

ELON SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2014

Volume 3, Issue 2

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Electronic Waste Expansion

by Jessica Bilecki



Map of Elon's electronic recycling bins

This semester Elon University added seven electronic recycling collection locations to the Elon campus and one to the Elon Law School campus in Greensboro.

Many electronics are banned from North Carolina landfills so additional collection locations and changes in what is collected make it easier for the Elon community to discard small electronics lawfully.

Small electronics include DVDs, CDs, phone chargers, digital cameras, cell phones, cords and more. Items small enough to carry across campus with little effort can go in one of the grey bins labeled "Electronic Recycling."

For large items, such as monitors or

large-screen TVs, that are university-owned or owned by students living on campus, a work order for pick-up service can be placed through the "[Fix It](#)" site or by calling x5500.

Elon's Environmental Services department works with [Global Electric Electronic Processing \(GEEP\)](#) to recycle the electronics. Located in Durham, N.C., GEEP is a local employer, has a zero landfill goal and a no export policy.

E-waste can have extremely negative impacts on the environment and waste management workers, especially when waste is shipped overseas. So take a moment to celebrate the fact that Elon is working with a trustworthy company to reuse, refurbish and recover materials from the e-waste stream safely.

Faculty Profile: Janet Cope

by Jessica Bilecki

"I'm taking your trash can, just use the one in the copy room."

In offices of Physical Therapy faculty, desk-side bins are on the decline. They disappeared by force, charm or discussion. The driving force behind this sudden disappearance? Janet Cope, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy Education.

Cope is a member of the Environmental Advisory Council so she is well aware of Elon's sustainability initiatives. She realizes Elon's success in achieving its sustainability goals requires help from every member of the community, not just the Office of Sustainability. Cope stated, "Thinking about all the changes that need to be made, that could be made, at Elon, in the US, globally, we can be overwhelmed by what we can't do." So Cope began asking where she could make a difference on campus.

Her answer was to focus on landfill waste reduction efforts in her own neighborhood.

Waste was a topic that made sense to Cope because she grew up immersed in the recycling conscious culture of Western Massachusetts. With sustainability principles weaved into the LEED Silver certified building and the work being done at the [Francis Center](#), addressing occupant behavior was one more way to contribute to sustainability efforts at the Francis Center.

Cope began asking questions about what is and is not recyclable and sharing the information with her colleagues through a monthly 'trash talk' email. She arranged for the Office of Sustainability to give a quick lunch and learn to clarify for students and employees what items can be recycled, where the trash goes, and why this is important to our health, and Elon's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. At the suggestion of her colleague Jane Freund, Cope also began collecting trash cans from offices and asking that colleagues use one centrally located bin instead. If nothing else she figured "at least it's one less plastic bag (trashcan liner) in the garbage".

At a faculty meeting, challenges of the one week trial were discussed, addressed and it was decided

that the trial would continue. With the support of Dean Rogers, Cope expanded her efforts by speaking about the experience with all School of Health Science Faculty at a faculty meeting.

For those interested in trying something similar in their department, Cope recommends getting buy-in from

at least a few colleagues and building from there.

Cope and her cooperative colleagues will likely continue striving to reduce waste where possible as illustrated by Cope's comment, "This year recycling, next year composting."



Physical Therapy Staff and Faculty

photo provided by Janet Cope

Staff Profile: Belk Library Green Team

by Jessica Bilecki

Being aware of sustainability initiatives at Elon and at university libraries across the nation, Jennifer Smith and other staff members in Belk Library, recently formed a Library Green Team.

Smith knew that other University Libraries had Green Teams and were starting to get more involved in sustainability efforts at their institutions from conferences and publications. They were familiar with some of Elon's sustainability initiatives from attending a "Creating a More Sustainable Workplace" session. This session is offered by the Office of Sustainability and helps participants generate ideas for how to incorporate more sustainable practices into actions taken in the workplace.

"Sustainability is something you can care a lot about but not necessarily do much about. Working with a group to come up with ideas helps things happen."
Jennifer Smith

To get the team up and running Smith put together information about what the team would do and got approval from Belk Library Dean, Joan Ruelle. Next, she presented at a staff meeting to see who else would be interested in participating and grew to a team of eight. According to Smith, being part of the Green Team is seen as a good

professional development opportunity for staff, "We can learn about a topic and use that knowledge to improve the workplace."

