

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



The STARS system offers several rating levels:

Bronze	25% of credits
Silver	45% of credits
Gold	65% of credits
Platinum	85% of credits

Note: Wells earned over 55%.

We will share with our campus community some of our successes and items on our "to do" list in future newsletter issues.

Wells earns a Silver STAR(S)...

For the past few months, we have collected data on a range of sustainability-related campus activities, including some unexpected aspects, like employee satisfaction. For this review, we utilize the *Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System* (STARS), an objective rubric developed by the *Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education*. More than 750 institutions use the STARS tool. We recently completed our first STARS assessment and were pleased to earn a Silver STARS rating, putting us in good company with over 125 Silver schools, including Boston University, Elon University, Michigan State, Ohio University, and President Gibralter's prior school, Frostburg State University. Data from our STARS assessment is also used by the *Princeton Review's* Green Survey and *Sierra Cool Schools* for their identification of institutions with very strong commitments to sustainability education and "green" practices.

There are over 200 eligible credits in 65 different STARS categories. Areas in which we scored well: Academic courses (11.99/14); Learning Outcomes (6.79/8.00); Academic Research (10.89/12); Outreach Materials and Publications (2/2); Community Partnerships (3/3); Biodiversity (2/2); Electronics Purchasing (0.94/1); Student Commute Modal Split (1.86/2); Rainwater Management (2/2); Sustainability Planning (4/4); Governance (3/3); Diversity & Equity Coordination (2/2); Support for Underrepresented Groups (2/2); and Wellness Programs (1/1). The STARS system is useful in that it points out where and how we might make additional progress. We are already planning some improvements. Next time: a Gold Star(s)?

Spring 2016 Sustainability Presentations

We organized a diverse series of talks for the *Sustainability Perspectives* series this spring. All talks in this series take place on Mondays starting at 12:20pm in the Hostetter Lecture Room (209) in Stratton Hall.

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February 1 Recycling of Used Agricultural Plastics in New York

Nate Leonard, NYS Field Coordinator, NYRAPP



February 8 Gendered and Racialized Spaces: Understanding the Experiences of Women in the New York City Community Garden Environment

Richaela Primus '12, Masters candidate, SUNY-ESF



February 15 Debrief from the 2015 AASHE Conference

Stephen Armstrong '16 and Holli Erkson '16, Wells College



February 22 What's in Cayuga Lake? A look into the pharmaceutical and consumer products in the Cayuga Lake Watershed

Susan Allen-Gil, professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences, Ithaca College



February 29 Sustainability Ethics

Ron Meyers, principal, Ron Meyers & Associates



March 7 An All-of-the-Above Renewable Energy Future

Art Weaver, co-founder and president, Weaver Wind Energy Inc.



March 28 Local Bugs, Local Jobs

Carol Glenister, founder and president, IPM Laboratories, Inc.



April 4 The Feasibility of Aquaponic Food Production in New York

Paula Turkon, asst professor, Environmental Studies and Sciences, Ithaca College



April 11 Terra Preta de Indo—pre-historic curio or future landuse model?

Johannes Lehmann, associate professor, Crop and Soil Sciences, Cornell University



April 18 Earth Week Celebration

Wells Campus Greens and Wells FORCES



April 25 Breaking Down Compost—the ins and outs of soiling our earth

Kurt Pipa, certified Master Composter, lecturer, Japanese, Wells College



February 8 Sustainable Business: Role of Business in Designing a Sustainable Economy

Laura Ornstein, coordinator, New York State Sustainable Business Council
7:00pm Zabriskie Hall Room 105



A shining example...

Tyler Morris '16 is conducting a Physics research study of the impact of reflecting and concentrating solar rays on renewable energy production. The pair of SolarWorld 255-watt solar panels he set up on the south side of Stratton Hall were lent to him by Revolution Solar, a company for which he interned last summer.

Faculty Achievements

Gehan Dhameeth, assistant professor of Business, published "Producing Ethanol from Switchgrass: A Literature Review on a Business Feasibility", a paper co-authored with Wells Business graduate Dino Constantine, in the *Journal of Basic and Applied Research International*. Gehan was also appointed as an editor/referee for the *International Society for Development* and the *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*.

