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Solar Farm at Elon University



Solar Farm construction

This spring a much anticipated project is coming to fruition. A solar farm is being constructed at Elon University that will generate nearly 3 megawatts of electricity. The 15-acre solar farm is located at the Loy Farm area of campus located along South Oak Avenue. It is being developed by Suntuity, a New Jersey-based company, which develops large-scale solar projects around the world, including projects in 10 U.S. states. Loy Farm Solar LLC arranged the project's funding and is leasing the property from the University for 20 years.

The system will consist of 9,900 photovoltaic panels expected to generate about 4,500 megawatt hours of electricity each year, enough to power 415 homes for a year. The electricity will be sold to Duke Energy benefiting the regional power grid. This amount of solar energy is the equivalent of

removing more than 2,100 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere or removing more than 450 cars from the road. In comparison to Elon University's electricity consumption, the generation of the solar farm represents about 12% of the University's annual electric consumption.

The solar farm adds to the rich experiential learning already taking place at Loy Farm in that students will have the opportunity to study the operation and output of the system. The Elon Environmental Center, which is adjacent to the solar farm site, demonstrates the integration of food and natural systems with the built environment. It is utilized for courses and research and includes a greenhouse, agricultural plots and a responsible architecture studio.

Faculty Profile: Robert Charest

Jessica Bilecki



Prof. Robert Charest

There has been noticeable new activity at the Elon Environmental Center at Loy Farm. Before construction on the solar farm began, one of the most eye-catching features of the property was a cluster of four repurposed shipping containers.

The “Container Space” serves as a design studio, prototyping workshop, classroom and experiential learning site for students in Professor Robert Charest’s classes, as well as ENS faculty. Charest is an Associate Professor of architecture and design in the department of Environmental Studies and teaches Green Design & Sustainable Futures; Sustainable Design Studio; Designing Sustainable Buildings and Humans and Nature. Students in these classes contributed to and continue to contribute to the design and construction of the actual space. Beginning in fall 2015, students taking Charest’s classes will focus on design-building sustainable products and affordable micro-housing for Alamance County and beyond.

Charest mentioned that it is common for students without a professional interest in architecture to take all of his courses. Theorizing why, he suggested it may be because they value experiential learning and discovery. One student commented “He is both passionate and inspiring. Taking his Sustainable Design course has

been a hands-on experience that is invaluable and unforgettable.”

When asked about the top outcomes for students in his courses, Charest mentioned the following:

- Awareness of what goes into a building; from budgets, to the politics of permits, to design details like waste streams.
- Ability to discover the challenges and opportunities when you move beyond conceptualization and actually make things.
- A sense of accomplishment and pride from contributing to this effort.

Born and raised in Montreal within a long lineage of builders and craftsmen, Charest relocated to North Carolina, via Austin, Texas ten years ago. Charest commented that growing up, dinner conversations were commonly about how to design buildings that would last and would use less energy. He said there was “never any doubt he would be an architect”. As to when he became interested in the sustainability component of building, that he said, was already integrated into the curriculum in the Canadian schools he attended. It was part of the culture.

Though much of his time is spent teaching and building with students, Charest is involved with projects outside of work. The latest project completed by his studio [Atelier Charest + Associates] is the rehabilitation of a mid-century print shop into the new YWCA headquarters in East Greensboro.

Container Space Features

- North facing curtain wall: allows for constant and regular daylight, keeps building cool in summer
- Well insulated & only a small portion of building is heated when building is not in use
- High Solar Reflectance Index [SRI] roof & exterior coatings
- Solar panels are scheduled for installation to offset electrical requirements of building
- Built with salvaged and repurposed materials
- Very high percentage of recycled materials



Staff Profile: Rike Habel

Marlena Fernandez



Rike Habel
Assistant Director of Residence Life Colonnades

Rike Habel started her role as the Assistant Director (AD) for the Colonnades Neighborhood in Fall 2013. As the AD, she supervises the Resident Assistants (RA) and assists residents with subjects ranging from roommate concerns to making the most of the school year. She feels that her role is to help students reach success in college, which she has consistently worked to fulfill with an aura of positivity. She sees how students grow throughout each year, which is one of her favorite aspects of the job.

Rike is from Germany, but has lived in America for several years. She grew up sorting waste into distinct categories based on material. She did not just sort paper from plastic; she sorted plastic from glass from paper and so on. Though this was a chore growing up, it was a normal part of her daily life. When she came to America, she was surprised by the lack of sorting. Though sustainability is not one of her paramount passions, through her childhood in Germany, she picked up some sustainable habits that remain today.

