Dear Student,

Thank you for your interest in SPARC. Students involved with SPARC chose to participate in one of the following ways: volunteer, complete a Graduate Internship, complete Practicum requirements, or complete an Undergraduate Field Placement. SPARC does not offer employment opportunities for students.

Currently the clinic has three programs where student involvement is possible. The first is our feeding program that addresses feeding issues: selectivity, swallowing, texture, self-feeding. Some, but not all, of these children have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. The second program is Social Skills. Here children ages 4-18 are taught ways to function within a group: following directions, taking turns, asking for help, learning to use peers as role models. Our third program is SPARCLERS, a pre-education program for children ages 2-5. Here children learn to participate in classroom routines and receive one-on-one individualized skill building. Training is required for all three programs as well as the clearances mentioned below.

In order to assess whether or not SPARC is going to be a good fit for your interests and schedule you need to do the following:

1. Go to SPARC’s website www.sparcwc.org and read “Services” and “About Us”. This will introduce you to SPARC and may answer questions you have.

2. Weigh the demands of your academic/work schedule against SPARC’s need for a consistent commitment across several weeks. A typical minimum commitment is 2-3 times per week from 7:30am-1:30pm or 2:00pm-7:00pm. Because of the training involved, SPARC is not an ideal setting for completing 20 hours of community service unless you plan to continue well beyond those 20 hours.

3. Consider your level of interest in and enthusiasm for working with children. We will need you to be assertive in taking a leadership role, responsible for the assignments given to you, and excited about helping our clients learn new skills.

4. Training runs for 2 weeks. Training for SPARC’s programs start 1 week prior to the start of the semester. For the first week, the schedule is M-F from 8am-4pm and for the second week, it will be your typically scheduled shifts at SPARC. You must make yourself available for training or make arrangements with SPARC staff ahead of time to work out a schedule.

5. Anyone working with children in the State of Pennsylvania must obtain the following clearances:
   - TB test
   - PA Child Abuse Clearance
   - PA Criminal Record Check
   - FBI Fingerprinting.

   You MUST have copies of these clearances on file at SPARC before starting your experience. Information about obtaining clearance is attached to this email. At least 2 of these clearances take several weeks for processing. DO NOT DELAY on getting started.

6. Once you have completed WCU registration for the upcoming semester:
   - Call 610-430-5678 or email sparc@sparcwc.org to schedule an appointment to meet with the student coordinator. Please indicate the type of experience you are seeking at SPARC (volunteer, practicum, internship, field experience) and days and times when you are available to be at the clinic. Be sure to factor in any work schedule you may have. Please provide both phone and email contact information.
   - For your appointment, please bring your resume, any clearances you may have and a letter of recommendation from a professor or an employer.

Again, thank you for your interest in SPARC.

Note: SPARC is located at the WCU Graduate Business Center, 1160 McDermott Drive, #233, West Chester, PA 19383 approximately 10 minutes from the main campus. You can find directions to the clinic on SPARC’s website.
SPARC

Important Information about Criminal Clearances

The State of Pennsylvania requires that all persons who interact with students in schools must have certain clearances. You must have the following clearances by the time you start your practicum or if volunteering with SPARC:

- TB test*
- PA Criminal Record Check**
- PA Child Abuse Clearance**
- FBI Fingerprinting*

* FBI & TB clearances are not renewed if you are continuously enrolled at the University.
** Criminal Record and Child Abuse clearances must be kept current, yearly, through the end of your SPARC experience.

How to obtain your clearances:

1. TB testing
   - Can be done by your doctor (occasionally free from a family doctor)
   - Can be done at the Student Health Center, Wayne Hall, 2nd Floor
     ▪ You must call the health center to find out times you can go for this testing.
     ▪ Cost is $36 with RAMeCARD or Check (made out to West Chester University with student ID number on check)
   - Can be done at the Chester County Health Department on Westtown Road. Cost is $15.
     ▪ You must check with the health department to find out what times you can go for this testing.
   - Can be done at Chester County Hospital Department of Occupational Health. Cost is $10.00 payable by cash or money order. Call to find out times.

2. Criminal record check
   - Can be completed online at https://epatch.state.pa.us/
     Check the box for individual/noncriminal justice agency

3. Child Abuse
   - You can apply for the clearance online at https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home
     Check the volunteer having direct volunteer contact with children option

4. FBI Fingerprinting Background Check
   - You must go to this website to schedule an appointment https://uenroll.identogo.com/
   - Enter service code: 1KG738
   - The fee is about $23
   - Go to the fingerprinting site to complete the clearance request

Reminders:

- Keep the originals of your clearances.
- Keep your Criminal Record and Child Abuse clearances current.
  They are only good for one year and are required for field observations, for student teaching, and when you apply for any job working with children. Keeping them up to date can save you time in the future.
- Make sure to bring COPIES to SPARC for our records.