



Spring 2012
Volume 1 - Issue 2

ELON SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

Contents

Staff Profile:
Dave Worden

2

Faculty Profile:
Barbara Miller

3

Student Profile:
Katie Kenney

4

The Elon Forest

5

Earth Week at Elon

6

Elon receives STARS Silver Rating

Kristi Jacobsen, 2012

Elon has received a STARS® Silver Rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. STARS stands for Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ and is a new self-reporting program that measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education.



This initial STARS rating serves as a benchmark for Elon's commitment to sustainability. "Elon's participation in STARS will help determine where there are opportunities to improve sustainability efforts," said Elaine Durr, Director of Sustainability. "It is a comprehensive system, and many people from across the campus provided information for the submission."

The STARS program involves publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or university's sustainability performance in three overall areas: education & research, operations, and planning, administration & engagement. The program allows for both internal comparisons as well as comparisons with similar institutions.



Staff Profile: Dave Worden

Rebecca Wickel, 2013



It is about more than turning off lights and recycling cans. It is about a lifestyle.

Dave Worden, Director of Environmental Services at Elon University, is determined to help students develop sustainable habits that stay in effect long after graduation. Worden oversees the Department of Environmental Services, which is responsible for custodial services and floor maintenance, sanitation and recycling, warehouse shipping and receiving and fire extinguisher maintenance. He said his background in golf industry management and commercial building services carries over to his responsibilities at Elon.

“It’s not glamorous, but it is necessary to save energy, recycle properly and make the concerted effort to be active in being sustainable,” Worden said.

Although sustainability at Elon is no new concept, Worden has been working to make environmental consciousness a priority for university students, faculty and staff. According to him, recycling is a program at Elon that truly “hits close to home.”

“Although Elon has been recycling for several years, the program’s growth has been very good,” he said. “There is still plenty of room for improvement, but when I hear students tell me how easy it is to recycle here within the boundaries of the campus, it helps to know our work is paying off.”

Worden’s focus contains two things: continuous improvement and enhanced student involvement. He anticipates a university that thrives on student engagement in environmental programs.

“I envision our efforts here will one day be over-run with student involvement and the campus thrives on the ingenious methods of support given by the students to move the campus to the forefront of sustainable programs,” Worden said. “The campus will be the model of sustainability for other campuses and businesses to pattern.”

POWERless - Spring 2012

Elon’s seventh POWERless competition concluded with exciting results. During a three-week duration, the overall amount of kilowatt-hours not used compared to the baseline consumption was 44,252 kWh.

Winning Areas –

Division I: Oaks Area – 11.3%

Division II: East Area Academic Pavilions – 34%

Winning Buildings –

Division I: Oaks A – 18.1%

Division II: International Pavilion (Academic Village – Cannon) – 36.9%



Dr. Smith Jackson presents bikes to top building prize-drawing winners Cameron Bentley and Lauren Sandberg.

Faculty Profile: Barbara Miller

Rebecca Wickel, 2013



It is not just about the message, it is about the communication.

For Barbara Miller, Assistant Professor in the School of Communications, supporting sustainability at Elon University comes in many forms. By teaching students about the means of conveying sustainable initiatives, Miller is able to make a difference.

“I teach strategic communication courses and environmental communications, an elective in communications, environmental science and public health,” she said. “The course examines the role of communications in influencing the way we understand the environment, as well as communication strategies to promote public awareness of issues related to the environment. We also talk about media coverage of sustainability topics and corporate social responsibility.”

Miller’s background in environmental communications gives her the knowledge necessary to understand the industry.

“I worked in the Communications Division of a firm with divisions in energy and mineral resources as well as environmental engineering,” she said. “It was during this time that I became interested in the ways in which businesses communicate with the public regarding industry issues and objectives.”

This interest led to doctoral research focused on corporate and industry advocacy campaigns, especially those that deal with energy and the environment.

“My research has examined how audiences interpret messages that promote an entire industry sector, such as the ones we’re seeing frequently on television now - the American Petroleum Institute’s ‘Energy Tomorrow’ campaign and the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity’s ‘America’s Power’ campaign,” Miller said.

As an adviser for *Visions*, Elon’s publication of student research from all disciplines with an interest in the environment and sustainable development, Miller is able to interact directly with students interested in both the environment and communications. “Opportunities like this give Elon a lot to be proud of,” she said.

“I’m particularly pleased with efforts to engage students on sustainability - promoting student research on sustainability issues, encouraging faculty to incorporate sustainability topics into classes, offering student leadership opportunities through programs like Eco-Reps, and publishing opportunities in *Visions* magazine.”

She does not, however, want to stop there. Miller said she believes there is still more Elon can do to further engage students in the topic of sustainability.

“Of course I’d like to see even more integration of sustainability topics in a variety of classes and across more disciplines,” she said.

Student Profile: Katie Kenney

Kristi Jacobsen, 2012

According to Water.org, women spend 200 million hours a day walking to collect clean drinking water. Senior Katie Kenney has witnessed this firsthand and is working to bring awareness to the issue.