What exactly does the Green Team do? Since they formed in the Fall of 2013 they have:

- Purchased discounted smart power strips from the Office of Sustainability to conserve energy loss when equipment is off but still plugged in
- Established a writing instrument recycling collection location
- Attended webinars on energy savings
- Attended lunch and learn sessions about what others are doing to promote sustainable practices in their workplaces
- Established a place for junk mail so it can be canceled
- Volunteered to pilot an energy conservation competition for faculty and staff
- Developed a plan with the library's Outreach Librarian to post about sustainability on the library's Facebook page
- Conducted an informal energy assessment of the building
- Hosted an Earth Week Event for students.

Their future plans include developing a summer workshop for library staff about sustainability and creating an online research guide about sustainability.

Sustainability Health Tips

1 Eat [locally grown produce](#) as often as possible. Local produce often tastes better and is more nutritious.

2 Eat [less meat](#). Meat production contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and high intakes of red and processed meats have a negative impact on health.

3 Exercise outside when the weather is nice. Machines, like treadmills, use precious energy that could be saved by either running on a track or along a sidewalk.

4 Use a bike to commute to, from and around campus. The light aerobic activity will keep your energy up during the day and you'll reduce your own carbon footprint in the process.

5 Turn off the lights and open your blinds. You'll save energy by keeping your lights off, and the Ultraviolet rays from sunlight help your body produce Vitamin D, one of the essential nutrients for healthy body function.

6 Drink [tap water](#), instead of bottled water. Most bottled water is as high of quality as tap water and it uses an absorbent amount of energy to produce and transport.

Student Profile: Michele Guthrie

by Emily Forinash



"Where Should I Belong?" Installation

photo by Michele Guthrie

As Michele Guthrie was grocery shopping for Styrofoam plates, her friend stopped her from buying them. Guthrie's friend, previous Office of Sustainability Intern Lauren Hoerr, suggested more environmentally-friendly plates instead. That one moment sparked an interest in Guthrie and led her to apply to the Communications Intern position in the Office of Sustainability.

Guthrie, from Birmingham, Alabama, is a senior strategic communications major with digital art and French minors. After her conversation with Hoerr that day in the grocery store, Guthrie was inspired to be more aware of her actions, and she began living in a manner that supported rather than harmed sustainability. Her interest in waste management, recycling, and composting was

developed through her own passion to learn about sustainability.

"Whenever I hear about and feel passionate about something new, I have this drive to research and learn about it," Guthrie stated. "After I learned a lot about sustainability, especially what we do at Elon, I began to realize the impact that my work could have on our campus, and I started making all my projects in class relate to sustainability." The premise for her thesis project for the digital art minor was "Where do I Belong?"

Guthrie took recyclable materials that she asked friends to collect and used them to create sculptures of everyday items. She then placed the sculptures in areas where they are normally found in nature and photographed them.

Through these installations Guthrie challenged people to stop and think about the disposal of materials, how they could affect the environment, and how materials can be repurposed. Her project was showcased in Arts West last fall.

Guthrie was particularly influenced by the documentary *Wasteland* (available at Belk Library), which follows artist Vik Muniz as he travels to Brazil to photograph people who sort through the world's largest trash dump. Guthrie found the relationship Muniz has with his work inspiring, especially his ability to make a work of beautiful art out of materials that are considered trash.

Guthrie's possible aspiration for future work is to somehow involve the concept of repurposing materials with graphic design. "I

want to be able to think of my work as coming from something else," Guthrie stated.

**"There is always a possibility of turning any object, like a piece of trash, into something beautiful, like a work of art."
Michele Guthrie**

"Learning about sustainability, especially waste management, has opened my eyes to so many things that are useful. There is always a possibility of turning any object, like a piece of trash, into something beautiful, like a work of art."



"Where Should I Belong?"

photo by Michele Guthrie

Updates

by Jessica Bilecki

Environmental Center

The Environmental Center is not your typical classroom. Located off of Oak Avenue, the Center provides a multitude of research and experiential learning opportunities. It is home to Loy Farm and soon will also be home to a 1.66 megawatt solar farm.

