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ELON SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

Campus Sustainability Week to feature virtual keynote address by Katharine Wilkinson

By: Kelly Harer

As part of Campus Sustainability Week, Elon will host a virtual keynote titled "Vital Questions for a Living Planet" by Dr. Katharine Wilkinson at 7:30 p.m. on Oct. 20. Dr. Wilkinson is a climate author, strategist, teacher, and vice president at Project Drawdown. Her publications include "All We Can Save," "The Drawdown Review," the New York Times best-seller "Drawdown," and "Between God & Green." TIME recently featured Dr. Wilkinson as one of 15 "women who will save the world."

Existential questions live at the heart of the climate crisis—questions that call us to make sense of this moment, imagine what's possible, and participate in this era of great transformation. In this wide-ranging and interdisciplinary keynote, Dr. Katharine Wilkinson will share highlights from Project Drawdown's pioneering and ongoing assessment of climate solutions, invite us to grapple with what it means to be human on a changing planet, and offer her insights about rapidly, radically reshaping society. Our call, as members in the community of life, is to live into the answers together.



To attend this webinar, please register [here](#).

Sponsored by the Office of Sustainability, Center for Environmental Studies, International and Global Studies Program, Kernodle Center for Civic Life, Political Science and Policy Studies, Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life



Faculty Spotlight : Jacob Rutz

By: Kaitlynn Dixon

Jacob Rutz is Elon's newest professor within the Department of Environmental Studies. His main area of study is agroecology: how agriculture relates to ecosystems and human systems. By teaching courses that focus on agroecology, Professor Rutz often uses Loy Farm as a means of teaching students hands-on knowledge about various topics—from how to plant and maintain a plot, to the importance of soil health, to the broader concept of how farming has impacted the environment. He also discusses how we can work towards shifting the industry towards sustainable practices.

He first became interested in how sustainability relates to food systems in high school, through discovering environmental scholars like Wendell Berry and Bill Mollison. Growing up in the suburbs of Ohio, Rutz didn't necessarily grow up with a background in agriculture, but knew that food and nature were his passions, leading him to study agroecology. Diving deeper into the field, Rutz is specifically interested in the intersection of human systems, meaning not only is he interested in how to make soil "healthy" for the sake of growing plants and microbes, but how healthy soil leads to growing plants and microbes to support healthy humans, healthy communities and healthy societies. In his personal life, Jacob describes himself as an "unashamed foodie," making sure to incorporate locally and sustainably raised plant and animal products into his diet. As a new professor on campus, Rutz is eager to meet others and grow opportunities for students at Loy Farm through collaboration across campus and in the local community!



Staff Spotlight : Cameron Holmes

By: Hannah Naehring



Cameron Holmes is a Certified Arborist in Elon's Landscaping and Grounds Department and works to maintain the urban forest on Elon's campus. During his three years at Elon, Cameron has worked hard to keep Elon's campus beautiful and sustainable. Along with Elon's other Arborist Wendy Williams, Cameron consults on tree selection, plants and maintains trees, and removes trees that become hazardous.

Cameron took an interest in arboriculture while working as a zipline tour guide. At the time, he was studying wildlife sciences because he enjoyed being outdoors. However, while being a zipline guide, he learned how to climb and prune trees and took an interest in becoming an arborist. In his own words, he "decided to switch over to arboriculture and haven't looked back."

As Cameron describes it, urban forest maintenance is an extremely important part of sustainability. He cites studies that have shown the importance of factors like canopy coverage and environmental cooling to environmental and economic benefits.

Staff Spotlight Cont.

“Trees provide shade, filter air, sequester carbon from the atmosphere, filter stormwater runoff and reduce erosion from stormwater, as well. Of course, there are thousands of species of insects, mammals, and birds that utilize trees, and there are even studies that show people are happier in areas with trees versus areas without trees. Maintaining this forest and increasing canopy coverage is directly related to sustainability at Elon. We put our inventory through a carbon sequestration program that showed the trees in the urban forest just on main campus sequester 157 tons of CO₂ per year.”

