

SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER



Fall 2017

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Exciting Changes for the Office of Sustainability

Kelly Harer



The Office of Sustainability incurred many changes this past summer, including a late-June move to the second floor of the Powell Building. The newly-painted green wall welcomes visitors to the Office of Sustainability and Powell 220—where students, faculty and staff are encouraged to stop and say hello to Kelly Harer, the new Assistant Director of Sustainability for Education and Outreach.



Kelly joined Elon this past July from Coastal Carolina University, where she taught sustainability and worked in the Office of Admissions. She earned her bachelor's degree from Coastal Carolina University and her master's degree from Western Kentucky University, specializing in Social Responsibility and Sustainable Communities. Kelly has had a lifelong passion for sustainability and is thrilled to be working in her dream job at Elon University.


As the Assistant Director for Education and Outreach, Kelly is particularly excited to work with the Eco-Reps to further promote sustainability initiatives throughout the Elon Community. She is also looking forward to getting to know the entire Elon community. Kelly manages the semester Phoenix Cup competition and Don't Trash It—the end of the year move-out waste reduction program. She hopes her passion for sustainability is contagious and is eager to inspire students, faculty and staff to live their best sustainable lives.

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Phoenix Cup Results for Fall 2017

This fall, Elon students, faculty and staff reduced energy by participating in the Phoenix Cup Energy Competition. From September 11 to October 2, individuals earned points by taking action, and potentially developing new habits, to reduce carbon emissions. Points were awarded for completing weekly checklists of energy-saving habits. Here are the winners!



Student Winners

- 1. Julia Needham (pictured above)
- 2. Scott Echols
- 3. Bear Tosé

Faculty/Staff Winners

- 1. Melissa McBane
- 2. Barb Carlton
- 3. Ginny Brown



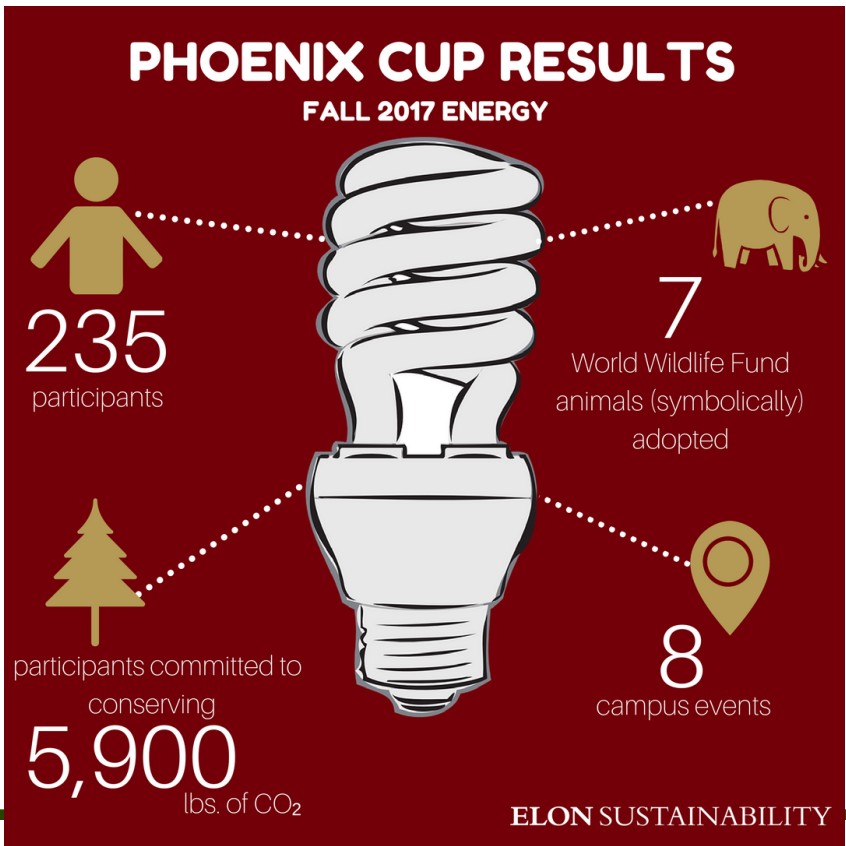
Melissa McBane



Barb Carlton



Ginny Brown



Faculty Profile: Samantha DiRosa

Charlotte Murphy

“When our pace slows down we can more mindfully engage in issues and make different choices.” Samantha DiRosa, associate professor of art and environmental studies, strongly encourages a greater mindfulness and a slower existence in all areas of life and in this case, sustainability.