As part of the Residential Campus Initiative, each neighborhood established a theme in Fall 2013. Sustainability was chosen for Colonnades because of its

LEED certified buildings, geothermal system, and the Sustainable Living Learning Community. Rike says, “I’ve enjoyed learning about the ways that Colonnades is sustainable.” She has embraced the theme and has worked to be a role model to her staff and her residents.

The neighborhood promotes its theme by partnering with the Office of Sustainability to publicize events and hold post-discussions. Participation in Office of Sustainability events, such as Phoenix Cup, is highly encouraged; Rike made a faculty-staff team with her colleagues. Rike is also interested in working with more community partners in the future to expand on activities. Rike hopes to focus on different aspects of the theme each year to enthrall current residents and to draw in new students.

The Colonnades Neighborhood Association (CNA) plans events for the neighborhood and works to incorporate the theme of sustainability. CNA is a team of faculty, staff and students who collaborate throughout the year to serve the Colonnades community. CNA “finds the experts on campus” and uses their knowledge to promote and plan events and to engage residents. From bringing sustainability themed events to the neighborhood to providing students special opportunities, the CNA works to create unique experiences for Colonnades residents to enjoy.

Rike, her staff, and the CNA have all been working to embrace the theme of sustainability and create amazing experiences for the residents of Colonnades. Some of the RAs and residents are very invested in the theme, which Rike notes is usually due to personal interest. Rike feels that sustainability is a “lifestyle theme” making it more difficult for some students to embrace. Though not all of the residents are devoted to the theme, Rike hopes that more people will find aspects of sustainability that they connect with in the future as she expands the opportunities available to Colonnades residents. Combining the interests of the residents with sustainability will be key to involve all of the residents.

Student Profile: Alex Goeldner

Shannon TEMPLAK



Alex Goeldner

During his lecture on February 24th, Dr. Julian Agyeman encouraged students, faculty, and staff to broaden their perception of sustainability by considering the relationship between environmental responsibility and social justice. Senior Alex Goeldner demonstrates her commitment to both environmental responsibility and social justice as a co-founder and co-president of Helping Other People Eat (H.O.P.E.). H.O.P.E. is a non-profit organization that raises money for food pantries in Alamance County.

Goeldner is passionate about social entrepreneurship and working with non-profits. She enjoys working with small organizations and helping them to get off the ground. As a full-time intern for a small start-up company in Germany, Goeldner appreciated the company's versatility and the fact that every day was different.

Goeldner's passion for social entrepreneurship, start-ups, and nonprofits led her to become one of the six co-founders of H.O.P.E. Goeldner heard about H.O.P.E. from her friends who pitched the idea for this non-profit as part of the Triple Impact Challenge.

She knew after attending one meeting that she wanted to be involved with H.O.P.E. because she recognized that H.O.P.E. is in line with her interest in working

with small organizations and social entrepreneurship. Goeldner currently commits 10 to 25 hours a week to working on H.O.P.E. related projects.

"Our goal is to help fight hunger by providing sustainable financial support to local food pantries", explains Goeldner. "It is important to us that it is really sustainable. We rely on community as a whole to give smaller donations, so that if people who give long-term donations don't give it one year it is not catastrophe for the food pantry."

H.O.P.E.'s primary way of collecting donations is through their H.O.P.E. certified restaurants. To become "H.O.P.E. certified," restaurants need to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU). This MOU explains what H.O.P.E. is, what H.O.P.E. expects from them, and when H.O.P.E. will come to pick up the donations.

Eight restaurants in Alamance County are currently H.O.P.E. certified. These restaurants are Pandoras Pies, Mel's Good Times Café, Oak House, Stokely's Barbeque, Fat Frogg, Hursey's Barbeque and Mosca's. These restaurants give every patron in the restaurant an opportunity to give a dollar or more to H.O.P.E, usually with a H.O.P.E. donation slip. In return, H.O.P.E. promises to advertise the restaurant through social media and their website, as well as to plan events.

"I think sustainability really means to make sure that we don't run out of the resources that we have here on earth, that we make sure that we handle them with care and don't waste them, and that we ensure future generations also have resources available," says Goeldner.

The largest H.O.P.E. event of the semester was the fundraiser held on March 4th at the Alamance Country Club. About eighty people were in attendance, including students, faculty, staff, and members of the Elon community.

The long-term goals Goeldner has for H.O.P.E. include paying someone to work for H.O.P.E. full-time as well as making a smart phone app available that restaurant patrons can use to make donations to H.O.P.E. rather than having to rely on filling out donation slips. Goeldner also wants to ensure the longevity of H.O.P.E.; there is a lot of turnover in the organization due to students graduation.

Goeldner encourages students, faculty, and staff to join H.O.P.E.

