Senior Cynthia Xinya Jia is a Computer Science major and Art minor working as a sustainability intern for the 2020-21 academic year. Having interned for Sustainable R&DE in the past three years, Cynthia has already contributed to R&DE sustainability efforts through her videos, including a waste reduction video and an animation video that discusses Give and Go. Before coming to Stanford, her family began to compost, which helped her have a fresh perspective and a desire to educate her peers to realize how easy it is to divert their waste from the landfill.

Focused on her passion for animation and design, Cynthia is currently developing materials for a modified and updated Give & Go program, which will launch this year. Traditionally a sustainability program during student move-out, Give & Go has expanded to accept donations from students all year round.

Cynthia works on a full range of design deliverables, including signage and banners for the new enclosures and collection points. She also produced renewed educational videos and imagery, refreshed and reorganized website assets, collateral for a new bike donation program, and a refresh of the ubiquitous Alpaca design, the main image that anchors the Give and Go program. Cynthia works closely with the professional team of graphic designers and videographers at R&DE Strategic Communications.
Despite the reduced student population this year, Cynthia hopes that the new bike donation tag and the renewed media will show students that anyone can donate their unwanted items, and help the university achieve its sustainability goals.

Q & A

What do you find most rewarding in your internship with R&DE Sustainability?

I love finishing an animation and seeing it go out to students who will hopefully learn something from it, or at the very least watch it and enjoy it! Also, this year I've been working more with graphic design, which is a newer area for me, and it's been really rewarding to watch myself grow as I learn how to master new design software and think more deeply about design principles.

What experience/s in your internship will help you in your career goals?

I can't say I know exactly what I want to pursue in my career - maybe it will involve visual design and animation, or maybe not - but I've gained valuable skills through my internship that I think will help me in any area I end up in. I've learned how to communicate and collaborate with different groups of people and how to interface between them (such as students, graphic designers, and vendors all coming together), and I've learned how to improve an idea over time through iteration, testing, and feedback!

How does it feel to be making a significant contribution to Stanford’s sustainability goals?

I'm proud to be working on projects that will teach and motivate other students to be more sustainable. I would be overjoyed if my work can bring us closer to our goals, closer to leaving a smaller footprint on this planet.

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