organization's web content.

#### **Community Director** (June 2007 – June 2008)

Northern Illinois University, Northern View Community, DeKalb, IL

- **Administration:** Designed processes for operating a newly-functioning and self-operating administrative office. Constructed protocol for administrative processes including routine correspondence, office supply and key audits, applications and contracts, and desk operations.
- **Supervision:** Selected, trained, and supervised Chief Clerk and paraprofessional staff. Responsible for daily supervision, regular performance evaluation, and hiring/termination decisions.

- **Liaison:** Networked with other university departments to ensure optimal services were maintained. Ensured proper communication with other University offices affected by decisions made regarding administrative and community operations.
- **Special Projects:** Conducted a series of meetings to determine environmental initiatives appropriate to submit to university provost for concept review. Continued to meet and discuss environmental initiatives, timelines, and budgets to recommend for Housing and Dining.

#### **Residence Hall Director** (March 2005 – June 2007)

Northern Illinois University, Housing and Dining, DeKalb, IL

- **Assessment:** Designed survey instrument using internet software to measure opinions about residence hall classrooms. Developed evaluation instrument for Department of Residence Life for use in program planning and review.
- **Supervision:** Supervised 10 paraprofessional staff. Responsible for daily supervision, regular performance evaluation, and hiring/termination decisions.
- **Project Management:** Advised paraprofessional staff through the successful planning and implementation of campus-wide programs. Collaborated with university departments to provide programming opportunities for target populations.

#### **Community Development Intern** (July 2004 – March 2005)

Village of Lemont, IL

- **Special Projects:** Created web pages for the Community Development Department. Assisted with the Lemont special census public information campaign.
- **Benchmarking Studies:** Compared municipal policies regarding institutional zoning, cash in lieu of parking provisions, and downtown parking regulations and redevelopment agreements.
- **Customer Relations:** Assisted residents and builders with flood plain location, property information, zoning classification, and zoning standards questions. Met with developers about proposed site developments and prepared follow-up correspondence regarding open issues from meetings.

#### **Administrative Intern, Village Manager's Office** (May 2002 – June 2004)

Village of Glen Ellyn, IL

- **Budget Production:** Participated in the development of the Village's annual budget, including budgets for the Village Board and the Administration Department.
- **Project Management:** Managed Annual Village Surplus Sale – coordinated efforts of all Village departments, notified the public, and arranged for disposal of sale remnants. Planned and directed vendor participation in village's Recycling Extravaganza.
- **Publication Design:** Designed and implemented employee newsletter – researched, wrote, and edited articles. Designed handout for Village residents about West Nile Virus and methods of reducing mosquito populations.

#### **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS AND TEACHING**

- NIU Social Justice Conference Panel; *Go Green or Go Home* (2015)
- NIU Hunger Action Month Panel (2015)
- Association of Environmental Studies and Sciences Conference Poster; *Bridging Disciplines to Offer an Interdisciplinary Certificate of Study in Sustainable Food Systems* (2015)
- New Ideas in Science: Climate Change and the Environment Conference; *Incorporating Online Resources into the Classroom* (2013)

- Association of American Geographers, West Lakes Division Presentation; *Assessing Urban Planning Performance for Curtailing Sprawl on the Metropolitan Edge: The Case of Kane County, IL* (2010)
- Illinois GIS Association Conference Poster; *Evaluating Ecological Land Cover Changes Over Time* (2009)
- NIU Instructor, UNIV 101: The University Experience (2005-2008)

## **PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

### **Supportive and Professional Staff Council**

Northern Illinois University (July 2012 – Current)

- Co-chair the Events Committee and plan events to encourage continued education and networking among supportive and professional staff in the workplace.
- Served on ad hoc committee to assess opportunities to improve sabbatical applications for supportive and professional staff.
- Elected as representative to serve on the Campus Security and Environmental Quality Committee.

### **Citizen's Environmental Commission**

City of DeKalb (August 2009 – Current)

- Assumed lead role in compiling and editing sustainable master plan for the City of DeKalb.
- Served as Secretary for the commission.
- Ex Officio status, representing Northern Illinois University, starting in July 2015.

### **Living Learning Community – Housing and Dining**

Northern Illinois University (August 2011 – Current)

- Co-Chair the Review Team tasked with evaluating the current Living Learning Community structure and recommending improvements.
- Advise the Green Living Community.
- Former Advisor for the Science, Engineering, and Technology House.

## **SELECTED ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS**

- Association of Environmental Studies and Sciences
- DeKalb County Community Gardens
- Green America
- Plants of Concern
- The Conservation Foundation
- Sierra Club

## **SELECTED HONORS**

- City of DeKalb Citizen Environmental Commission: P.R.I.D.E. Award (People Responsible for Improving DeKalb's Environment), 2015
- NIU Supportive and Professional Staff Council: Outstanding Service Award, 2015
- NIU Supportive and Professional Staff Council: Certificate of Recognition, 2013 and 2014
- NIU Honors Program: Young Alumnus Award, 2011
- NIU Public Administration: Model Public Administrator Award, 2004; Academic Scholar Award, 2004 & Distinguished Manuscript Award, 2004
- NIU Graduate Student Leadership Award, 2003
- Dean's List, NIU College of Liberal Arts and Science: Spring and Fall 1999; Spring and Fall 2000; Spring and Fall 2001; and Spring 2002

**SELECTED TRAINING**

- Kishwaukee College: A to Z Grant Writing (2015)
- CATIS Mexico Summer Field School: Earth Friendly Technologies (2015)

**SELECTED VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

- Northern Illinois University Green Team
- NIU Alumni Association, Honors Alumni Council
- DeKalb County Farmland Foundation, Executive Board Member
- Forest Preserve District of Kane County; Certified Naturalist Program
- Egyptian Theatre of DeKalb
- Chicago Green Festival

**EXTERNAL FUNDING SUPPORT**

- Environmental Education Association of Illinois: applied for \$200, received \$200 (2012)
- DeKalb County Community Foundation: applied for \$4,838, received \$2,400 (2013)
- Douglas and Lynn M. Roberts Family Foundation: applied for \$3,800, received \$0 (2013)
- American Honda Foundation: applied for \$75,000, received \$0 (2013)

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

- ArcMap; Cascade Web Content Management System; GroupWise; Microsoft Office Suite; Adobe Acrobat, PageMaker, and Photoshop; and SPSS, WinCati, and Sensus.