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Phoenix Cup Competition

by Jessica Bilecki



Kristen DeMaria receiving her prize. Photo by Sarah Wasko.

A new contest aimed at reducing Elon University's ecological footprint began this semester. From Sept. 17th – Oct. 8th teams of Elon students, faculty and staff competed to conserve energy by participating in the Phoenix Cup Energy competition. This competition rewarded points to teams who reduced the energy use in their building during the competition. Points were also rewarded for participating in and talking about different types of energy conservation behaviors.

Captained by Rachel Cockman, team Dan K won the competition for student teams. All teams who participated were placed into a drawing for a prize bag. The Fox Den, representing Oaks A and captained by Kristen DeMaria won the participation prize.

Alexandra Welgehausen won the raffle prize of \$25 Phoenix Cash which was

open to all students who were not on a Phoenix Cup team but who signed a pledge with a Phoenix Cup team or took the online Sustainability Pledge.

Phoenix Cup also included a faculty and staff competition this fall. This was the first Elon energy conservation competition in which faculty and staff competed. Living up to their name, staff in the Center for Leadership won the faculty and staff competition. They were rewarded with a lunch for their department, gift cards and reusable items. Faculty from the School of Education also earned prizes for their efforts.

Buildings with the most energy reduction during the competition were Daniele D and 231 Station at Mill Point. Residents of these buildings can have a donation made in their name to one of several charitable causes including the World Wildlife Fund's Adopt an Animal program.

This spring students, faculty and staff have another opportunity to compete in the Phoenix Cup. The spring competition focuses on landfill waste reduction. We hope to see your team competing next semester!

Faculty Profile: Barbara Miller

by Jessica Bast



Barbara Miller.
Photo courtesy of University Communications.

With environmental issues becoming more prominent in today's society, many students are curious about how they can become more knowledgeable about topics related to the environment and sustainability even if it is not their major. Every year Elon offers a variety of courses from different academic departments that integrate sustainability into the curriculum. This way even non-environmental science majors have opportunities to address aspects of sustainability in their coursework fostering connections between sustainability, one's own major and career aspirations.

Each academic year Elon offers a course called, "Environmental Communications." In this course students develop an understanding of environmental issues and communication practices by analyzing media coverage of sustainability topics and methods for informing, educating and influencing important target audiences. For example, students have the opportunity to explore Elon's sustainability initiatives by learning how aspects of the school's sustainability master plan are communicated with broader audiences, such as prospective students, parents, and alumni. With this knowledge, students learn how to promote public awareness, behavior change, and influence public policy on environmental issues.

Barbara Miller, an assistant professor of communications, is teaching the Environmental Communications course this fall and has taught the course for five years. The majority of the courses that Miller teaches focus on the broader field of strategic communications; however, Miller explained,

"This course allows me to focus on one area of communications, the environment, and look at the topic from multiple perspectives."

The Environmental Communications course also enables Miller to incorporate her research on advocacy for environmental campaigns into the curriculum.

The composition of students in the course varies each year. About half of the class is comprised of communications students with the other half a mix of business, political science, policy studies and human services students. Miller commented that the variety of disciplinary backgrounds makes for an engaging and exciting semester.

Miller hopes that by the end of the Environmental Communications course students will gain an understanding of and appreciation for, "the challenges of communicating science-based issues such as climate change and environmental disasters." Miller believes this is important for students pursuing careers in media, public relations, and advertising. However, for students in environmental studies and other majors Miller explains, "I hope that they will learn effective strategies for environmental advocacy and engaging in public debate on environmental issues. Meanwhile, I hope all students will begin to critically evaluate the arguments used in the public sphere to frame environmental topics and policies."

Miller hopes that the course will become more popular as students become more aware of the increased prevalence of environmental and sustainability issues.

Staff Profile: Automotive Services

by Jessica Bilecki

In fewer than 10 years, Elon's fleet went from having 0 alternative fuel vehicles to having a fleet composed of 42% alternative fuel vehicles. The people behind this technological shift are Keith Dimont, Supervisor of Automotive Services and staff in Automotive Services.



Ray Pruitt and Chad Aldridge with an electric cart.
Photo courtesy of Keith Dimont.

Alternative fuel vehicles include those that operate with 100% electricity, electric/gasoline hybrids or those that run on B-20 biodiesel. Such innovation means that despite an 18% increase in the size of the fleet from 2008 to now, carbon emissions generated by fleet vehicles only increased by about 8%.

With more and more institutions making concerted efforts to decrease their carbon emissions, the shift has made Keith a popular guy with peers at nearby institutions. Dimont regularly takes calls about Elon's fleet, sometimes gives tours and in 2012 helped Elon host a Green Fleet Meeting.

Commenting on the history of alternative fuel vehicles at Elon, Dimont points out Automotive Services was operating with sustainability in mind before it became a familiar concept. They have always worked to ensure Elon never had more vehicles than

were needed, and the right vehicle was assigned to appropriate tasks. Additionally, before motorized alternative vehicles, Automotive Services worked on maintaining bikes and building bike racks to support bicycling around campus. Though the original bike share model has shifted to a bike rental program via Campus Recreation, every summer staff in Automotive Services still perform maintenance on the Elon bikes.

