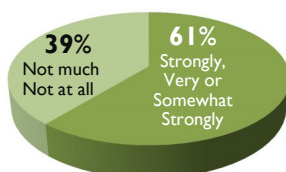


Newsletter of the Center for Sustainability and the Environment at Wells College.



In the **2016 Hopes and Worries** survey, conducted by *The Princeton Review* each year, over 10,000 prospective students and their parents were asked this interesting survey question:

If you (your child) had a way to compare colleges based on their commitment to **environmental issues** (from academic offerings to practices concerning energy use, recycling, etc.), how much would this contribute to your (your child's) decision to apply to or attend a school? Over 60% responded that these factors **are** important to their college choice. How would you have answered that question?

In this issue:

Struttin' our stuff...	2
Sustainability-themed summer internships	2
Fall Sustainability classes	2
NYSED approves our Sustainability B.A.	2
Team-taught fall gardening class breaks new ground	3
Water-conserving renovations	3
"Green" is bustin' out all over at the Bookstore	3
Register this positive change	3
Planning a greener residence hall	3
Grind's getting' even greener	3
Powering down...	3
No waste of recycling effort	3
Composting spreads out	3
Fall Sustainability programs and activities	4
Campus Greens kickin' off...	4
Floating a new partnership	4

Check the numbers...

In the winter *Wellspring* issue, we reported that Wells had successfully completed its first comprehensive sustainability self-assessment using the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE) *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System* (STARS). We were very pleased to earn a **Silver** rating in our first assessment, looking at 63 sustainability aspects. Schools earning 45% or more of all applicable points get a Silver rating; those earning 65% or more are awarded Gold. Wells earned 55.66%, halfway to Gold. We plan to re-assess using the new 2.1 STARS version in January. With our progress this year, we are aiming for STARS Gold. With our permission, our STARS data was used by two other organizations to conduct their own campus sustainability ratings. But as the title above states, we urge you to "check the numbers".

As a "Green School", we score a 91...



... according to **The Princeton Review Guide to Green Schools**, which rates institutions for:

1. whether students have a campus quality of life that is both healthy and sustainable;
2. how well a school prepares students for employment in the 21st century clean-energy economy as well as for citizenship in a world now defined by environmental concerns and opportunities; and
3. how environmentally responsible a school's policies are.

Princeton Review's Green Schools rating used our AASHE STARS data, but selected only certain assessment areas and assigned different weights to those criteria than does STARS. Their *Green Schools* rating is based on a scale of 60–99. Some specific STARS assessment questions The Princeton Review's *Green Schools* rating uses:

What is the percentage of food expenditures that goes toward local, organic or otherwise environmentally preferable food? Our total sustainable food buying between *Wells Dining* and the *Grind Café* is 13%.

Does the school offer [sustainable transportation] programs? We earned points for our campus shuttle, our anti-idling policy, offering local housing, and telecommuting and condensed workweek programs.

Does the school have a formal sustainability committee with participation from students? The Sustainability Advisory Committee, re-convened by President Gibraltar, fully represents our campus community.

Are buildings constructed or majorly renovated in the past three years LEED certified? We have not – yet – constructed or renovated buildings to LEED levels, but the new residence hall is planned to do so.

What is our overall waste-diversion rate? We reported a 17% diversion rate, and a 250% recycling increase!

Do we have an environmental studies major, minor or concentration? We do, *plus* we have a sustainability major and two sustainability-related minors. (see more page 2)

Do students graduate from programs that include sustainability as a required learning outcome? 85% of Wells students graduated from 22 academic programs incorporating sustainability-related learning outcomes.

Does the school have a formal plan to mitigate its greenhouse gas emissions? Wells is implementing its Climate Action Plan that guides our efforts to become 100% carbon neutral by 2050 (and hopefully sooner).

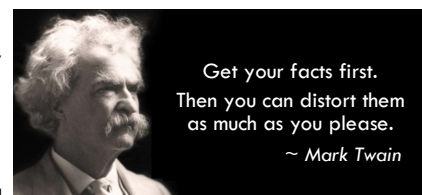
What percentage of the school's energy consumption is derived from renewable resources? We didn't have much to report in this area, but we have major plans to incorporate renewable energy in the near future.