Professor of Political Science **Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo** edited a new book, *Land Reforms and Natural Resource Conflicts in Africa: New Development Paradigms in the Era of Global Liberalization*, published by Taylor & Francis Ltd, (London, UK, 2015).



Kent Klitgaard, Economics professor, was named to the board of directors of the *International Association of Biophysical Economists* and will serve as vice president. Dr. Klitgaard was also named to the editorial board of the new Springer journal, *Biophysical Economics and Resource Quality*.

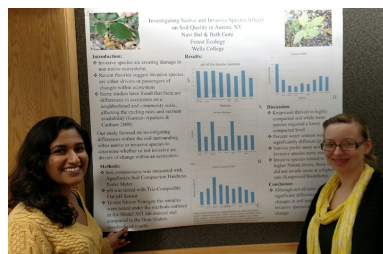
Learning by Doing

Students in Dr. Jackie Schnurr's Fall Advanced Ecology (BIO 363) class conducted independent research projects, getting them out in the field and actually doing science rather than, as Jackie quipped, "listening to me drone on about ecological concepts." The thirty students worked singly or in small groups proposing, conducting, and analyzing primary research on such varied topics as macroinvertebrate community composition of Little Creek and Paines Creek, the effect of light on vine growth (both poison ivy and other species) as well as the growth of mosses, the effects of invasive species on the Wells College ecosystem, the

effect of woodpecker holes on the composition of the microbial community, the distribution of



Antonia Merritt '16 and Amanda Gillette '16

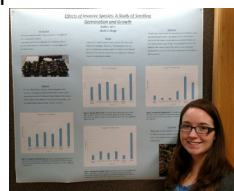


Navi Bal '18 and Beth Gore '17



Chris Castro '16, Emily Guzman '16, and Angela Paul '18

bones in relation to the location of fox dens, the influence of moss on salamander populations, and others. The students presented their work in a special poster session in Stratton 209 in December.



Kaitlyn Jahn '17

Fall semester and January term internships and research projects

At the end-of-term Internship Fairs held in December and February, we noted a number of interesting sustainability-related internship projects.



Business major **Kailin Kuciewicz '16** interned for the

Aurora Farmers Market in the fall, working to promote the market and prepare an updated business plan. Kailin was just the latest intern for the market; we have committed to providing market interns each semester to help further develop the market.

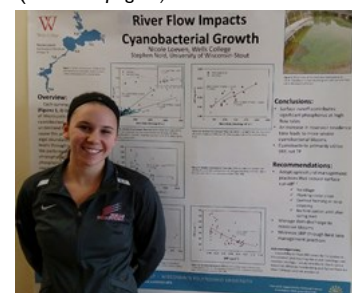


Environmental Science major **Sam Ayers '16** interned with King Ferry Vineyard, learning about proper maintenance and harvesting of vinifera grapes.

Shania Dauphinais '18 did her Fall Environmental Science internship with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, helping promote



that organization at its fall fundraiser and at other watershed events, as well as writing for the winter newsletter (see more page 4).



Nicole Loeven '16 did her fall Biochemistry research project in conjunction with a researcher at University of Wisconsin-Stout, contributing data to a study of the development of blue-green algal blooms in rivers.

At the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Rochester Academy of Science in November, **Ashley Gingeleski '16** presented her Environmental Sci-

ence thesis research done under Dr. Niamh O' Leary's supervision. Ashley's poster was titled "Weed Diversity at King Ferry Vineyard, King Ferry, NY".



Katherine Pryor '19 explained her J-term internship at the City of Oneida Wastewater Treatment Plant.



Nate Pieper '19 discussed his internship project helping a downstate county Cornell Cooperative Extension office promote its watershed educational symposium in January. Nate's outreach efforts netted the organization its largest-ever attendance.





The Circle of Life...

Concerned with the expense to replace annual plants used for landscape plantings around campus trees and buildings, in late Fall, Nancy Baidon (above) from Human Resources, Kelly Brown from Advancement, and other staffers unearthed whole plants and cuttings to overwinter in the Zabriskie greenhouse. Come spring, these recycled beauties will again brighten outdoor areas, at far less cost to Facilities.

