

Co-founder of mountain bike school & guiding service

- Which academic career did you imagine when you started to study this Sustainable Development Master's Program?

I didn't have a specific career in mind, let alone an academic career-- I simply wanted to further my education after spending 5 years in the sports management and teaching fields. But my "backup plan" was always to continue teaching as a math and science teacher at a private school (where a specific teaching degree is not required).

- Where are you currently working and what is your scope of activity?

I co-founded a mountain bike school and guiding service called [Bike Austria](#), based in Mittersill, Salzburg, Austria. We offer youth cycling camps for local kids (approximately 55 kids in spring and fall-- 70 in summer). We also offer guided gravel and mountain bike hut-to-hut tours in the Austrian Alps and Italian Dolomites. I became a licensed mountain bike guide, and help with all aspects of the business: building the website, marketing, booking tours, and guiding trips. It's busy, but really rewarding.

I also work part time doing "consulting" for an American bicycle touring company called [Overland](#), out of Williamstown, MA. I build and plan cycling trips in Europe, and hiking trips in Switzerland, Norway, Spain and Iceland.

- How is your job linked to sustainable development?

Bike Austria promotes local kids being active and outside, while Overland offers students a chance to undertake a great adventure (bicycle across the USA in 6 weeks, or across Europe in 4-- hike across Switzerland, etc). Essentially, the trips inspire the students to see how beautiful and exciting, how full of promise the world is.

- Did the study program help you getting the job, and does it help you doing the job?

Not exactly, but it certainly didn't hurt. Experience living, working and studying abroad absolutely played a role in me finding the two positions I currently hold. And the skills I learned in the program helped me to work more effectively in a team, and balance a busy workload.

- How did you find your job and how long did it take you to reach your current position? (e.g. Did you do internships (unpaid or poorly paid) beforehand?)

I was hired for both jobs while still working on my thesis-- I've been with Overland for 7 years now in various roles. I've done several internships and related positions beforehand to gain experience in the field.

- Would you call your work varied and interdisciplinary?

It's incredibly varied, but I would not describe it as interdisciplinary.

- 3 tips you would like to pass on to future Sustainer graduates how to tackle their first job hunt?

1. Don't be too fixated on one job-- there is experience to be gained from any position. You can always move on / up.
2. Don't be afraid to create your dream job! For instance, if you love being outside and riding bikes, start a mountain bike guiding business. You'll meet amazing people and spend time in the most wonderful spots :)
3. Pro tip: jobs which require you to be outside, and far away from a laptop, are the most fun. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise :)

- Any other advice you would like to share?

Enjoy your time as a student in Graz, and during your mobility semester. And make sure to explore the surrounding trails, peaks and lakes. Styria and the neighboring countries are full of adventure!

- David McCahill