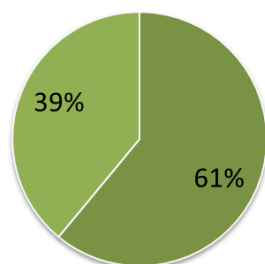


Newsletter of the **Center for Sustainability and the Environment** at Wells College.

Did you know?



In the 2014 *Princeton Review* Hopes and Worries survey, over 60% of prospective students (and their parents) said that a college's commitment to environmental practices factored into their college selection criteria.

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The Center for Sustainability and the Environment is finally open

The new *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* opened in June, with the hire of the new director, Marian Brown. The Center was temporarily located in MacMillan Hall, while the permanent space for the Center was completed in the newly-renovated Zabriskie Hall (see *more below*).

Over Fall Break, along with the *Sullivan Center for Business and Entrepreneurship*, the Campus Store, and several faculty offices, the Center moved into Zabriskie, occupying rooms 212 and 213.

Even in its temporary "digs", the Center was busy this summer, working to get new programs in place before the start of the academic semester, and learning

about the many sustainability efforts already in place that you might not have known about and which can be built upon. Some of those are detailed on the inner pages of this newsletter.



Come visit our new space for the *Center for Sustainability and the Environment*, with its kicky, grass-green racing stripe down the center.

And we're off!

We have been busily firing on all cylinders: exploring ways to enhance sustainability educational offerings; creating new partnership opportunities for experiential learning; grant writing and researching external funding sources; developing the inaugural *Sustainability Perspectives* speaker series (see pg 4); collaborating with campus programs (like the *Peachtown Native American Festival* and the *Science Colloquium*); poking into a number of ways to make campus operations even more sustainable, like setting up online ordering for more sustainable office products through *Staples Advantage*; and just becoming more familiar with the unique and special culture of Wells College.

Zabriskie Hall - A Sustainable Renovation

There are a number of sustainability-related features incorporated into the renovation of this venerable old campus building—the first being that the building WAS renovated, not demolished. It is no mean feat to try to update and modernize a historic building like Zabriskie, the former science building, but the architects from *Chiang-O'Brien* in Ithaca worked closely with the senior team to

devise ways to sensitively reclaim the wonderful historic elements of the original building while still providing a 21st century learning environment.

Among the sustainable features of this project:

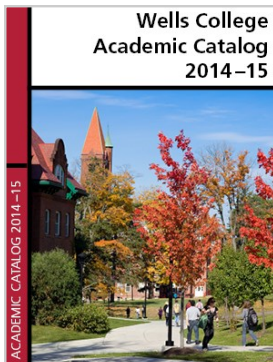
- Reuse of millwork and cabinetry within the building (or in other campus buildings)
- LED lighting
- Occupancy sensors on common



space lighting

- Water-saving bathroom fixtures
- Traction elevator that uses significantly less energy than a conventional hydraulic elevator
- Making the entire building fully accessible, including all gender-neutral bathrooms
- EPEAT™ certified computers, Energy Star™ certified appliances and lighting equipment
- Low VOC paints
- Carpet tiles with high-recycled content (that are recyclable)
- Tie-in to excess capacity of Stratton Hall's high-efficiency boiler and chiller
- High-efficiency hand dryers in lieu of paper towel dispensers
- Use of local /regional contractors and subcontractors
- Removing old drywall and plaster to allow the ground floor brick walls to "breathe" and naturally dissipate moisture

A sustainable decision related to academics was to move from a printed, hard copy course catalog to an on-line version.



"If I could have every Wells College student leave us knowing just one thing, it would be how they can - and must - make more sustainable choices."

~ Marian Brown, director,
Wells Center for Sustainability
and the Environment



Ashley Gingeleski '17, discusses her field studies internship at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest through Syracuse Univ.

New Sustainability Academic Programs

The **Sustainability minor** explores the concept from a variety of academic and interdisciplinary perspectives, working to understand inherent complexities while gaining the knowledge needed to make more informed life and career decisions. Learn more about the sustainability minor: Dr. Milene Morfe, at mzmorfe@wells.edu, or 364-3255. What we eat - and where we get our food - significantly impacts our world. The **Sustainable Food Systems minor** investigates the challenges of the current global



food system by exploring the cultural meanings of food and the social and physical conditions under which we grow and consume foods. Contact Dr. Laura McClusky at lmccusky@wells.edu, or call 364-3252.



Introduction to Sustainability
This new course offers an overview of the concept of sustainability, its evolution and selected methods to quantify impacts. This project-based course will equip students to develop and evaluate solutions to national and local challenges by balancing factors

that are environmental, economic and socio-cultural.