Does the school employ a dedicated full-time sustainability officer? We do. The director of the Center for Sustainability and the Environment also serves as the college's sustainability director.

This was the first time we had STARS data to use for the *Green Schools* rating, so this is our first appearance in their *Green Schools* list. We are pleased to have earned a 91 out of 99 in their rating system, meaning that Wells will be included in the Princeton Review's 2017 *Guide to Green Schools*, that helps prospective students identify schools that are a good "fit" for their values.

Sierra Club considers Wells a "Cool School"

Sierra Club, showcasing "the colleges working hardest to protect the planet", also "cherry-picked" our STARS data and re-weighted categories per their particular concerns. Of 201 institutions included on their 2016 "Cool Schools" list, Wells came in at #132. On a 1000 point scale, Sierra awarded Wells 509.88 points; the #1 "Cool School" earned only 783 points. Sierra heavily weights *Energy* (264), *Transportation* (122), *Investments* (95), *Waste* (95), and *Water* (70), while max points for *Co-Curricular Activities* is 93 and *Academics* is a really low priority (71) which, as an educational institution, we question. Our *Cool Schools* scores were mixed. In *Planning*, we are #12 on the list; in *Academics*, we rise to the #18 position. In *Energy* and *Food*, we scored well above average, but we were pulled down in other areas that Sierra heavily weights, like *Investments*, *Waste*, and *Transport*. So, as we warned, be careful of these interpretations of the numbers, even though the data source is the same. But as with The Princeton Review's *Guide to Green Schools*, if it is true that most prospective students seek institutions supporting their environmental values (see inset top left), Sierra's *Cool Schools* list may prove useful to help budding *sustainabilityistas* find their way to Wells.



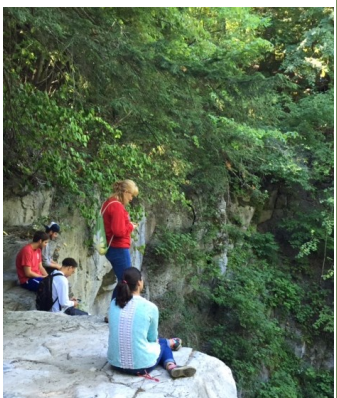
AMERICA'S GREENEST
SCHOOLS
Sierra's annual "Cool Schools" ranking

Struttin' our stuff...

On May 28th, **Gehan Dhameeth**, assistant professor of Business, was the guest of honor at the University of Wales Sri Lanka Chapter annual conference; he delivered a talk on "scholars' contribution to a sustainable economy."

**Fall Sustainability classes**

Professor Milene Morfei took students in her SC101 *EcoPsychology* class on a hike to the campus waterfall.



BKRT 285 *Introduction to Papermaking* class partnered with the *Peace Paper Project*, a Wells In-Residence program sponsored by the Book Arts Center. This week-long series of lectures and hands-on papermaking demos was held out on the lawn next to the Morgan Hall greenhouse paper studio. Open to the entire Wells community, this gave students the opportunity to learn about the papermaking materials and techniques of various cultures, including those of Japanese, Iranian, Early European, and 21st Century American papermakers.

**Sustainability-themed Summer internships**

We always love to attend the Internship Fair that kicks off the Falls semester, at which Wells students present posters about their summer internship experiences. They get to do *SUCH* interesting things!



Destiny Rivera '19 interned at the Wild Bird Fund, a project started by Wells alumnae Mary-Rita McMahon, rehabilitating birds and other animals found in and around New York City.

