



Norris-Gaynor Student Scholarship at Rookery Bay Research Reserve – Naples, FL

Are you interested in a career focused on protecting the coastal environment through science communication in Southwest Florida?

We are seeking a motivated individual to serve in a four-month long, paid internship starting early 2026. The intern will use science communication skills to inform the local real estate community of coastal research successes on habitat protection, restoration, and conservation within the Rookery Bay Research Reserve. The opportunity is funded by the Norris-Gaynor Student Scholarship which was established in 2019 through a generous contribution by Lavern Norris Gaynor, a long-time champion of youth education and environmental causes. Managed by Friends of Rookery Bay, the scholarship funds internships at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve for generations to come.

Description: The internship assists the Coastal Training and Engagement sector at Rookery Bay Research Reserve to follow up on a needs assessment that was conducted for our local real estate professionals in 2022 where they were asked to address topics of concern from their clients, in addition to a workshop series in 2024 focused on educating realtors on local environmental topics. The primary goal of this position will be to create a meeting template (Meeting in a Box: [Meeting-in-a-Box.pdf](#)) focused on addressing the needs identified by local real estate professionals, as well as any training and science materials necessary.

During the internship, the candidate will work closely with Training and Engagement to learn more about stakeholder-driven program development. The candidate will also contribute to reserve marketing projects, such as social media campaigns and outreach material for the real estate community by the creation of a welcome packet that may be provided to new homeowners. This position will need to work in a highly independent nature with both Reserve staff and the Friends of Rookery Bay.

Opportunities for learning and career growth: This opportunity will create a unique learning experience to understand the interactions between coastal ecosystems functioning in concert with a thriving and growing community. The primary objective of this program is to provide the selected candidate the opportunity to improve their knowledge about science communication focused on people's interactions with coastal ecosystems and their growing curiosities in their backyards.

Candidate responsibilities:

- Review the 2022 needs assessment and the 2024 workshop series to identify training needs
- Work with the team to develop an informational meeting template (Meeting in a Box)
- Develop a realtor welcome packet (e.g., folders with brochures and take-aways)
- Ability to envision and execute messaging through the written word, videos and graphics
- Work with Reserve staff and stakeholders in-person and/or virtually
- Assist as needed with other Reserve programs such as workshops for landscape professionals,

- resilience trainings, or collaborative research on mangrove ecosystems
- Work during scheduled times and successfully complete tasks within a reasonable time frame
- Deliver a presentation to Reserve staff summarizing experience gained from the internship
- Deliver a presentation at local realtor association meetings (i.e., MIAAOR, NABOR) using the developed Meeting in a Box

Required skills: Experience working independently and as part of a team; Ability to manage time appropriately; Skilled in active listening, written and oral communication; Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others; Ability to summarize complex ideas; Ability to identify key themes in a concise and clear way; Basic computer skills.

Minimum Criteria:

- A student enrolled in a bachelor's program or a post-secondary institution.
- Demonstrates formal training or coursework in the designated internship field.
- One letter of recommendation and a cover letter discussing how the internship will enhance your continued education or professional pursuits.
- A passion and commitment toward environmental education, research, or natural resource management

Preferred skills: Experience working with a professional audience; Knowledge in advanced features of Microsoft Office Suite and Zoom; Basic knowledge of Southwest Florida's coastal environment issues; Experience using process agendas and in educational program development.

Area(s) of discipline: Environmental Science, Environmental Education, Risk Communication, Creative Media, Science Communication, Social Science, Business, or Journalism.

Hours per week: ~20 (Not to exceed a total of 500 Hours), Hybrid or Adaptable work schedule available.

Compensation: \$15.00/ hour or approximately \$300/week (Not to exceed a total of \$7,500 Dollars)

**Discount housing available at the Reserve Dorms, per request.*

Location: Rookery Bay Environmental Learning Center, 300 Tower Road, Naples, Florida

Anticipated Start/End Date: Early 2026; 4-month duration

How to Apply:

Submission: Email info@rookerybay.org with application packet; Subject: Norris-Gaynor Internship Application

INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION PACKET:

- Cover Letter of Interest
- Resume
- 1 Letter of Recommendation
- Unofficial Transcripts (optional)

Application Closing Date: Applications reviewed on a rolling basis until position is filled.

About: The non-profit Friends of Rookery Bay connects people to southwest Florida's dynamic coastal environmental in support of Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Reserve provides a

basis for informed stewardship of estuaries in Southwest Florida through research and education. Visit RookeryBay.org for more information.