Students in this course will :

- be able to define sustainability and explain how sustainability relates to their lives and their values, and how their actions impact issues of sustainability
- be able to utilize their knowledge of sustainability to change their daily habits and consumer mentality
- learn change agent skills
- learn how to apply concepts of sustainability to their campus and community by engaging in the challenges and solutions of sustainability on campus

Sustainable Community Courses

Sustainable Communities (SC) is the designated theme for courses that develop students' communication skills, both written and oral, information literacy, and their use of presentation technology. We noted these sustainability-related, first year SC-themed fall courses:

The Literature of Nature

Cynthia Garrett, English
This course considers writing about the natural world and the relationship between humans and the natural environment. How have views of nature changed over time and varied by culture? How do age, class and gender affect human experiences of the land, vegetation, and creatures that surround us? We explore these questions through reading works of biolo-



gists, naturalists, and creative writers, by engaging in observation of the local environment, and by writing analytically and creatively about the world we inhabit.

Culture and Water

Ernie Olson, Anthropology/Religion
Simply put, water is essential for human existence and culture is inherent to human experience. More to the point, our daily need for water is molded by basic biological needs and a diversity of cultural desires, tastes, and expectations. In the contemporary world, our connection to water is also affected by environmental constraints; at the local level, our particular socio-cultural relationship with water cannot be isolated from the global reality of increasing demands for water. The global

challenge is that water is a finite and shrinking resource in a world with a growing thirst for water. This course focuses on present and future water challenges - even "water wars" - and exposes us to issues of cultural survival, sustainability, social justice, and human rights connecting local to global.



Food

Kristina Blake-Hodek, Biology
Every day we are inundated with changing, and often conflicting, recommendations of what and how we should eat. We investigate past and current nutritional trends, exploring the science, pseudoscience and popular interpretations that have influenced them.



Sustainability-related Internships

Being new in June, the *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* cannot claim any role in helping our students obtain their summer internships. We now actively reach out to community partners and businesses to facilitate future opportunities. Nonetheless, at the poster session for Summer Internships organized by the Center for Career Services and Experiential Learning, we were impressed with how many of our students had

experienced hands-on learning in sustainability-related fields.



Arent-Peter Kits van Heyningen '16 interned with the *Finger Lakes Land Trust*



Mikayla Kravetz '15 interned at one of the region's largest organic CSA farms



Justine Tibbitts '16 explains her Habitat for Humanity's ReStore program internship



Sign(s) of the Times

From “Installments”, our monthly informational newsletters that get placed on the inside of bathroom stalls, to signage to remind our community how to properly recycle and to conserve energy and water, the *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* has already placed its mark(s) on the campus.

Buildings & Grounds collaborated with the Center to phase in “commingled recycling”, in which most all recyclable items can be placed in the same bin. As part of that effort, we have moved to “Carry In—Carry Out” for classrooms and, most recently, for staff offices. Landfill waste material and

recyclable items are to be taken outside the classroom or office to the nearest waste separation area and sorted properly into the right container. These bins will become standardized and coordinated.

The *Center for Sustainability’s* unofficial mascot, Orson the Owl, turns up on some signage and on each “Installment” to remind our community about ways to make more sustainable decisions.

While we aren’t generally in favor of using lots and lots of paper, in these early days, it feels necessary in order to catch attention and help our community make better, more sustainable choices.



Speaking of paper...

The *Center for Sustainability* worked with staffers in Information Technology and the Office of the Provost to enable Wells to purchase 30% post-consumer recycled content paper at a very favorable price, so that is what will now be used in all networked printers.



This new paper is certified by the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative* to come from responsibly managed timber stands.

Book recycling

Rich Kloster in the Campus Store works with *One Planet Books* to accept old textbooks and trade books. Still usable books go to other countries, some get recycled, but they *all* stay out of the landfill! Rich recently sent ten boxes of books to *One Planet*, and received back \$10 per box.



Going 'round in circles...

We were able to identify two ideal locations on campus for new, free reuse programs:



The *Bargain Basement* in Main is open 24/7 for swapping clothing, craft items, room furnishings, and housewares. You name it: it's probably there, been there, or is coming there....

The *Rumpus Room* in MacMillan is a free exchange closet for excess, but still usable, office supplies.



The *Inns of Aurora LLC*, which operates Wells' dining program, partnered with the Center to begin the “Gotcha” program—folks spotted using a reusable beverage mug or bottle get a card redeemable for a free refill at any on-campus café.

Signed, (Green)Sealed, Delivered...

Steve Gelsi, Building Care Manager, is keenly aware of the need to “clean green” in our buildings. He balances effective cleaning performance with reducing chemical exposure for both building occupants and the building care custodians who have to get “down and dirty” with the cleaning chemicals.

The good news is that many of the cleaning products that Steve and his team have been using are *Green Seal™* certified.