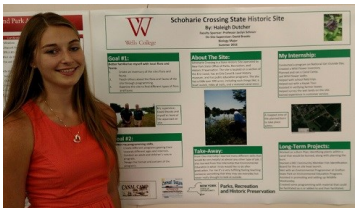


Joe Dyson '19 helped with pulls of the invasive water chestnut plant from several waterways

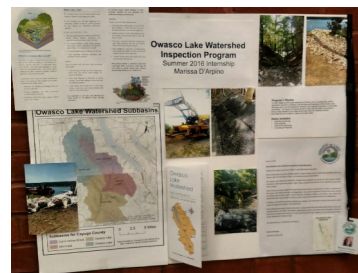
under the guidance of the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District.



Haylee Ouellette '17 served as a park ranger for the Black Rock State Park in Connecticut, teaching visitors about proper use of the park's natural resources.



Haleigh Dutcher '18 worked alongside staff at the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site. Among other internship projects, she created a wildflower inventory and education program for site visitors.



Marissa D'Arpino '17 is studying abroad this fall so could not present her poster in person, but she did her sustainability internship with staff of the Owasco Lake Watershed Inspection Program.



Emily Mills '18 interned with the Oswego State Sustainability Office. Emily told her supervisor about our GOTCHA cards (see page 3); Oswego "adaptively reused" our concept and will debut their own "Caught Ya" cards this fall. Emily worked on their bike share program as well as helped to create incentives for reusable bottles.

NYSED approves our Sustainability B. A.

We were very gratified to learn in early June that the New York State Department of Education approved what had heretofore been our *Individualized Major in Sustainability*. NYSED reviewers agreed that our academic major proposal met all the requirements for students to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability from Wells. This means that Wells joins a very short list of New York schools offering a general sustainability academic major; there aren't even that many programs nationally. The highly interdisciplinary team of faculty contributing courses to the Sustainability program are now meeting to begin to "re-work" the major and minor. Some are busily preparing proposals to cross-list their courses as SUS courses, or developing new course proposals to add to the roster of offerings. Among the proposed Spring offerings will be a Tutorial called *Reflections on Sustainability* that will take advantage of the many sustainability-related programs and activities offered through the Center for Sustainability, including the *Sustainability Perspectives* and *Sustainable Business* speaker series, the *Sustainability Films* series, and other Center-planned activities (see more, page 4). If approved, tutorial students can earn academic credit for attending several of these sustainability programs, doing additional research about the particular topic addressed in the program, and writing a reflective essay.

**Team-taught fall gardening class breaks new ground**

We offered a new experiential course, FOOD 285 *Introduction to Gardening*, which almost immediately enrolled to full capacity. This 7-week course uses a blend of classroom learning and hands-on experience, often outdoors in the McGordon House Languages Garden, which has long-standing productivity issues. This course is unusual too because it is team taught by **Lindsay Burwell**, assistant professor of Chemistry, who teaches about soil chemistry with lab testing; **Kurt Pipa**, Japanese lecturer and Master Composter who teaches about amending soils; and Anthropology/Religion professor **Ernie Olson**, who guides students to explore different water management strategies we might employ in the McGordon garden.



Water-conserving renovations

Late this summer, the college secured the financing to begin tackling some deferred maintenance issues in our residence halls, starting with Leach House's shower rooms. In just about ten days, contractors completely reconstructed these outdated spaces. Our favorite part: they installed *WaterSense™* certified shower heads, rated to be at least 20% more water-efficient than regular units. We plan to install such water-conserving faucets and fixtures as renovation work continues in Leach, Dodge House, and Main.

photo: Brian Brown



"Green" is bustin' out all over at the Bookstore



Bookstore manager Rich Kloster estimates that well over 2/3 of the textbooks offered this Fall were less expensive used books, coming back to the campus through the textbook buy-back system (see all the yellow "USED" labels on the spines of the books).

The new textbook rental kiosk (at right) in the Bookstore facilitated this additional new way to obtain course materials; Rich estimates that over 20% of fall class textbooks were rented.

Rich is always on the look-out for new sustainable products to offer to our campus community; he currently stocks more



than 25 different products with sustainability features, including recycled content and reusability. Some of the newest items:

H2OGo Force™ stainless steel vacuum bottles, to keep your drinking water cold (especially if you fill up at one of our bottle fill stations!)