DiRosa recently stepped into the role of Faculty Fellow for Sustainability. In this four-year position, DiRosa will work between students, faculty, and staff on various programs around sustainability issues. One of DiRosa’s goals is to use Lunch and Learns, core forums, or winter term diversity themes to generate a deeper dialogue around environmental justice issues. Part of her duties in this new position also include leading the Sustainability Faculty Scholars Program, which started in 2008. In this program, DiRosa provides specific support to faculty within a certain cohort, as they develop a course or part of a course around sustainability issues. Through Lunch and Learns, field trips, discussions, and feedback, the cohort grows and learns about their specific sustainability issues. This opens up the door for the curriculum on campus to grow and include sustainability across the university’s six schools.

DiRosa claims that we often think about environmentalism as involving effects of climate change pertaining to trees, soil, etc.. DiRosa states that we often don’t think about the social component and how inequality comes into play with environmental issues. By this, DiRosa references those people that first get hit in climate disasters or dumping of toxic chemicals. She claims there is a disproportionate effect of these issues to those in lower socio-economic status or people of color. In acknowledging this, DiRosa wants to develop more of a conversation on campus and seeks to work with the Office of Inclusive Community or CREDE to do so. DiRosa acknowledges how we are part of a largely privileged community here at Elon and wants to encourage more conversation on environmental justice.

During her time here at Elon, DiRosa developed the courses, Time Arts and Eco-Art. These courses closely follow DiRosa’s idea of mindfulness and thinking outside one’s own bubble. Across the nation, there is a limited amount of environmental art courses offered, which makes DiRosa’s Eco-Art very unique.



Samantha DiRosa in Costa Rica for a Winter Term trip

In DiRosa’s Eco-Art class, students collaboratively create an installation-based work within a refurbished greenhouse by Scott Studios and also do other interventionist style projects around campus, motivated by their environmental issues of interest.

Central to DiRosa’s courses and initiatives in sustainability is her belief in looking beyond ourselves. While DiRosa acknowledges the value in taking shorter showers or using a reusable shopping bag, she pushes us to realize the greater ramifications of our actions. DiRosa states that we live in a busy culture, which inspires a fight-flight survival response in us. In this, we tend not to think of the bigger picture or long-term effects of our actions, especially when we are in a position of power. DiRosa stresses that our practices and habits come out of a deeper ideological belief and so she promotes mindfulness in all areas of life.

Student Profile: Abbie Robinson

Cara DePan

Abbie Robinson, known on campus as A-Rob, is merely one version of an environmentalist. She is a well-rounded senior majoring in Environmental Studies B.S., the apartment manager for Oaks E, the secretary for the Elon Gospel Choir, and the current Loy Farm Manager. While involving herself in various experiential learning opportunities and contributing to intellectual discussions in the classroom, she stands out for her passion for sustainability.

One way that A-Rob practices sustainability is by decreasing her carbon footprint. Students of all years can take advantage of having a vehicle on campus, but A-Rob chooses not to have a vehicle on campus. She explains how cars are a modern-day convenience, but there are small actions we can take every day to do our part for the environment. A car is easily attainable from home, but even for her fourth year, she still prefers to walk or bike, carpool with friends, and even utilize the Zipcar program. For friends and family influenced by her, A-Rob redefines a car as merely one means of transportation. She challenges those around her to ease off the gas but never stop moving forward.

A-Rob also incorporates sustainability by “being the kid who saves her apple cores and banana peels to get composted.” Through her previous job as a garden manager, she witnessed first hand how crops reap the benefits of decomposed food waste. When she was not exercising her leadership in the garden, she was engaging herself wherever she could in conversations “about agriculture, how we can sustain our food, and water management strategies to harvest enough grain for livestock.” As her knowledge grew on these topics, an energy-efficient lightbulb turned on in her brain.



Abbie Robinson working at Loy Farm

Her idea was that one way to do her part, not just as an Elon student, but as a human being, was to become a vegetarian. She finds that explaining her vegetarianism or other environmentally conscious decisions at home is interesting because, for so long her parents were the ones advising her how to live. Acting out of respect for the atmosphere and biosphere, she epitomizes the model ambitious student, taking what she learns from college courses, offering a broadened perspective and changed lifestyle while influencing those around her.



Abbie Robinson with produce from Loy Farm

It is a popular misconception that all environmentalists eventually become vegetarians; however, this could not be further from the truth. Abbie’s response to this misconception is that not everyone can realistically stop eating meat, but that does not prevent anyone from participation. Elon offers numerous convenient and environmentally conscious options, such as recycling and compost bins in academic buildings, dining halls, and even residence halls. Abbie Robinson admires Elon for making it easy to move throughout campus, while still being able to live sustainably. She appreciates that there are countless different avenues to practice sustainability.

