

Shane Vaughan

Degree: Psychology and Sustainability

Year: 2



Why sustainability?

I was brought up in Japan and became interested in environmental issues after doing projects on global warming in elementary school. During high school, human psychology fascinated me as well. While studying Foundation in Exeter, my interest became focused in food related issues such as food waste. My goal in studying both psychology and sustainability is to determine the best approaches to help people change their behavior and ways to change societies' rules that can lead to a more sustainable social system.

What experience have you gained at University?

As a part of my degree, Exeter offers a fantastic sustainability course. Course mates are all studying different subjects, which opened my eyes to different perspectives on issues related to sustainability. This has greatly enhanced my understanding of the complexity of sustainability.

I became involved in the Slow Food Soc. during my Foundation year, and have met many local food and drink producers as well as students with similar interests. Appreciating all the great produce that Devon has to offer has been an enriching experience, but making connections has been most rewarding. Studying sustainability exposes me to many things that are wrong in the world, but having the network of people who are tackling these issues in different ways keeps me motivated and optimistic!

I have done several volunteer activities such as help run a banquet using food that otherwise would have gone to waste. Other volunteer activities included the "Re-use project"



environmental auditing of the University, and the sustainable suppliers show case. Through these, I have seen many ways in which the University is striving to be a sustainable organization (The University was awarded first class in the green university ranking, and I can see why!). A recent volunteer activity was an educational event for elementary school children about ecology. I believe education is definitely a key to sustainability, and how the university is committed to providing it not only to its students but also the local community makes me proud to be a student here.

What skills have you gained?

Every new experience has helped my personal growth in various ways. I'm a very shy person, but through Slow Food and volunteering, I am experiencing more and becoming a lot more confident.

This confidence has made networking and communication easier. Although I still wouldn't consider myself as a people-person, I keep pushing myself to improve myself. Through organizing events for Slow Food Soc, I am more organized and responsible. (I hosted a Japanese food night and it was a big success!) It has molded me to become a better person, and hopefully contributed to my future employability.

Volunteering has taught me a lot about teamwork and the importance of effective communication. There's things you can do on your own, but it doesn't compare to what can be achieved as a team!

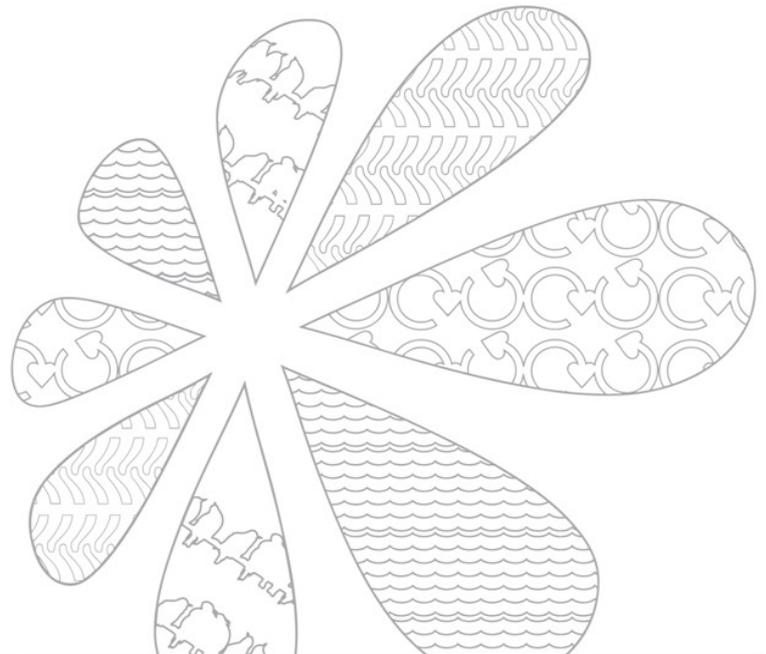


What are you going to do next?

In my second academic year, I am planning to get a part time job hopefully somewhere in the food supply chain or the environmental sector in general. I expect experience and insights gained will help me in the future for employability. I am now on the committee of Slow Food Soc, and will continue planning events and raising people's awareness for food related issues...and eating great grub with friends through events!

What is one thing that everyone can do to make a difference?

Be more conscious of the food you throw away, and aim to reduce this! I've seen so much food that has been thrown away by my flat mates, because it's gone moldy or out of date. Plan before going grocery shopping so that you don't buy more than you need – hence you save money! If you cook or buy too much, the freezer is really useful!



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