Here are a few of the educational opportunities currently happening at the site:

- Professor Wolter in engineering is working with his students on coatings to reduce heat gain inside intermodal shipping containers.

- Britta Halvorson, a student in Environmental Studies, performed soil tests to assess impacts of constructing the studio
- Professor Amanda Chunco and students are surveying mammal diversity
- Professor Steve Moore’s Sustainable Food Production course learns to grow food onsite
- Loy Farm is used in the Peace Corps Prep Program
- Professor Robert Charest uses the site for Sustainable Design and Human and Nature courses

POWERless

Students conserved 19,000 kWh of energy during Elon’s 11th POWERless energy competition which ended March 19th.

The amount of energy conserved would power about 16 North Carolina homes for a month. The environmental impact is the equivalent of not burning over 10 tons of coal or not releasing about 10 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Oaks and Historic – Academic Pavilions won the two neighborhood contests with savings of 8.3% and 12.3% respectively. Loy A, B, C from Division II was the building with the highest reduction, 18.1%. In Division I, Oaks Building F with a 9.5% reduction was the top ranking building.

POWERless savings since 2008

228,840,148	Cell phone charges
823,166	kWh of energy
460	Tons of carbon dioxide emissions
352	Tons of coal
63	Homes powered for a year in NC



Elon places 7th
in state, 193rd in
nation

School	U.S. Rank (of 328)	Lbs/person
Duke University	33	20.678
Guilford College	36	20.368
Barton	47	18.67
UNC Chapel Hill	48	18.32
UNC Wilmington	70	14.612
UNC Raleigh	168	7.703
Elon	193	6.924
East Carolina	258	3.949
UNC Greensboro	263	3.611
UNC Asheville	284	2.628
Catawba	289	2.375
Western Carolina	296	2.063
UNC Charlotte	298	2.033
Haywood CC	299	1.956
Wilson CC	306	1.711

Table shows results through week 7

What's Coming Up

April 16 & 22



Dr. Sandra Steingraber

Poet, Ecologist, Cancer Survivor, Human rights activist, recognized authority on environmental links to cancer and human health

Living Downstream Screening

Wednesday, April 16

7:00 pm KOBC 211

Lecture

Tuesday, April 22

7:30 pm McKinnon Hall

April 22-26



EARTHWEEK 2014

April 22-26

**Tuesday
April 22**

Card Catalog Art
4-6 PM
Belk Library 206

Living Downstream
Dr. Sandra Steingraber
7:30 PM
McKinnon Hall

**Wednesday
April 23**

Landfill on the Lawn
11 AM-2 PM
Speakers' Corner

Millpoint Garden Workday
2-5 PM
Station at Millpoint

Envisioning a Future We Want
4-5 PM
Moseley 215

S'mores with Elon Outdoors
10 PM
Beck Pool Patio

**Thursday
April 24**

Swap Shop
10 AM-2:30 PM
Speakers' Corner

Elon Community Church Farmer's Market*
3-6:30 PM
ECC Lawn
*featuring Elon a capella groups

Meditating on Earth
4:15 PM
Outside Numen
Lumen Pavilion

**Saturday
April 26**

Haw River Canoeing with Elon Outdoors
9:00 AM
Meet at Boney Fountain
*register with Elon Outdoors by 4/23

ELON UNIVERSITY
Office of Sustainability
www.elon.edu/sustainability

May 14 - 26



DONATE IT DON'T TRASH IT

Packing up for the end of the year?

Donate your unwanted and gently used clothing, electronics, furniture, and bedding. Non-perishable food items are also welcome!

Drop-off locations and details available at www.elon.edu/sustainability

Semester Highlights



1. Attendees discuss Elon's sustainability efforts at the first "Envision a Future We Want" session. **2.** Students complete "Commit to Conserve" online to commit to certain energy-saving actions. **3.** Office of Sustainability Eco-Reps are ready to announce the Spring POWERless 2014 winners. **4.** Professor Steve Moore assists his Sustainable Food Production class at Loy Farm.

Contributors

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