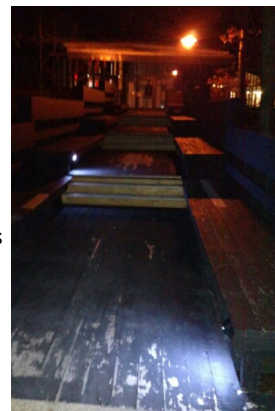
Serving up energy savings

The Center for Sustainability partnered with the office of the Chief Financial Officer to solicit proposals for a new multi-year vending service contract. The new service contractor will not only offer more commission income on vending product sales, they will also offer some healthy food and beverage products. Best of all, the new company will install much more energy-efficient vending equipment that includes lower-wattage LED lighting, timers, and occupancy sensors to turn lights and cooling compressors off when no one is around. This upgrade is important to Wells College because our part of the contract bargain is to provide the electricity to run the vending equipment.



Shed [better] light on the subject

The Center for Sustainability partnered with the Campus Improvement Committee to research better options to light outdoor spaces like the Long Library walking bridge. We found a source for solar-recharged, high-intensity LED units that feature motion sensors, so these lights only come on when needed. These new lights offer much brighter illumination than the older, solar-powered LED units they replaced. *Light on!*



Some RecycleMania changes



Over winter break, each student room received a recycling bin, to help facilitate residents' separation, collection and transfer of recyclables to the trash/recycling room in each residence hall. As part

of *RecycleMania*, we are piloting the placement of recycling bins and instructional signage in residence hall laundry rooms and bathrooms, to try to divert recyclable items generated in those spaces that otherwise get disposed of in landfill trash containers. We are watching that residents don't just put their recyclables in the bathroom bins.

Library looking 'seedy' again...

The Long Library is again hosting the Wells College Seed Exchange, a free community resource for home gardeners. The Center for Sustainability solicited and received donations of 1,500 seed packs from over a dozen companies as well as saved seeds from local gardeners. The Library organized the vegetable, flower and herb seed packets into a repurposed card catalog and maintains the sign-out log. Many members of the campus and local community have already visited the Seed Exchange to get their gardens growing this season.



Gotcha!

We partnered this year with the *Grind Café* to accept these cards enticing folks spotted using their reusable beverage mug with a free coffee or tea refill. In the Fall, 225 *Gotcha* cards were redeemed.



K-Cup Round-Up

During *RecycleMania*, we again partnered with the *Grind* to reward those turning in 15-20 used K-Cups and pledging to "kick the K-Cup habit" with a reusable filter for their K-style single cup brewer along with a package of ground coffee, supplied by the *Grind*.

Idle No More

The Center for Sustainability worked with the leadership of Facilities and Mail Services to draft and adopt an anti-idling policy for their employees. New York State already has in place an idling prohibition for heavy-duty vehicles (large trucks and buses), but there was no campus restriction on leaving other stopped vehicles running. The new anti-idling policy requires that no motor vehicle or piece of equipment is to be idled in a non-emergency situation on campus. There are a few exemptions: the vehicle is responding to an emergency situation; a maximum 5-minute idling time if the temperature is



above freezing; the vehicle engine must stay on to maintain passenger comfort; or the vehicle is powering workplace equipment. Otherwise, turn the key and help clear the air!

Fill 'er up!



The Center for Sustainability, the 2016 Collegiate Cabinet, and the Office of Facilities partnered for a special purchase of four Elkay EZ-H₂O water bottle fill stations to replace existing drinking fountains in Cleveland Hall, Macmillan Hall, and the Sommer Center. These new fill stations provide chilled, filtered water through a sanitary, hands-free dispenser that automatically fills reusable water bottles. The units feature an LED digital counter showing how many fills have been made, or how many disposable water bottles were avoided through use of durable, reusable containers. We hope to install more water bottle fill stations in more locations in the future.

