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## ***For Immediate Release***

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### **Six CSUS students gain experience as Green Communities interns**

“About 1.5 million, or 53.6 percent, of bachelor's degree-holders under the age of 25 last year were jobless or underemployed, the highest share in at least 11 years,” [reported the Associated Press this spring](#).

With those kinds of odds facing today's college students and recent graduates, an internship can provide students with the advantages of on-the ground experience and related skills that employers are seeking.

Six students from California State University, Stanislaus are gaining such valuable experience as paid interns for the [Green Communities program](#), which provides greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventories at no cost for participating local governments. Currently 14 governments in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced and Kern Counties are participating in this program.

Following intense training, the college students, graduate students and recent graduates collect and analyze city- and county-wide operations data for the Green Communities program, administered by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), collaboratively with the Great Valley Center (GVC) in Modesto. California utility customers fund the program under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission.

The interns gather the city or county's GHG emissions data and prepare a report outlining their assigned local government's baseline "carbon footprint" using technical support and software provided by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability. Program momentum is growing, with nearly all data collected in the various regions. The interns are now qualifying and analyzing the data they have gathered, in preparation for writing the reports. Upon completion of their final report, the interns earn a \$4,000 stipend.

CSU Stanislaus undergraduate interns include Gil Perez (Geography), Kathrina Schillaci (Geography), and Veronica Benavides (Biology). Graduate interns include Natasha Hanley (Geography) and Jose Morales (Public Administration). Recent CSUS graduate Melissa Moebius (Mathematics and Geography), is also participating as an intern. Several other CSUS students were involved in various early stages of the project, including Emily Cimino (Public Administration), Alexander Jongenelen (Geology) and Jason Nascimento (Business Administration).

Green Communities provides valuable training and hands-on experience to the college interns collecting and analyzing the data. Over the last five months the program has offered five training sessions for interns and participating local government partners, with one more remaining.

Jose Morales, a graduate student at CSU Stanislaus, is currently in his second internship in the Green Communities program this spring said he has enjoyed his internship experience for many reasons.

“I feel proud to represent the program for many reasons and one of them is the change in how the local governments operate their resources. I'm very happy to work with a unique and very professional staff who has

taught me how to interact with local government employees. As result, I have become a professional myself thanks to the good coaching from all the staff, including the ICLEI members and Bryce.”

Bryce Dias, the GVC staff member who oversees the program, was recruited after serving as one of the Green Communities interns from the initial grant round in spring of 2011. Dias is a CSUS alumni and former student leader and has just completed a Master of Public Administration degree at CSUS.

The program provides a beneficial service and resource to budget-strapped local governments, which often suffer from reduced staffing, to quantify and address GHG emissions. This is the second time the Green Communities program has been offered in the northern San Joaquin Valley, with ten projects being completed last year.

The Green Communities Program is a collaborative effort, implemented by PG&E, ICLEI and the GVC. The Program is dedicated to providing innovative energy efficiency and climate change solutions for local governments and communities in the Central Valley, as well as other parts of the PG&E service area.

More information is available online at <http://www.greatvalley.org/work/greencommunities>.

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