

San Francisco State University Conference Session Highlights and Reflections from Student Attendees

Introductory Note

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SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY IS GRATEFUL for the opportunity to connect our students with the 2015 George Wright Society conference in Oakland, California. This upper division seminar in recreation, parks, and tourism is called “Recreational Use of National Parks and Protected Areas,” a course cross-listed with the Environmental Studies Program. Because this is a university elective, there are other majors represented as well such as archeology, theatre, history, psychology, broadcast electronic communications, and geography.

Throughout the conference week, 23 students in my class had a chance to network with professionals and attend a variety of sessions. As part of their conference experience and course assignment, students signed up to be a rapporteur for one session of choice on their day of attendance. Subsequently, they were assigned to write a 500-word essay highlighting presentation content relating to the session they attended. They selected sessions from panel discussions, contributed papers, lightning sessions, café conversations, or invited speakers.

Furthermore, they wrote a brief reflection (200 words or less) to accompany the content presented during the session regarding implications. That is, the goal was for them to write about how the details presented in the session were relevant (or not) to students who are interested in professional development for their future. Reflection statements at the end of each student paper were intended to relate to the notion of inspiring a new generation of stewards. Some of the reflective comments included how their needs, as students, could have been better served through session organization or content. Another facet they wrote about in reflection is simply their greatest “take away.”

Last, the conference committee hosted a career session on how to get government, public-service employment in conservation science, and opened this session to SFSU students in this class. One student, in fact, selected this very session for their written assignment as well. Any questions or comments readers have can be communicated to Dr. Nina Roberts.

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