

ISABEL RIVERA

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EDUCATION

Clark University, Worcester, MA

Expected May 2028

Master of Science in Environmental Science & Policy
Graduate student, Fall 2026

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Graduated May 2026

Bachelor of Arts in Geography; Bachelor of Science in Community, Environment, and Development
Minor: Politics and Public Policy | Certificates: Environment and Society Geography (May 2025); Justice, Ethics, and Diversity in Space (December 2025)

CERTIFICATIONS

CITI Program

Oct 2023-Oct 2026

Social and Behavioral Human Subjects Research (IRB)

CITI Program

Oct 2023-Oct 2026

Students in Research

TEACHING & ADVISING

Graduate Assistant for Leadership & Engagement

Aug 2026-Present

Student Leadership, Identity, & Community Engagement, Clark University

- Serve as a liaison between SLICE and student organizations, providing event planning and policy advising.
- Provide on-site event support, troubleshooting logistics, safety concerns, and attendance management.
- Support administrative operations, communications, purchasing, marketing, and event preparation.

Undergraduate Advising Assistant

Sept 2023-May 2026

Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education, Penn State University

- Advised undergraduate students across majors on course selection, degree planning, and departmental opportunities.
- Represented the department at recruitment events, information sessions, and student involvement fairs.
- Facilitated one-on-one advising meetings with prospective and current students to clarify academic pathways.

Teaching Assistant

Aug 2023-Dec 2023

CED 152, Penn State University

- Assisted the course instructor in grading written assignments and presentations for 20+ students.
- Monitored student progress through Canvas and provided feedback on coursework and participation.
- Led in-class discussions and activities in the professor's absence to reinforce key course concepts.

Peer Learning Assistant

Aug 2023-Dec 2023

CED 102N, Penn State University

- Provided peer support and guidance to students during work sessions and project development.
- Helped facilitate group discussions and collaborative exercises to enhance comprehension of systems thinking.
- Evaluated low-stakes assignments and maintained records of student participation.
- Assisted the instructor in lesson coordination, classroom management, and online learning resources.

INTERNATIONAL FIELD EXPERIENCE

International Research Intern, ECO-DRYFOREST

March 2026

South Africa

- Participated in an international research internship focused on local aspirations for ecosystem restoration futures in South Africa.
- Supported qualitative fieldwork processes connected to key informant interviews and focus group discussions in restoration landscapes.

- Documented field-based observations related to land use, restoration priorities, livelihoods, governance, and community wellbeing.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant

May 2026-Present

Environmental Demography Network - Indiana University

Assistant to Dr. Guangqing Chi

- Supported administrative and research operations across multiple NSF-funded projects (ACE, POLARIS, RETRACE).
- Managed project communications, web content, and social media outreach for the EDeN research group.
- Coordinated data management and reporting processes for multi-institutional collaborations.
- Developed the EDeN "Impacts Map" and online project summaries showcasing research outcomes.
- Assisted in preparing annual NSF progress reports, including documenting outputs and student participation.

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Sept 2025-May 2026

Independent Study & Rock Ethics Institute - Pennsylvania State University

Assistant to Dr. Ida Djenontin

- Conducted qualitative thematic analyses of key informant interview and focus group discussion transcripts related to ecosystem restoration and community engagement.
- Identified and coded emergent themes across stakeholder perspectives to examine ethical dimensions of environmental governance.
- Contributed to manuscript development and literature synthesis on ethics, power, and justice in restoration practices.
- Assisted in organizing and interpreting data for cross-case comparison and inclusion in collaborative research outputs.
- Participated in weekly meetings to discuss analytical progress, refine coding frameworks, and ensure consistency in qualitative methods.

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Sept 2023-May 2026

Environmental Demography Network - Pennsylvania State University & Indiana University

Assistant to Dr. Guangqing Chi

- Supported administrative and research operations across multiple NSF-funded projects (ACE, POLARIS, RETRACE).
- Managed project communications, web content, and social media outreach for the EDeN research group.
- Coordinated data management and reporting processes for multi-institutional collaborations.
- Developed the EDeN "Impacts Map" and online project summaries showcasing research outcomes.
- Assisted in preparing annual NSF progress reports, including documenting outputs and student participation.