When asked why the shift, Dimont quickly mentioned the University's purchase of its first hybrid vehicle in 2005 for Dr. Lambert. With the University President taking interest in this type of technology and growing interest in sustainability, Dimont knew reducing Elon's carbon emissions was something the University was serious about pursuing. That is all he needed to take initiative and facilitate researching and implementing the use of alternative fuel vehicles. Dimont commented,

"We're here to teach students, we need to show them we're doing our part...that we are working to do the right thing."

Automotive Services staff are innovators. Inspired by conferences, an article on the internet, or an idea from a student, everyone brings ideas to the table about what adjustments can be made to the fleet that are economical, functional and more environmentally sound. Dimont emphasized that implementation is a team effort not only requiring skilled Automotive Services staff but the support of administration and students as well.

Alternative Transportation!

2005: Dr. Lambert goes electric!

Dr. Lambert gets a hybrid.

2006: Birth of the Biobus!

Bio Buses begin operating. After testing, Elon settled on using B-20 fuel, a fuel mix consisting of 80% diesel and 20% plant based fuel!

2007: It's e-lectric!

The first e-rides, 100% electric vehicles, are purchased to replace aging, gasoline powered counterparts and more hybrids are purchased!

2014: Sun power, fun power!

A few e-rides retrofitted with solar!

2015: And we wait!

Pending budget approval, about 35 more e-rides will be retrofitted with solar.

Student Profile: Susie Masecar

by Shannon Tendlak



Susie Masecar on location this past summer. Photo courtesy of Susie Masecar.

Snowboarding, ecotourism, pottery and sustainability. These are all interests of Senior Susie Masecar. As a Sustainability Research Scholar and president of Elon's Kappa Alpha Omicron (KAO) chapter, Masecar has certainly heeded Elon's encouragement to students to engage in experiential learning to explore and develop their passion.

Masecar's interest in the environment stems from a combination of her interest in natural science, her desire to improve and maintain ecosystem health, and her determination to advocate for the protection of species.

"It's my personal philosophy that other species have intrinsic value and the right to exist," says Masecar. "People are dominating virtually every other species we encounter."

Masecar was recognized for her scholarship in sustainability upon receiving a Sustainability Research Grant in Fall 2013. Three \$1,000 grants are available each year to students from all disciplines who are or will be engaged in independent, faculty-mentored undergraduate research related to sustainability at Elon University. The Sustainability Research Grant provided Masecar with the financial means to purchase the necessary supplies for her project.

Her research project titled, "Sustenance vs. Biodiversity: Relative Effects of Agricultural Practices on Mammalian Diversity," investigates how mammals are affected by agriculture and preliminarily identifying which agricultural practice has the largest effect on the surrounding ecosystem. Masecar's research mentor is Dr. Amanda Chunco.

This past summer, Masecar sampled mammal populations at thirteen farms in Central NC that vary in agricultural practices. To monitor small mammals Masecar set twenty Sherman traps at each farm every evening and set up a motion- and heat-activated camera. Masecar concluded the summer by comparing mammal diversity associated with each agricultural practice and overall species richness. With her research, Masecar aims to increase understanding of how mammals are affected by agricultural practices. She also hopes to assist farmers in prioritizing their sustainability efforts.

“Farmers don’t have unlimited funds to dedicate towards becoming sustainable,” Masecar explains. “But, for example, if they know that eliminating pesticides from their practices would be more beneficial than increasing crop diversity, we will more quickly reach sustainability. And time is of the essence!”

Masecar also demonstrates leadership in sustainability as the current president of Elon’s Kappa Alpha Omicron (KAO) chapter. KAO is the first international interdisciplinary environmental science/studies honor society.

“KAO fully encompasses the broad range of disciplines in which Elon’s Environmental Studies students are trained,” says Masecar. “While Elon has other environmentally focused organizations such as the Sierra Club and Eco-Rep program, KAO provided the venue to celebrate and develop Elon environmental studies students’ academic life.”

As KAO’s second appointed president, Masecar is dedicating her time to finalize the Elon chapter of KAO as an official organization in the eyes of Elon University and the Interdisciplinary Environmental Association.

Masecar has many goals for KAO, two of which are holding effective meetings and collaborating with other student organizations.

“We’re hoping to provide useful and engaging opportunities and resources to our members through our general meetings; connect our members with other environmental events, opportunities, and resources; and collaborate with other Elon environmental and science organizations.”

KAO meetings are a means for members to find internships, explore potential careers, and become more aware of campus resources, such as the Elon Job Network. The KAO executive board brings in guest speakers who are professionals in various environmental disciplines such as law, education, and conservation.



Black Eyed Susans at the Environmental Center. Photo by Jessica Bilecki

Masecar encourages students to join KAO for professional development and networking opportunities, as well as to get to know other environmentally minded students.

Students interested in joining KAO can attend a meeting or email Masecar at smasecar@elon.edu. KAO meets every other Tuesday at 4:15pm in McMichael 102.