“No matter if you are excited about H.O.P.E., working at a startup, helping your local community, or fighting hunger, H.O.P.E. is a good way to get involved with that and help your local community look beyond the typical Elon bubble,” says Goeldner.

Students are always invited to join the H.O.P.E. Team and/or serve on a student committee. Being on the H.O.P.E. Team is similar to holding a volunteer position and it requires a certain number of hours each week. Being on a committee resembles being a part of a study organization; this entails meeting weekly or bi-weekly to plan a specific event or work on a particular project.

H.O.P.E. seeks Elon faculty and staff to serve as mentors and advisers. Goeldner explains that the H.O.P.E. co-founders are thankful for the help they have received thus far and always appreciate more advice as well as assistance in spreading the word about H.O.P.E. beyond the university community.



Students, staff, or faculty who are interested in joining H.O.P.E. can email Goeldner (agoeldner@elon.edu).

Goeldner is graduating from Elon this May with an International Business dual degree with a marketing focus. She is from Southeastern Germany and studied at the ESB Business School at Reutlingen University before attending Elon University. In addition to her involvement with H.O.P.E., Goeldner is in Intervarsity and teaches German to a 10-year old girl in the community. Her interests include learning other foreign languages and learning about other cultures.

Sustainability Database goes LIVE April 20th!



What is it? The Sustainability Project Database is a resource for students, staff and faculty to view past and ongoing projects related to sustainability. Featured projects can address environmental, social and/or economic sustainability!

Submit your sustainability projects!

Contributing to the Database will showcase your work and facilitate completion of and improvement on projects from year to year!

Click “Academics: Class Projects” @ www.elon.edu/sustainability

What's Coming Up

April 21 & 22



Danielle Nierenberg

President of Food Tank and expert on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Issues

Cultivating a Better Food System

Tuesday, April 21

7:30 pm

Moseley Center, McKinnon Hall

Q&A Sessions

Tuesday, April 21: 8:00 am, 2:20 pm

Wednesday, April 22: 9:25 am, 12:15 pm

Koury Business Center, LaRose Digital Theater (KOBK 101)



EVENT CALENDAR

April 19 - April 25

Take a picture at 5 events for the chance to win a 25 dollar gift card!

Use #ElonEarthWeek on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram or email to sustainability@elon.edu!

SUNDAY April 19	MONDAY April 20	TUESDAY April 21	WEDNESDAY April 22	THURSDAY April 23	FRIDAY April 24
<p>Haw River Canoe and Clean-up 9:00 - 3:00 with Campus Rec Register by April 14th</p>	<p>Earth Week Kick-off! 2:30 - 5:00 Moseley Student Center Kitchen make your own "dirt" cake</p>	<p>Sustainable College Coffee 9:40 - 10:20</p> <p>Danielle Nierenberg <i>Cultivating a Better Food System</i> 7:30 McKinnon Hall</p>	<p>Party for the Planet*** 11:00 - 2:00 Iconic (Lakeside) Plaza</p> <p>Local Meal 11:00 - 2:00 Colonnades</p> <p>Sustainable S'mores with Outdoors 10:00 - 11:00 Beck Pool Patio</p>	<p>Sustainability Master Plan Input 12:00 - 2:00 Moseley 120</p> <p>Farmer's Market 3:00 - 6:30 Elon Community Church lawn</p>	<p>Garden Work Day 2:00 - 4:00 Community Garden</p>
					<p>SATURDAY April 25</p> <p>SUB Cinema & Sustainability at Elon Video Debut 8:00 Young Commons</p>

***Swap Shop will be at Party for the Planet. Bring an item, take an item.

May 13 - 27



DON'T TRASH IT!

Packing up for the end of the year?

Donate unwanted and gently used clothing, electronics, furniture, and sheets. Non-perishable food items are also welcome!

Drop-off locations and details available at www.elon.edu/sustainability in May.

Sustainability Abroad

Comprehensive Rural Health Project

Chloe Donohoe

As a participant in the Public Health Practicum in India over winter term, a main focus throughout the trip was

learning about aspects of the sustainable public health systems established in rural Indian villages by our community partner, the Comprehensive Rural Health Project (CRHP). A particular project that we learned about was the Rajanikant Arole Demonstration Farm, founded in 1980. Managers of the Farm have created a space that addresses multiple social and economic issues with its use as a demonstration/training farm, rehabilitation center, and an innovation platform for sustainable agricultural techniques. Its 100 acres are brimming with areas to teach local farmers about appropriate farming techniques for subsistence and cash crops. Some of the project demonstration sites we visited focused on rain fed grains, goat breeding and vermiculture, all of which aim to provide local farmers with the skills to develop their agricultural enterprises in sustainable, progressive ways.

