

Sarah Lyons

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EDUCATION

Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

Expected – June 2026

B.A. in **Environmental Sciences & Political Science** | Cumulative **GPA: 3.93/4.00** | Dean's List: 12/12 quarters

Honors Thesis: How does Rights-Based Climate Litigation Impact Environmental Policy Outcomes? Evidence from Colombia, Nepal

Advisor: Prof. Elizabeth Thom, Northwestern University Department of Political Science

Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador

Jan. 2025 – March 2025

Galapagos Semester Program in Evolution, Ecology, & Conservation

- Honed cross-cultural communication skills through three-month immersion with Spanish-speaking host families.
- Collected quantitative field data in Amazon Rainforest, Andean Cloud Forest, and Galapagos Islands, evaluating findings through interactive maps and graphics in ArcGIS and statistical analysis in R.
- Supported sustainable agriculture and economic independence of small farmers through volunteer work in Galapagos Islands.

PRESENTATIONS

Midwest Political Science Association 83rd Annual Conference, Chicago, IL

Apr. 2026

How does Rights-Based Climate Litigation Impact Environmental Policy Outcomes? Evidence from Colombia and Nepal

- Designed independent, year-long research project, culminating in 97-page honors thesis and presentation at Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference.
- Conducted comparative case study using process tracing and archival analysis of government records, legal documents, and news media to track policy changes over time.

Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, Evanston, IL

Feb. 2026

Examining Indigenous Participation and Representation at the "First COP for the Amazon"

- Designed independent research project as part of Northwestern University delegation to COP30 in Belém, Brazil.
- Collected observational data and conducted interviews in English and Spanish with Indigenous conference attendees.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Horton Research Group, Evanston, IL

Apr. 2023 – June 2026

NU Anthropology Dept. Undergraduate Research Assistant

- Analyzed Chicago urban and green space statistics using GIS and Microsoft Excel for environmental health research.
- Communicated intricate protocols clearly to 40 study participants, ensuring procedural compliance and quality of data.
- Performed fluctuating set of administrative responsibilities including scheduling appointments, managing calendars, and entering data, maintaining accuracy and confidentiality across hard copies and electronic databases.
- Adapted to unfamiliar equipment and software through self-directed learning and wrote procedures to train staff on use.
- Created a supply inventory tracking system now used by all staff, eliminating materials overuse and waste over 2 years.

Run on Climate, Evanston, IL

May 2025 – Aug. 2025

Policy Research Intern

- Tracked building electrification regulations in 42 states to set priorities for local climate advocacy, communicating findings through a policy memo and presentation that informed two new city partnerships.
- Drafted a bike parking ordinance for inclusion in Evanston's 2027 zoning code by evaluating policy from 8 similar cities.
- Analyzed and edited Evanston's draft comprehensive plan, making recommendations to strengthen city commitments to climate action while balancing goals of city councilors and nonprofit stakeholders.

Chicago Bar Foundation, Chicago, IL

Sept. 2024 – Dec. 2024

Intern

- Provided procedural guidance and legal information in English and Spanish to diverse pro se litigants in civil court, including filling out court forms, referring patrons to legal aid resources, and explaining legal terminology.
- Tracked nationwide developments in court AI policy and prepared updates for staff to inform legislative advocacy strategies.
- Examined Illinois guardianship law to identify complex language and recommend simpler and clearer phrasing.

- Compiled lists of contacts for research on emerging legal issues and maintained directory of 200 local legal aid agencies.
- Maintained accountability and high standard of work in fast-paced, high-stress environment with minimal supervision.

Evanston Grows, Evanston, IL

June 2024 – Aug. 2024

Education and Urban Farming Intern

- Pioneered nutrition education program that designs healthy, affordable recipes for food insecure Evanston residents.
- Publicized Evanston Grows and promoted urban gardening at community events.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE & STUDENT GROUPS

Students for Ecological and Environmental Development, Evanston, IL

Jan. 2023 – June 2026

President

- Oversaw executive board by maintaining schedules, setting budget and priorities, and assigning tasks for weekly meetings.
- Strengthened relationships between 25 campus environmental organizations and community groups by forming inclusive communication channels and planning several shared outreach events each quarter.
- Revitalized inactive student organization by devising effective recruitment strategies, increasing membership by 700%.

Northwestern University Marching Band, Evanston IL

May 2024 – December 2025

Trumpet Section Leader

- Led music and marching training for 20-member section (10 hrs./week).
- Recruited new members through electronic and verbal outreach.
- Planned section-wide bonding events to boost morale during physically and mentally strenuous rehearsal season.

Northwestern Center for Civic Engagement, Evanston, IL

Sept. 2024 – Nov. 2024

NUVotes Ambassador

- Initiated 1:1 conversations and formal presentations to mobilize over 150 student voters.
- Researched state ballot initiatives and candidate voting records to craft accessible, nonpartisan voter education materials, including a weekly newsletter and social media campaign reaching over 1,000 people.

Associated Student Government, Evanston, IL

Sept. 2022 – May 2024

Sustainability Committee Member

- Programmed annual Earth Day celebration (>120 attendees) to espouse campuswide culture of environmental responsibility.
- Brainstormed social media campaigns and events to provide environmental education and action opportunities to students.
- Planned Black Climate Week event (~30 attendees) to celebrate diversity in Chicago's environmental justice movement.

TRAININGS & CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC

July 2024

Summer Institute on Law & Policy

- Analyzed foundational case law through courses in legal reasoning and constitutional law with Duke School of Law faculty.

Citizens' Climate Lobby, Coronado, CA

Jan. 2024 – May 2024

Climate Advocacy Certificate Program

- Studied climate advocacy skills such as lobbying, political communication, and grassroots activism.

New Roots Institute

June 2023 – Aug. 2023

Leadership Academy College Fellow

- Cultivated communication and leadership skills to advocate for more sustainable and just agriculture practices.
- Strategized campaigns and lessons to educate communities about animal agriculture.

Climate Reality Project

Aug. 2020 – Dec. 2023

Climate Reality Leader

- Studied climate science and activism strategies during week-long Leadership Corps global training.
- Contributed to clean energy legislative advocacy with Cincinnati, OH and Chicago, IL chapters.
- Built skills for activism through webinars and training series.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Skills: Microsoft Office: Excel, PowerPoint; QGIS (Advanced). R, ESRI ArcGIS, Atlas.ti, SPSS, Adobe Suite (Proficient)
Languages: Spanish (Advanced)
Activities: Philharmonia Orchestra, United Nations Local Conference of Youth USA Delegate (2025)