Roaring Spring Paper Products' US-made *Compost™* bioblend composition books, made from 30% sugarcane fiber (bagasse) and 70% post-consumer recycled paper and printed with soy inks.

Green Oath™ durable presentation folders, books, and binders, which have organic compounds added to their poly resin, making these items phthalate-free, non-leaching, and environmentally safe.



Register this positive change

A number of campus offices have recently made some of their internal processes go "paperless". Most recently, the Office of the Registrar announced that it was transitioning to an online Google form for faculty to submit Spring courses. Having faculty enter this course information online, including requirements for room size, setup, and technology needs, streamlines the process to create academic schedules, assign appropriate rooms, and easily notify IT and other offices of needed support items.

Planning a greener residence hall

The planning group for the new residence hall project - construction of which was deferred - includes representatives from Student Life, Facilities, Safety, IT, and Sustainability, working with the design/build team from *Beardsley Architects+ Engineers* and *Purcell Construction*. Together, the group developed a design that students should love, one meeting high energy efficiency and environmental design standards, something that delights us!

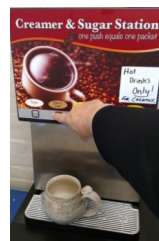


Grind's gettin' even greener

The *Grind Café* is partnering with us to redeem our *Gotcha* cards, issued to those spotted using their own beverage container.

The *GRIND* redeems *GOTCHA* cards for a free hot beverage refill into one's reusable container. The *GRIND* already discounts refills for reusable "muggers".

The *GRIND*'s new relationship with *F&T Creamer & Sugar Station* Distributing affords access to more sustainable foods plus eases supply headaches. A new *GRIND* feature, spotted at *F&T*'s summer food show: this nifty bulk sweetener dispenser. No more paper sugar packet waste.



Powering down

We compared this fiscal year's utility bills to last year's. We factored in the much milder weather we experienced this winter over last year's long, bitter cold season. Still, it's obvious that strategies that Facilities uses to improve building envelopes and energy systems, coupled with our campus community's conservation efforts, are working.

Fuel	2014-15	2015-16	% change
Electric (kwh)	4210382	3997974	-5%
Propane (gal)	402570	406667	1%
#2 oil (gal)	46645	24567	-47%
Diesel (gal)	1226	1209	-1%
Gasoline (gal)	16223	11880	-27%

Propane is our major building heating fuel, although we do have several large, all-electric buildings (Dodge, Long Library); #2 fuel oil is our backup heating fuel.



No waste of effort

Our recycling rates are steadily climbing. In 2013-14, our waste hauler estimated we diverted about 3 tons of recyclables. In fiscal year 2014-15, when we phased in our comprehensive recycling program mid-semester in the Fall, we saw our recyclable tonnage rise to nearly 5 tons. In FY 2015-16, with a well-established program enhanced mid-year with recycling bins added to student rooms,

bathrooms and laundry rooms, our recycling really jumped up, to 17.67 tons, a better than 250% increase. Our current recycling diversion rate—not including separately collected, recyclable cardboard - is about 23%. Solid, but we have much room to improve!

Composting spreads out

For the past year, The *Grind Café* has been collecting its spent coffee grounds and filters in tubs outside Zabriskie Hall, supplied by the *Center for Sustainability*. Those filled tubs of grounds are regularly transported over to the McGordon House Languages Garden, where we set up a coffee grounds composting bin that we inoculated with red wiggler worms (they love coffee grounds!). We set up a second bin this summer to accommodate the growing quantity of grounds. We look forward to soon harvesting compost from the first compost bin, using it to augment the soil quality in the McGordon Languages Garden (see more page 2).





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Wells Center for
Sustainability and
the Environment



@Wells Sust Center

Campus Greens kickin' off...