A (time) change for the better

As a result of research by Navi Bal '18 and field testing over break, we asked MacGray, our laundry service contractor, to change the cycle setting on their dryers from 60 minutes to 45 minutes, saving 25% on drying energy. Announcing this change gave us the opportunity to educate our campus community through the February *Installation* about other ways to reduce the environmental impact of laundry and to encourage use of the online *LaundryView* system to check the usage status of machines. *LaundryView* also provides a running tally of how much water our high-efficiency washers have saved: over 393,600 gallons of water since the units were installed.





Center for Sustainability and the Environment

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Wells Center for
Sustainability and
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Midyear Trash2Treasure

In December, we set out collection bins in the residence halls to catch any items that December graduates or spring study-abroad students might want to dispose of. We didn't receive anywhere near what we got during last spring's move-out collection, but a number of still-usable items made their way to the King Ferry Food Pantry (clothing), the Rescue Mission, or right back onto the shelves in the Bargain Basement for other students to use.



Before: sorting collected items



After: reloaded Bargain Basement

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

Some of the many ways we reach out



In January, the Center for Sustainability collaborated with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to host a pair of webinars on "Deer and Deer Management in New York State". Wells College was the designated webinar host site for Cayuga County residents. More than two dozen land-owners and/or hunters attended one or both of the webinars, which introduced NYDEC's Central Finger Lakes Wildlife Management Unit Aggregate pilot project that will update deer management planning efforts for this region. On a related note, Marian Brown, director of the Center, was elected to the board of directors of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County. She has served on CCE-Cayuga's Environment team advisory board since 2014.

Senior **Stephen Armstrong** set up several Shoe-Box Recycling collections around campus, including this one in the Center for Sustainability. Many on campus have seized this opportunity to donate

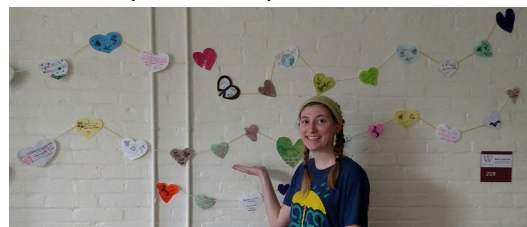


gently used footwear to others less fortunate. When the box is full, Stephen can just seal it up and mail the shoes to the organization. As of today, this is what that Shoe-box container in the Center looks like.

Oh, Stephen, you need to bring your mailing tape...



Wells Campus Greens offered a fun and thoughtful activity for the community. Recycling still-usable paper cadged from various offices and copy rooms, Greens members cut out paper hearts and extended the opportunity to write a "Love Letter to the Earth". The dozens of finished love letters were mounted in the Center for Sustainability where everyone can read them.



Nice that our opinion matters

In December, **Marian Brown**, director of the Center for Sustainability, was an invited presenter for a webinar titled "Residence Hall Recycling: the good, the bad, and the ugly", sponsored by the College Council of the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse & Recycling (NYSAR3).



In a special invitation, Brown represented Wells at a closed roundtable meeting with Lemuel Srolovic, chief of the Environmental Protection Bureau within the Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York. The purpose of the meeting was to identify environmental concerns shared among higher education academic sustainability professionals and government leaders and learn how state Attorney General Schneiderman's office has taken or plans to take action to address some of those issues.

Brown was also interviewed by the organizers of the REV Campus Challenge (REVCC), a program of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), to help identify the next major initiative that NYSERDA will host under REVCC. The organizers wanted to know what would best support the energy reduction goals of institutions like Wells College.



Loving our watershed

Did you know? The Cayuga Lake Watershed Network steward, Hilary Lambert, maintains the organization's office here on campus in Stratton Hall and has worked with several Wells interns.

The Center for Sustainability, Wells Campus Greens, and Wells FORCES (Friends of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship) were all featured in a section titled "Celebrating Cayuga Lake Lovers, Protectors, Scientists & Supporters" in the 2015i4 issue of Network News, CLWN's newsletter. **Shania Dauphinai** '18, CLWN Lake Intern in Fall 2015, was instrumental in producing this newsletter issue. (see more page 2)



In late Fall, **Wells Campus Greens** and the CLWN co-sponsored the Watery Wells Photo Contest. This is the winner by **Hakeem Rihan** '18 in the Water category.

