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ELON SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

Elon hires waste reduction and recycling manager to help divert waste from landfill

BY: KELLY HARER

Elon is excited to welcome Kendra Harrison, the first waste reduction and recycling manager, to campus. Kendra joined the campus community in September. Previously, she worked for her local county in central California as the education and outreach coordinator for public works - solid waste and recycling.

As Elon's waste reduction and recycling manager, Kendra's overall goal is to increase the landfill diversion rate to 50%. Currently, only about 18-21% of Elon's waste is diverted from the landfill. Kendra notes that there is "a big job ahead of us, but something I think we can do if we work together." She is looking forward to hearing from students, faculty and staff.

"I want to hear your ideas, complaints, questions, concerns, etc..." She encourages anyone in the campus community to reach out to her at kharrison17@elon.edu.

In her free time, Kendra loves to travel and explore historical sites. She can often be found road tripping with her two dogs, Phil and Nugget, who enjoy the destinations as much as Kendra does. Kendra says that everyone has been so welcoming since she began working on campus, and she is looking forward to connecting with many more members of the Elon community.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. KELSEY BITTING

BY: SAMANTHA SCHWAMBERGER

Dr. Kelsey Bitting is the newest full-time faculty member in the Department of Environmental Studies. Dr. Bitting has found comfort in nature from a young age and has always been aware of natural resource use and sustainability in a conscious way.

In college, she discovered a new love for geology and science that inspired and empowered her to look at the world in a new way. This passion drove her research on sedimentation in the Delaware River Valley in graduate school at Rutgers University. Dr. Bitting's research has helped her to look at the past as a way to understand the future, and she hopes to bring that to

her students in order to promote sustainable behavior change.

Outside of her work as a faculty member, Dr. Bitting is a longtime gardener. She likes to grow as much of her own food as possible, while also incorporating pollinator plants and perennials.

Dr. Bitting also loves to compost and attempts to reduce her consumption through changes, such as using wash cloths instead of paper towels and using a clothesline instead of a dryer. She has also recently begun exploring making her own herbal medicines and teas. It is important to her to be conscious of the systems that we participate in and try to build back relationships with



nature to regain balance with the ecosystem.

Dr. Bitting is looking for students interested in research on earth and environmental education and carbon sequestration in soils. Any student interested in those topics can reach out to her to learn more at kbitting@elon.edu.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: PAUL HOLT

BY: EMERSON WELLS

Paul Holt serves as maintenance engineer for the Facilities Engineering Department within Facilities Management.

Holt began working at Elon in 1981 with an understanding of sustainability, then known as “stewardship” or holistic. Having a new relationship with his career and entering a workforce where stewardship could intersect with his work, Holt served as the first electrical supervisor at Elon. Under his supervision and with the assistance of a student worker, lighting in residence halls underwent a big shift to compact florescent lighting, reducing energy with a one-to-two-year payback period. In 1988, the Emerging North Carolina Alternative Energy Cooperation, now known as Advanced Energy Cooperation, featured both Elon and Holt as a case-study for this work.

In 1995, Holt had a career change to utilities manager, allowing him to work directly with construction crews for buildings on campus.



Outside of the process of working on construction documents, Holt contacted contractors to schedule trainings with departments related to plumbing, heating and AC systems to hold “walk through tours,” allowing individuals to open and see machinery used in newer buildings to learn and notice any issues. As buildings became LEED certified, this allowed those in Facilities Management to be involved with sustainable construction, to make recommendations and become equipped to support the increased technologies present in these buildings.

In 2007, Holt was involved with a partnership between Duke University and the NC Independent College and Universities to attend trainings and fourteen months of peer audits to prepare Elon’s campus for a three-day audit by the Environmental Protection Agency. He was also instrumental in Elon’s “POWERless” energy competition, a competition to inspire energy reduction by students across campus. Holt currently sends monthly energy tips for both on-campus and at home to faculty and staff.

Outside of work, Holt focuses on energy reduction within his home, investing in LED bulbs, a targeted thermostat, an energy-efficient AC unit and a newer, more efficient hot water heater and pump. He emphasizes that relationships, interdepartmentally and beyond, are crucial for sustainability and encourages students to make sure what they are doing to save energy is effective.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: CAROLINE DIGRANDE '23

BY: LAUREN HILL



**TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT WASTE
REDUCTION AND
RECYCLING ON
ELON'S CAMPUS,
CHECK OUT
THE WEBSITE!**