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Jan 2023-Aug 2023

Pennsylvania State University

Assistant to Dr. Ida Djenontin

- Conducted discourse and sentiment analysis using Twitter data related to ecological restoration and environmental justice.
- Examined how narratives of power, place, and sustainability are constructed in online spaces.
- Organized and coded qualitative datasets to identify recurring social and political themes in digital environmental discourse.
- Shared preliminary findings in research meetings.

PUBLICATIONS & MANUSCRIPTS

Djenontin, I., **Rivera, I.**, Abdulai, A. S., Elias, F., Qui, T., Twine, W., Chen, H., Kamoto, J., Smithwick, E., & Fleischman, F. Understanding Local Aspirations for Restoration Futures in Tropical Forest-Woodland Mosaics: Lessons from Malawi, Southern Africa. *Journal of Global Environmental Change* [Under Review]

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

- **Rivera, I., & Chi, G. (2025).** Climate change impacts on Indigenous Alaskan food sovereignty and what we can do at Penn State. *Penn State Student Farm Food Justice Summit*. State College, PA, February 13, 2025.
- **Rivera, I., & Pavlacka, A. (2025).** Asset mapping and resource utilization suggestions for nature education on South Fayette School District grounds: A geospatial land use assessment. *South Fayette School District Faculty Townhall*. McDonald, PA, December 4, 2025.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

- **Rivera, I., & DeSa, K. (2025).** Resource Assessment for Clinton County Homeless Coalition. *Penn State Sustainability Summit*. State College, PA, December 11, 2025.
- **Rivera, I., & Pavlacka, A. (2025).** Asset mapping and resource utilization suggestions for nature education on South Fayette School District grounds: A geospatial land use assessment. *Penn State Sustainability Summit*. State College, PA, December 11, 2025.

HONORS & AWARDS

- Dean's List for 9 semesters – The Pennsylvania State University
- Eva B. and G. Weidman Groff Memorial Scholarship Fund, July 2024
- John and Elizabeth Holmes Teas Scholarship Fund, August 2024
- ARCUS Early Career and Travel Funding Award, August 2024
- G.D. Richardson and Kathy LaSauce Scholarship, October 2024
- Ryan Earth and Mineral Sciences Scholarship, July 2025
- Paul R. and Ethel S. Guldin Agricultural Scholarship, August 2025
- Rock Ethics Institute – Undergraduate Ethics Fellow, September 2025
- EMSAGE Laureate, October 2025
- Fiat Lux Scholarship – Clark University, March 2026

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

President May 2025-May 2026

Gamma Theta Upsilon - Geography Honor Society, Alpha Tau Chapter

- Led executive meetings and served as liaison between the chapter, faculty, and departments.

Recruitment Analyst Jan 2024-March 2026

Alpha Delta Pi Sorority, Delta Kappa Chapter

- Managed recruitment analytics for 200+ chapter members and 1,000+ potential members, led analyst team of 14, coordinated data reporting between chapter, international organization, and the university, and led chapter Member Selection Session.

President Apr 2023-May 2026

Community, Environment, and Development Club

- Oversaw executive board operations and professional development events, maintained relationships between the club, the university, and the department, and communicated with relevant faculty members.

Executive Vice President Dec 2023-Jul 2024

Omega Phi Alpha Service Sorority

- Chaired Chapter Standards and Alumni Boards and oversaw constitutional revisions and governance.

THON Finance Chair Jun 2023-Feb 2024

Omega Phi Alpha Service Sorority

- Tracked donations, reported financial progress, and coordinated fundraising logistics.

Event Planner Oct 2022-Apr 2023

Community, Environment, and Development Club

- Organized service and social events and created activities to strengthen member engagement.

SKILLS

Technical: NVivo, ArcGIS Products, R (Programming Language), Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, research writing and reporting, grant writing and reporting (NSF and USDA), website and social media management, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, statistical analysis

Interpersonal: Public speaking, teamwork and project management, critical thinking and analysis, time management, independent and collaborative research/project development

Research Methods: Qualitative coding, mixed methods data collection, key informant interviews, focus group facilitation, discourse and sentiment analysis, survey development, literature synthesis, policy analysis