Katie is a double major in Environmental Studies and English and a member of the Periclean Scholars Class of 2012. She is currently working on a project that will use travel writing to bring attention to water scarcity issues in rural India and women's roles in watershed development. Last summer, Katie traveled to rural Maharashtra, India to conduct two weeks of field research. She met with various nonprofit organizations and observed watershed development projects. She also conducted focus groups with women who took part in the watershed projects.



"Watershed development work was really interesting to learn about and see firsthand," said Katie. Another intriguing aspect of her research was the observation that watershed projects helped build communities and empowered women. "They were able to work as daily laborers, bringing home extra money for their families," explained Katie. Many of the women worked within self-help groups where they were able to develop leadership skills and gain confidence.

Some of the women Katie spoke with reported that they had never left their homes before the formation of women's self-help groups, and since then they have found strength and a voice in both their households and communities. "In several of the villages I visited, it was the women who made the decision, and convinced their husbands to support it, to pursue watershed development projects in their communities, which also involved the installation of central taps accessible to all the families," said Katie. "The women no longer have to spend hours each day walking up to eight kilometers daily to collect water."



Watershed development involves using a variety of mechanisms to manipulate and improve the land in a given area. Examples include digging trenches and building gully plugs with rocks to trap rainwater, which allows the water to seep into the ground and replenish local aquifers.

This project has allowed Katie to combine all of her studies and interests. She has always been concerned about water issues and feels strongly about community development and women's empowerment. She will be submitting her work to online travel writing sites and will be presenting at the Spring Undergraduate Research Forum. Katie plans on moving to South Korea next year to teach English but hopes to eventually return to school and help solve domestic and global water and development issues.

Elon University Forest

Kristi Jacobsen, 2012

Elon students and faculty have utilized the 56 acres of forest and open area north of University Drive for over a decade. This area is the largest intact forest within walking distance of campus and the largest remaining intact forest within the Town of Elon. In October of 2010, the Elon University Board of Trustees officially designated this area the Elon University Forest.

The mission of the Elon University Forest is to provide a protected natural area to serve primarily as a teaching resource and research site and secondarily as a service learning site and quiet place for reflection and observation.

Today the forest is a growing part of Elon's diverse curriculum and allows faculty to teach their students through hands-on research, observation and reflection. "I don't know an exact number, but it is many hundreds of students a year already, and we expect that to grow as our management plan comes to fruition," said Jeffrey Coker, Director of General Studies and Associate Professor in Biology. Coker was one of the first people to suggest and support the formal naming and preservation of the forest.

The preservation of the Elon University Forest is important for a number of reasons. These include creating research, teaching and philanthropic opportunities, creating valuable spiritual and psychological resources and representing important values of community, stewardship



and global awareness. The Elon University Forest is comprised of different forest types, open areas, ephemeral wetlands and streams. This diversity adds to the beauty of the area and allows students to contemplate an area of complexity and fragileness.

The Elon University Forest fits exceedingly well with Elon's values. It is also fitting that the word "Elon" translates to "Oak" in Hebrew, and the forest is home to oak trees that could be over 200-years-old. The forest will long symbolize the sustainability, diversity and engaged learning habits of Elon University. As Coker sees it, "Elon Forest guarantees that Elon students 10, 50, and 100 years from now will still have a place to go for meaningful research and reflection in a natural ecosystem. The fact that it is within walking distance means that all students can benefit from it and enjoy it. It is something that the university can be proud of."



Be a Leader In Sustainability:

- 1 Take a shorter shower. If all members of the Elon community saved just one gallon of water from their daily shower, over the course of a year it would equal over 2.3 million gallons of water!
- 2 Use a reusable mug for your coffee or tea rather than a disposable cup. Think about the number of cups you could keep out of the landfill – hundreds a year, thousands in your lifetime!
- 3 Keep your vehicle's tires properly inflated and the engine tuned to maximize your gas mileage.
- 4 Purchase paper that contains recycled content. Paper products made with recycled content save trees, water and energy.
- 5 Turn off the lights when you leave a room. This will save energy and help lower your utility bills.

Events to Celebrate Earth Day 2012

Tuesday, April 17: Sustainable College Coffee 9:40 AM

Tuesday, April 17: Landfill on the Lawn 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM, Speaker's Corner

Wednesday, April 18: Local Lunch 11:00 PM – 2:00 PM, Colonnades Dining Hall

Wednesday, April 18: Giving Tree 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM, Speaker's Corner

Thursday, April 19: College Chapel with Colin Beavan 9:50 AM, Whitley Auditorium

Thursday, April 19: ECC Farmers' Market Opening Day 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM, Lawn next to Elon Community Church

Thursday, April 19: Colin Beavan, "Saving the World, Being Yourself" 7:30 PM, McKinnon Hall

For more information please visit the [Elon Sustainability Facebook page](#) and the [Earth Week calendar](#) posted on E-Net.

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The Office of Sustainability, the Center for Environmental Studies, General Studies and the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life present to you:

Colin Beavan
"Saving the World, Being Yourself"
Thursday, April 19, 2012 - 7:30 PM
McKinnon Hall, Moseley Center