Abbie feels that she has grown tremendously over these past few semesters, proving herself repeatedly with her unique, and sometimes required, ability to effectively manage over 30 volunteers of various experience. Just like running a farm, in sustainability there is a task for everyone regardless of previous exposure or how well-versed one is in environmental conversations. Through her efforts, alongside the ongoing work of her peers and colleagues alike, A-Rob shows the Elon community what it means to be your own environmentalist.

Staff Profile: Cristina Vega

Kate Pearce

“Land has been good to me. I should be good with the land.” In her role as Community Director for Colonnades Neighborhood, Cristina Vega has found the ability to incorporate the three aspects of sustainability through the programs she oversees and the staff and students she works with. One particular way she has done this is investing in compostable items for her RAs to use for events instead of plastic or styrofoam. While attending Florida Gulf Coast (FGC) in Fort Myers, Florida, Vega was given the opportunity to start working outside in a Food Forest where the school grew plants that could survive without much care, including banana plants and moringa trees. Each plant in the forest had a purpose. The mint leaves could deter fire ants and the moringa leaves had medicinal purposes. FGC also had a commitment to only building on half of the land that was given to them. Vega says her time at FGC began her passion for sustainability.

When asked to define sustainability, Vega thinks it is easy to think about sustainability in terms of the environment but oftentimes we miss the human piece. She says that the recent hurricanes and earthquakes lead her to believe in the importance of taking personal responsibility for her actions and the importance of our responsibility to other people. Vega states that living your best life as a sustainable person includes taking care of other people and taking care of the environment, as well as acting sustainably with your money. Referencing a point Bryan Stevenson makes in “Just Mercy” Vega points to the importance of building connections and staying proximate to these connections. This allows us to continue to act sustainably in whatever actions we take.

While in the past sustainability has been a buzzword on Elon’s campus, Vega believes that we are past that point. Sustainability has become incorporated into how Elon operates, which provides students with the opportunity to incorporate daily actions into their lives.

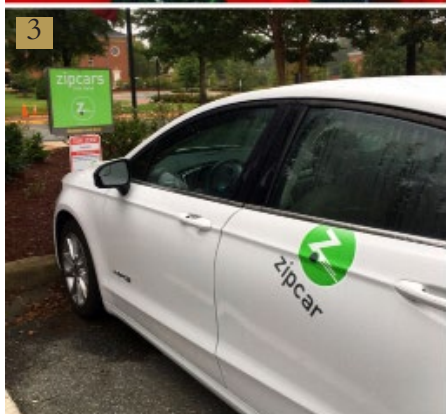
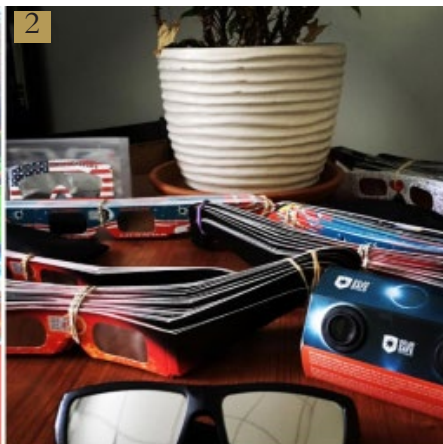
When Vega discusses sustainability with students, she finds it important to explain how each action is an investment, either you can invest in the future and invest in society or invest in something short-term.

When asked what her one hope for students would be when they graduate Elon in terms of sustainability, she describes the proverb that says “they try to bury me but they didn’t know we are seeds.” Through this proverb, Vega believes that it is important to be persistent in sustainability and creating change, since change is not simple or easy. Vega states that she is a work in progress when it comes to sustainability but encourages all individuals to participate in little actions that in the long-term will make a difference.



Colonnades Neighborhood is home to 430 students in 5 different buildings.

Semester Highlights



- 1 Orientation Leaders help first-year students learn about composting at Community on the Commons.
- 2 Together, the Elon community kept over 250 eclipse glasses out of the landfill. Some were donated to schools in South America and Asia for the 2019 eclipse, while others were safely stored for Elon's next eclipse.
- 3 Elon students, faculty, and staff now have 24/7 access to Zipcars, which can be rented by the hour or by the day.
- 4 Eco-Reps Tori Ippolito (left) and Kate Pearce (right) encourage students to be more sustainable at the Organization Fair.

Sustainability Events Calendar - Learn about what's happening on campus!

STEP 1: Visit elon.edu/sustainability.

STEP 2: Click on the calendar icon on the left sidebar.

STEP 3: View the Elon Sustainability Events Calendar to learn what events are coming up across campus!



**OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY
SPRING 2018 JOB POSTING**

**COMMUNICATIONS
INTERNSHIP**

Apply through [Elon Job Network](#)
Applications due by Nov. 1

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