The farm's rehabilitation component was introduced to us by Ratna. Ratna is the farm's manager who found refuge in the farm and utilizes her experiences with HIV, poverty and isolation to empower women in similar situations. Women facing isolation from their families as well as those living with highly stigmatized HIV/AIDS are welcome to stay on the farm to recover and heal while collectively contributing to the operations of the farm. CRHP has set up this empowering environment in a way that all food produced feeds the workers, as well as CRHP's campus, which includes its training center, preschool and staff living quarters.

Any excess agricultural items, such as compost, are sold on the market for income generation to fund CRHP's endeavors. The farm is also experimenting with innovative ways to grow plants in the drought-ridden Indian climate. Their most recent project is



growing drought-resistant plants and testing their resilience to different irrigation techniques. Ultimately, CRHP is an organization working to provide sustainable health interventions to circumvent social, political, and economic disparities in rural Indian society, and I was lucky to be able to observe and learn from their framework.

FIE: London

Shannon Tmlak

Prior to arriving in London for my Spring 2014 semester abroad with the Foundation for International Education (FIE), I did not fully understand just how committed FIE is to promoting sustainability issues and raising awareness throughout the entire FIE community.

Receiving an FIE merit scholarship gave me the opportunity to serve as an Environmental Responsibility Leader over the course of my time in London. As an Environmental Responsibility Leader, I assisted FIE's Sustainability Action Group (StAG) - a standing committee made-up of FIE staff and faculty - in running a student energy-saving residential program for 300 residents in four buildings. Spring 2014 was the first semester FIE took part in the National Union of Students (NUS) Student Switch-Off campaign, a 10-week energy competition during which university students in the United Kingdom reduce their energy usage. I enjoyed promoting the NUS Student Switch-Off because it resembles Elon's residential competition, Phoenix Cup (formerly known as POWERless). In Spring 2014, FIE London reduced carbon emissions by six tons, the equivalent to making over 377,000 cups of tea or taking 65 round-trip flights from London to Manchester!



The Environmental and Sustainable Development

Lecture Series is another sustainability feature of the FIE program. Each semester, FIE hosts a guest speaker who lectures about a sustainability-related topic. Students are then instructed to take part in class discussions about the lecture and to write a guided response paper for their class. The Spring 2014 guest lecture was presented by Futerra, a communications agency that works exclusively on promoting responsibility and sustainability. FIE's strong commitment to sustainability is why FIE won the 2014 GoAbroad Award for "Innovation In Sustainability." If you are a student interested in studying abroad and learning to live sustainably, then I strongly encourage you to apply to the FIE London program! For more information about FIE's sustainable initiatives please visit the ["Sustainable Development" page](#) on FIE's website.

Danish Green Living LLC

Sarah Wasko

When applying to study with the Danish Institute of Study Abroad in Copenhagen, an increasingly popular program among Elon students, I elected to live in the Green Living and Learning Community. The "Green House," as we affectionately called it, provided an outlet for environmentally centered discussion and service. Denmark is no stranger to sustainability. Living in the Green House allowed us to better adapt to the Danish lifestyle and think critically about environmentalism in a Danish context and how these initiatives could be



implemented at home in the U.S. Every Wednesday, we would travel to a farm that operated under a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model where we would pick up our designated bags of veggies and fruits that had been paid for at the beginning of the growing season. A group of us would prepare dinner for the whole house of around 25 people. Each week, the groups would figure out ways to use local, seasonal foods to prepare a unique meal. At each dinner, we had a guest speaker; our own living room Ted Talk. We were encouraged to discuss a particular topic over dinner and would convene afterwards in the living room to have a group discussion. Each week was a new experience. We had a variety of guests ranging from dumpster diving experts to local farmers market employees to university professors.

We went on several trips as a house. We were able to experience Svanholm, an intentional self-governing community outside of Copenhagen. With nearly 1000 acres of land devoted to organic food production, they have played a pivotal role in organic farming in Denmark. Other excursions included environmental events during Copenhagen's public Culture Night, attending the international documentary film festival, and touring Christiania, the free city within Copenhagen that has served as a vanguard of Denmark's environmental movement. Additionally, we volunteered at the CSA, advocated for honeybees at a honey booth during Copenhagen's renowned Christmas markets, and participated in some "sticker bomb" activism. This housing option has the potential to deepen the abroad experience by allowing students to engage in meaningful discussion and get involved in the community. And if that's not convincing enough, it is located in the center of the city in a beautiful three story, 18th century house... equipped, of course, with the latest in water and energy saving technology.

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