This student organization, Wells' oldest sustainability-focused group, the Greens always do fun and interesting things. Late this summer, Greens started off their year with a couple fun activities: a



bonfire at the Wells boathouse, and a club "bonding" cruise aboard the Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom, helping their staff collect samples of aquatic plants and animals for an ongoing research study. (see more at right)



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

Fall Sustainability Presentations and Activities

The Center for Sustainability programs a number of sustainability-related programs:

Sept. 5 Cody Two Bears of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council, delivered "Mni Wiconi" - Water is Life, detailing the struggles of indigenous peoples against the threats posed by the Dakota Access Pipeline project.



Our **Sustainability Perspectives** series brings in experts to speak on a variety of topics. The talks are on Mondays at 12:20PM, in the deWitt Lecture Room, 106 Zabriskie Hall.

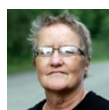


Sept. 12 Jesse Cook, CEO Geotherm Inc., spoke about *Harnessing the Power of the Earth and Sun: geothermal technology and battery storage.*

Sept. 19 Neil Patterson from the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment presented his talk, *Haudenosaunee Biocultural Restoration*, which was part of the 2016 Peachtown Native American Festival.



Sept. 26 Cayuga Lake is not forever: We must protect it better Hilary Lambert, Lake Steward Cayuga Lake Watershed Network



Oct. 3 *The Importance of getting outdoors: and why it's not always so easy* Rachel Danford, outdoor educator The Discovery Museums



Oct. 17 *Sustainable and Sustainability* Laticia McNaughton, graduate student and Wells in-residence scholar SUNY Buffalo



Sept. 24 *Oxygen and Early Animals: Modern Implications of Ancient Geologic Records* Shuhai Xiao, professor, Geobiology Virginia Tech



Oct. 31 *Ripped from the Headlines...* Susan Tabrizi, assoc. professor, Political Science Wells College

Nov. 7 *Auburn Permaculture Park: A source for community transformation* Peter Cramer and Laura Kennedy Auburn Permaculture Park



Nov. 14 *The Language of Waste, Consumption, & Sustainability* Deb Gagnon, professor, Psychology Wells College

We offer two **Sustainable Business** series talks, co-developed with the Sullivan Center for Business and Entrepreneurship.

On Sept. 13, Wells alumnae Darlynn Overbaugh '01 offered *Sustainable Sweets* (improving the candy industry one truffle at a time). Owner of Life's So Sweet Chocolates, Darlynn explained why she chooses more expensive Fair Trade certified chocolate for her candies.



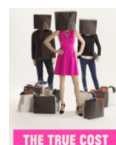
Oct. 4 *How Money Responds to Climate Risk* Vita DeMarchi, managing partner Synapse Partners LLC

Sustainability Film series will show two movies, at 7:00PM in the deWitt Lecture Hall, Zabriskie 106.



Oct. 25 *The True Cost*

Nov. 1 *Just Eat It*

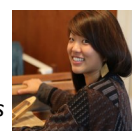


We also organized two workshops:

Sept. 24 *Natural Dye Workshop* led by Sarah Gotowka, visual artist



Oct. 6 *Home Storage of Fruits and Vegetables* Monika Roth, agricultural educator Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins



Floating a new partnership ...

In June, Center for Sustainability director **Marian Brown** was elected chair of the Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom's Advisory Board, of which emeritus faculty **Tom Vawter** is a founding member. Wells has long had an academic partnership with this unique education program; environmental science classes go out on their vessel to study aquatics. In August, the Center partnered with *Floating Classroom* program manager Bill Foster to co-host activities for a middle school STEM Camp from Seneca Falls. The original plan was for campers to take a 2-hour *Floating Classroom* cruise, then have lunch and do some water-related activities in the Center before heading home. Mechanical difficulties with the boat meant a last-minute retooling of plans. Facilities director **Brian Brown** jumped in to lead a tour of our drinking water plant, then campers collected water and aquatic plant samples off our dock. They then came up to the Center to learn more about Cayuga Lake, our drinking water source, and threats to water quality from *Floating Classroom* educators.



At the staff picnic golf outing, new Security officer Roger Henry won this Green Golfing Goodie Basket - with reused golf balls and biodegradable tees - from the Center for Sustainability.