Masecar is from Holly Springs, NC and is majoring in Environmental and Ecological Science and Biology. She is an Elon College Fellow, a Periclean Scholar, and a member of Beta Beta Beta and Omicron Kappa Delta.

Updates

Environmental Center & Elon Community Garden

A second greenhouse is being built at the Environmental Center's Loy Farm with the help of Professor Moore's ENS 232 Greenhouse course. When completed, it will double the insulated space at Loy Farm increasing the potential for winter growth. There are currently a wide variety of crops growing at the Farm, including broccoli, carrots, kale and cabbage.



Greenhouse at Loy Farm in spring 2014.

While the growing season definitely slows down this time of year, North Carolina's climate allows production year-round at both Loy Farm and the Community Garden. Work days are held in the garden most weekends. Contact ahren@elon.edu for more info!



Students working in the Community Garden. Photo by Sarah Wasko.

AASHE Conference 2014



Chloe Donohoe, Jessica Bilecki and Shannon Temlak at AASHE.

Office of Sustainability staff and students traveled to Portland, OR this fall to attend the AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education) Conference. The annual conference provides an opportunity for thousands engaged in higher education sustainability to share with and learn from one another.

Shannon Temlak, Sustainability Intern and Eco-Rep Coordinator, and Chloe Donohoe, Database Intern, attended the conference and will present some of what they learned to Office of Sustainability Eco-Reps and Interns later this semester.

Elaine Durr and Jessica Bilecki presented "Using Attitude and Behavior Surveys to Advance Sustainability on Campus". The well-attended presentation provided participants with basic understanding of how to best design campus sustainability surveys and use survey data effectively.

What's Coming Up

Nov. 10



Aileen Kenney: Offshore Wind - Clean Energy is Just Over the Horizon
Mon., November 10, 2014, 7:30pm – 8:30pm
Koury Buisness Center, LaRose Digital Theatre (KOBK 101)

Kenney will discuss the current status of the American offshore wind industry, the technology and the environmental benefits. She will also touch on the various environmental studies and stakeholder engagements that must be completed to make these complex projects reality. Kenney is the Vice President of Permitting and Environmental Affairs at Deepwater Wind, LLC.

Nov. 13 - 14



Dr. Julian Agyeman: Just Sustainabilities
Tues., February 24, 2015, 7:30pm - 8:30pm
Koury Buisness Center, LaRose Digital Theatre (KOBK 101)

Dr. Agyeman will discuss the concept and practice of 'just sustainabilities'. This concept argues that environmental quality and human equality are inextricably interrelated: wherever environmental degradation happens it is usually related to equity, social justice and human rights issues. Dr. Agyeman is an author and Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy & Planning at Tufts University.

Newsletter Photo Contest!



Student with reusable mug at College Coffee. Photo by Sarah Wasko.

What ever your inspiration...

Capture the perfect portrait of a peer participating in sustainability?

Want to share images of sustainability from your course abroad?

Aspiring National Geographic photographer?

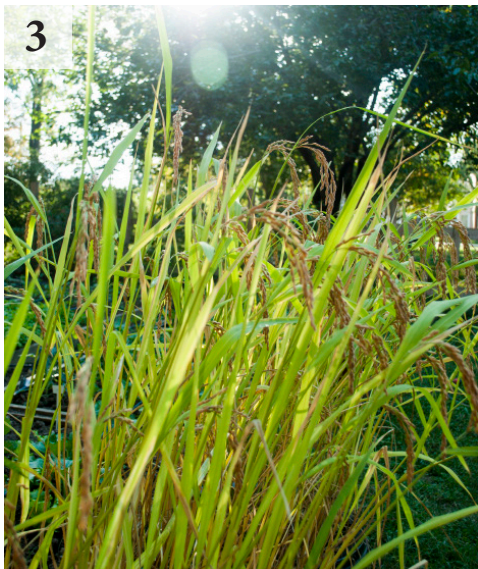
Love to take photos on your morning walk?

...we want to see your photos!

For a chance to have your sustainability photos featured in the spring newsletter:

- Email a jpg file as an attachment
- Provide a brief caption
- Send to sustainability@elon.edu by **March 1, 2015**

Semester Highlights



1. Tony Crider, Associate Professor of Physics, is one of the September Zimride contest winners. 2. Eco-Rep, Liz Van Hise, is excited to direct students in composting at the first Sustainable College Coffee of the year. 3. The Elon Community Garden is producing rice for the first time this fall. 4. Eco-Reps Corinne Haywood and Mackenzie Conley and Eco-Rep Coordinator Shannon Templak welcome new students at Org Fair.

Contributors

Shannon Templak, '15
*Sustainability Intern and
Eco-Rep Coordinator*

Jessica Bast '16
STARS Intern, Summer 2014

Layout

Sarah Wasko, '15
Communications Intern 2014-2015

Original Design

Michele Guthrie, '14
Communications Intern 2013-2014

Staff

Elaine Durr
Director of Sustainability

Jessica Bilecki
Education and Outreach Coordinator