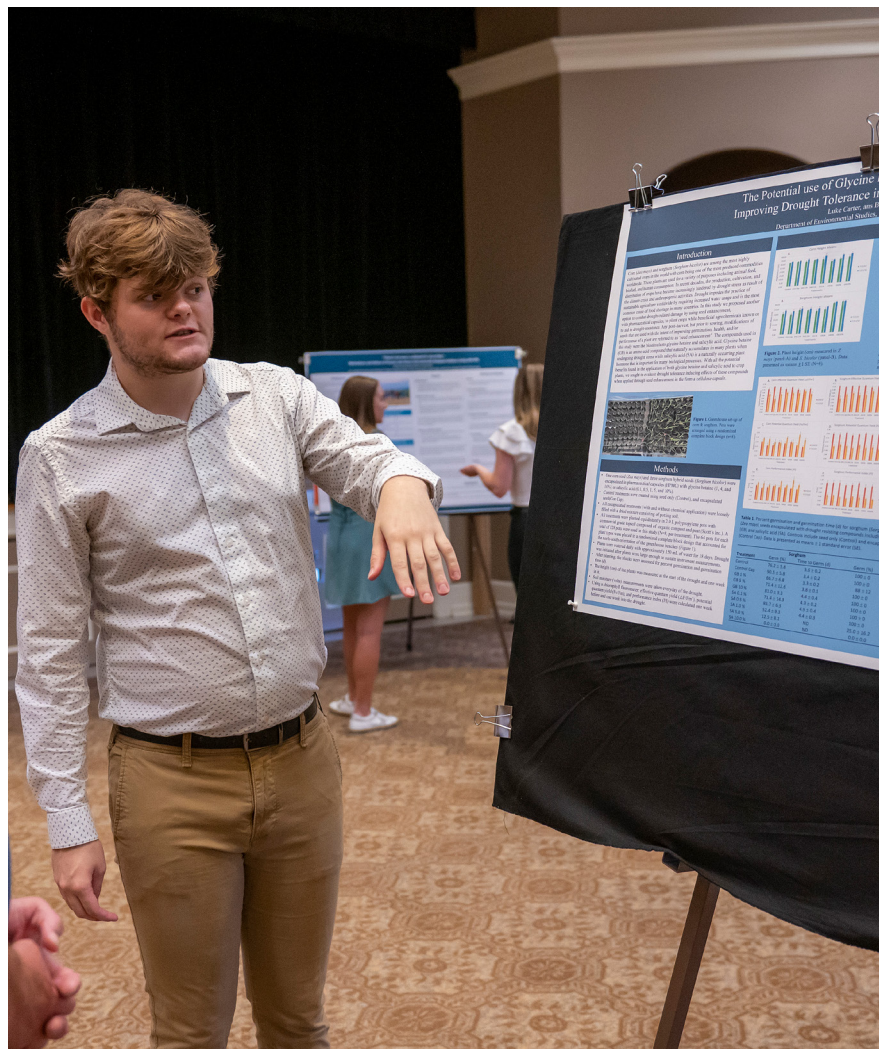
Caroline DiGrande is a senior Elon College Fellow majoring in environmental and sustainability studies with minors in Spanish and sociology. Growing up in New Jersey, Caroline always loved playing outside and spending time in nature. Her interest in environmental studies was first sparked in an AP Environmental Science class, but it wasn't until college that she discovered the major and the possibility of a career in sustainability.

DiGrande's Fellows research project was inspired by the sight of trash bins (and contaminated recycling) overflowing at the start of Fall 2020 and experiencing first-hand how the pandemic brought unimaginable new levels of waste to Elon's campus.

"For someone who's always looking at the world through that sustainable lens, it's devastating," said DiGrande. Under the mentorship of environmental sociologist Dr. Robert Perdue, Caroline formulated a thesis to further explore how COVID-19 has impacted university sustainability programs and initiatives across the United States. The ultimate goal is to make pragmatic, sustainability-minded suggestions for future protocol under pandemic conditions or anything similar.

Now in her third semester of research, qualitative and quantitative data collection in the form of surveys and personal interviews of sustainability professionals is almost complete. DiGrande noted how she has had to be mindful with her passion for the research topic, staying objective and acknowledging any preconceived notions she might hold. She also reflected on how grateful she has been for all the responses and thoughtful interactions she has received throughout the process.

"It is a little scary to put yourself out there to over 200 universities, but I think it's been a really good experience for me and good to know that some people really do care," commented DiGrande. She wants other students to recognize that even when sustainable goals feel out of reach, student voices and impact matters. Systemic change must start somewhere, and it can start with students and the example that they can set for others and their communities.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LUKE CARTER '24

BY: ELIANA OLIVIER

Luke Carter is a junior at Elon, majoring in environmental and ecological science in the Department of Environmental Studies (ENS). Luke has always had a love for nature, the outdoors and working with animals. His major offers the opportunity to have a hands-on approach to learning. For research, Luke is studying sustainable agriculture. He is looking at ways to increase drought resistance in crop plants to decrease food loss from climate change, as well as the droughts that can be caused by it.

Luke says that his mentor, Dr. Brant Touchette, helped him narrow his focus to this subject, as he originally wanted to study wetlands. He likes that the Department of ENS supports his interdisciplinary interests, as environmental issues often intersect with other topics and issues. For example, his research also intersects with access to food and nutrition, which involves several social factors as well. Luke hopes to help make a difference for people experiencing the brunt of climate change with his research.

RESOURCES

SHARE THE RIDE

What is it?

STRNC is a free, secure and user-friendly online tool that helps find ridesharing options for commuting or single trips to the airport, beach or wherever else you travel. It also allows users to log their trip to learn about dollars saved and emissions reduced. Sign up [here](#)!

How to Join:

REGISTER: There is an Elon-specific program for students, faculty and staff. Using your Elon email, register for a free account and create a profile!

FIND A RIDE! Enter some info about where you want to go so you can view and communicate with potential matches through the system.

EMERGENCY RIDE HOME PROGRAM

This program reimburses eligible faculty/staff commuters for a qualified emergency ride home a maximum of 4 times in a fiscal year.

To be eligible, participants must:

1. Be a part-time or full-time employee **and**
2. Have carpooled, biked, walked, taken the train or a bus to work on the day a ride is needed.

It's available for commuters when:

1. They or an immediate family member gets sick or has a crisis
2. Their carpool driver has to unexpectedly leave early or stay late OR
3. They must work unscheduled overtime

Learn more [online](#)!

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

IDEATE. INVESTIGATE. IMPACT

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”

UCAPTURE

SAVE MONEY. SAVE THE PLANET.

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 online partners.

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 on Elon's behalf, 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 and set-up your account

Step 3: Activate UCapture when you visit online partner stores

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