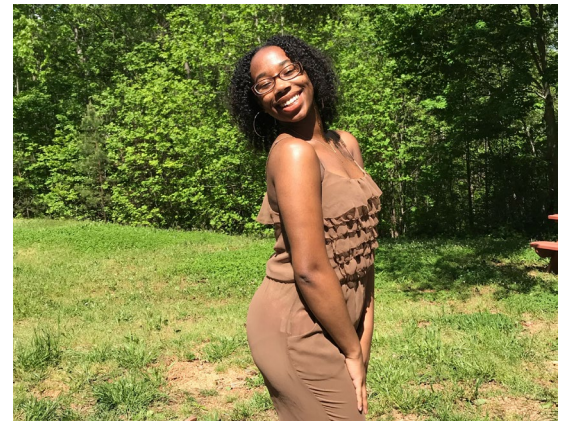
Outside of work, Cameron spends his time growing vegetables year-round in about 200 square feet of planting space. He also utilizes a compost pile at home for food scraps and landscaping waste. In addition to this, he and his wife try to limit their use of water and power, which is both good for the planet and their wallet.

Cameron likes to express how much he adores the trees here at Elon and the joy that people experience from them. He also loves that he gets to work somewhere like Elon that values its trees. He believes that every tree program in the world can do a better job of maintaining a beautiful and sustainable urban forest. In his own words, “we are always moving forward at Elon to do better for our trees.”

Student Spotlight: Imonni Withers

By: Gibson Field

Imonni Withers is a junior environmental studies major, who is also minoring in sociology and poverty and social justice. On campus, she serves as the Vice President of Community Outreach and Activism for the Black Student Union and dedicates her time as a mentor in the SMART Mentoring program. In this program, mentors help with the transition of students of color to Elon and enhance the social engagement and academic success of first-year and transfer students. Given her campus leadership roles and academic interests, Imonni plans to volunteer within both the Elon and Burlington community and tackle issues, such as food insecurity and the lack of urban greening.



Imonni first took an interest in sustainability when she took AP Environmental Science in high school. There, she learned about sustainability and how important its role is in keeping our environment healthy and safe. But, in turn, she realized that sustainability wasn't a popular topic of conversation among her peers, even though it's very important for the future of the planet. She believes earth provides us with so many amazing resources, and it's vital that we work to sustain them. Some of the ways in which Imonni is working to live more sustainably are carpooling with her friends to classes, reducing the amount of waste she produces, recycling and reducing the amount of electricity she uses daily. Imonni's dream after graduation is to help enact change for those who face environmental injustice. Low-income communities, which are often communities of color, suffer from environmental injustice daily. Once she graduates, she plans to work with these communities fighting for their rights to live a healthier and more sustainable life.

GET INVOLVED

Campus Sustainability Week is Here!

Oct. 19

5:15-6:45 PM | Eco-Grief Tending in Community at Loy Farm-[registration required](#)

7:30 PM | Outdoor Yoga at Iconic Plaza ([Virtual](#) option available)

Oct. 20

2:30 PM | Treeples Tree Walk at Historic Neighborhood- meet at Fonville Fountain in front of Alamance- [register here](#)

7:30 PM | Keynote Speaker, Katharine Wilkinson: Vital Questions for a Living Planet (VIRTUAL- [register here](#))

Oct. 21

5:30 PM | Plantable Paper at LaRose Student Commons

7 PM | Sustainable Hair Wear (VIRTUAL- [WebEx](#))

9 PM | S'mores with Outdoors at Beck Pool Patio

Oct. 22

11 AM-1 PM | Danieley Unplugged at Lake Verona

3-6 PM | Authentically Alamance Farmers' Market at Elon Community Church

5-6 PM | Make Your Own "Plarn" Coasters (VIRTUAL- [Zoom](#))

Oct. 23

3 PM | Bike to Burlington ([Registration required](#))

7:30 PM | Trashion (VIRTUAL- [Zoom](#))
Kits available in Global Commons

Learn more on the [Office of Sustainability Website](#).

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Submit to the Database!

What is it?

Online platform of past or current student projects related to sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS DATABASE
STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABILITY AT ELON



Why submit?

This is an opportunity to showcase your work and offer research ideas to interested undergraduates

How to submit:

1. Go to "[The Sustainability Projects Database](#)"
2. Log in with Elon username & password
3. Click "To add a project click here"



Elon has partnered with UCapture, a green-tech company that funds environmental projects and applies coupon codes, at no cost to you, when you shop with over 7,500 online stores.

How Does It Work?

When you shop using UCapture, partner stores pay commissions. UCapture uses 66% of these commissions toward high-quality, third-party verified carbon offset projects, which are then retired in Elon's name, reducing Elon's carbon footprint.

Follow These Steps to Utilize UCapture

Step 1: Visit www.ucapture.com/elon

Step 2: Click 'Add UCapture' to install the browser extension on your computer and set-up your account

Step 3: Activate UCapture when you shop with 7,500+ partner stores