Steve has been working with his suppliers to evaluate and purchase even more “green” cleaning chemicals and paper products. Among the more sustainable products

Steve has been/is now specifying:

- *Clean by Peroxy™*, a hydrogen peroxide-based cleaner
- *Biorenewables™* Glass Cleaner
- *Good Sense™* Odor Eliminator
- “coreless” toilet tissue
- Recycled paper roll towels
- *Deb™* foaming hand soap

Steve’s folks were already using the *Deb™* hand soap product in many bathrooms, but recently converted to all *Deb™* dispensers, which has the added benefit of saving the College a lot of money.

Steve also switched to the *Green Seal™* certified version of the *Deb™* foaming hand soap, moving away

from the kind containing the anti-bacterial ingredient *Triclosan*, which the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* recommend against using.

The CDC recommends this proper hand washing procedure:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold),
- Apply regular soap and lather your hands by rubbing them together; lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Hum the “Happy Birthday” song through twice.
- Rinse your hands well.



Look for this third-party-certifier’s logo on more sustainable cleaners and bathroom paper products.



Steve Gelsi with a new *Deb* hand soap dispenser insert



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Wells Center for
Sustainability and
the Environment



@Wells Sust Center



The Center for Sustainability and the Environment received a very nice shout-out from the *Auburn Citizen* late this summer.



FORCES (**F**riends **O**f **R**ecreation, **C**onservation, and **E**nvironmental **S**tewardship) conducted a trail cleanup and removal of an invasive species, swallowwort, along the walkway from Woods Lot to Stratton.

Sustainability is a decision-making framework for continuous improvement that mindfully takes into account the social, environmental, and economic impacts of our choices.

The *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* has three distinct, yet highly-interconnected areas of focus: academics, operations, and outreach. Eagle-eyed observers may have noticed that this newsletter is organized to highlight recent successes in those three areas, although sometimes you could argue whether something would fit equally well into another category. We *said* these areas were highly inter-connected!

Our main purpose - to encourage all members of our campus community to learn to make deliberate, more sustainable decisions - can only lead to better outcomes. Campus sustainability should not be viewed as a competitive advantage in higher education - it is an educational and an operational imperative. It is incumbent upon Wells College, as an institution of higher learning, to readily share what we come to understand and what we have already learned how to do with others in the academy and within society at large. Sharing the "whys" and "hows" of developing a resilient, more sustainable future for our faculty, staff and students - and their families - is of paramount importance.

Sustainability Perspectives Speaker Series

Our new speaker series looks at sustainability from a variety of viewpoints. We offer the Wells community—and the public—a diverse set of interesting expert speakers:



- September 3 "Linking Architecture and Education: Sustainable Design for Learning"
Anne P. Taylor '55, Ph. D., president, *School Zone Institute*
A discussion of the role the physical environment plays on learning.
- September 17 "The Iroquois White Corn Project" *
Kevin White, asst. professor, Native American & American Studies, SUNY Oswego
A look at restoring the farming and consumption of this ancient indigenous crop.
* talk held in conjunction with the *Peachtown Native American Festival*
- October 2 "Re-Imagining Water: Water Wisdom and Art"
Mara Alper, associate professor of media arts, sciences and studies, Ithaca College
This multi-media presentation takes us on an exploration of our relationship to water.
- October 17 "Sustain This! Making Math Matter" **
Tom Pfaff, associate professor of mathematics, Ithaca College
Dr. Pfaff explains how he incorporates sustainability content into statistics and Calc I.
- October 31 "Permaculture: Designing with Systems" **
Karryn Olson-Ramanujan, *SEEDS Consulting* and *Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute*
This presentation will examine how permaculture design works within natural systems.
- December 3 "Lighten Your Study Abroad Footprint"
Astrid Jirka, director, Cornell University Language House and founder, *Green Passport*
Learn how to consider the social and environmental consequences of studying abroad.

** talk held in conjunction with the *Science Colloquium* series

Our dynamic speakers (from left to right): Taylor, White, Alper, Pfaff, Olson-Ramanujan, and Jirka.



Student Organizations Working To Advance Campus Sustainability

There are three main sustainability-related student organizations: *Campus Greens*, *FORCES*, and the newest, the *Greenhouse Club*, which is looking to utilize the Zabriskie greenhouse for more than just research. The *Greenhouse Club* recently partnered with the Book Arts Center to help clean out the older Morgan Hall greenhouse to ready the space for a new printmaking studio. The Book Arts Center wants to use the greenhouse to grow a species of mulberry used in Japanese papermaking. The greenhouse-cum-studio space

will also provide a "wet lab" for printmakers to process the mulberry plant fibers into printing paper. A neat collaboration!



In another collaboration: all three sustainability clubs have committed to maintaining the organic garden near McGordon House. This summer, Japanese

lecturer Kurt Pipa and his wife, Chieko, organized several workdays to clean out the overgrown garden and plant vegetables the Pips will use to cook a Japanese themed dinner this fall.

The *Center for Sustainability and the Environment* collaborated with *Campus Greens* to screen the new film "Disruption. Climate Change", about the organizing effort behind the recent *Peoples Climate March* in New York City.

