

# Environmental Studies

SPRING 2015

## Spring Break Research Trip to Africatown

BY GABRIELA GOLDSMITH '16

I traveled with five other students to Africatown, Alabama, this past spring break with Associate Professor Janet Fiskio and Professor Ted Toadvine, a faculty member at the University of Oregon. Located a few miles north of downtown Mobile, Africatown is registered as a historical district. Its history dates back to 1860, when William Foster illegally imported West Africans as his slaves—that is, until the government found out. The West Africans were ultimately left where Africatown is now, and on their own built the town with local resources provided by the landscape.

Africatown's population is primarily made up of low-income people of color. More than 20 industries are situated in town, including a paper mill and a natural gas company. Mobile Environmental Justice Action Coalition (MEJAC), an organization that includes local residents, is fighting the installation of a Canadian tar-sands storage facility and pipeline in Africatown. The tanks store diluted bitumen, the fossil fuel used to make liquid fuel and other products from Alberta. MEJAC invited Oberlin students and faculty to participate in a community-based learning

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## Chair's Report: Growth, Development and New Leadership for Environmental Studies

BY JOHN PETERSEN '88, CHAIR, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM

I have now spent the majority of my adult life in Oberlin—first as a student in the 1980s and then, after a decade away, as a faculty member starting in 2000. Yet I still get the jitters each fall as I prepare for a new academic year. I still feel a strong sense of empathy with my first year advisees as we meet to begin the exciting process of planning their Oberlin education. As each fall semester starts, the one thing I know for sure is that by the end of the year these students and I will be changed by our experiences in this intense place. Of course, the ways we experience change is different in important ways. Students, among other things, will enjoy watching the trees in the landscape of our Environmental Studies Center leaf out, blossom, and bear fruit during each of their four years at Oberlin. I will enjoy this as well, but from my office window, where I can watch these trees take shape and grow as the years pass by.

The orchard that is environmental studies changed in a number of important ways this last year and will continue to shape the program well into the future. At the start of the 2014-15 year, our big agenda items were promotion and hiring. With regards to promotion, it has been enormously gratifying to see my colleague Janet Fiskio recommended for promotion to the level of associate professor. For our non-professorial



ENVS faculty, staff, and friends at '14 picnic.

readers, this essentially means that Janet has job security at Oberlin. I know I speak for faculty, staff and several generations of Oberlin students in heartily congratulating Janet on this significant milestone!

A few other changes among our current faculty are noteworthy. Roger Laushman was appointed to the newly created position of David Orr Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology. I was appointed to the position of Paul Sears Professor of Environmental Studies, a position formerly occupied by David Orr. While David is now officially Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies, he continues to serve as the special assistant to President Marvin Krislov on sustainability and the environment and maintains a home office in the Lewis Center.

This has also been a busy year for hiring. In the late summer of 2014 we hired Samuel Hartman as the sustainable energy technology

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# Africatown Research CONTINUED

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experience to collect and analyze soil samples for toxins and conduct a community health survey drafted by MEJAC. The purpose of the survey was to document the declining health of the community and land.

The day after our 14-hour van ride to Africatown, the Oberlin team met activists involved with MEJAC. We divided into groups to participate in Sunday mass at three churches and were welcomed with southern hospitality.

Afterward, residents met with our team, shared the history of their town, and took us on a tour of the local industries. The most disturbing of these was a natural gas plant located behind a middle school; natural gas pipes run just next to a field where children play. Over the next few days, led by an Oberlin geology student, we gathered soil samples from various spots around town, including an urban garden and the yards of residents' homes. Our team also conducted community health surveys that sought the community's knowledge of the connection between pollution from

the nearby industries and the health of residents. All who took the survey indicated having one or more health problems, including cancer.

Our team also met with David Nelson, professor emeritus of biology at the University of Alabama, at a nature reserve. He showed us a red-bellied turtle, an endangered species native to Alabama, and described its life cycle and habitat. Because of

its status, the turtle could prevent a tar sands pipe from being installed in Africatown. This will not be Oberlin's last time visiting Africatown. Members of the Oberlin team hope to return during the summer or fall of 2015 to continue to work together.

*For more information about the trip, please visit <http://news.oberlin.edu/articles/seeking-environmental-justice-tar-sands-battleground/>.*



Top: One of the many industrial complexes located in the nature preserve of Hog Bayou that affects Africatown. Above and left: Oberlin students work with community members to take soil samples to be analyzed for toxins.

# Living Machine

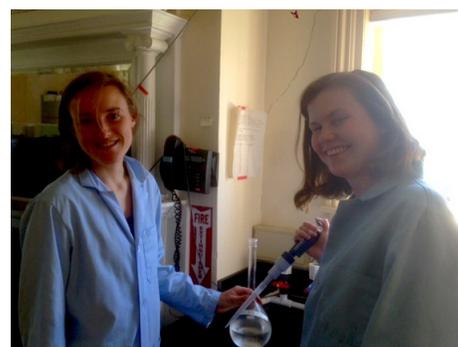
BY LAURA MESSMAN '15

A lot of work goes into keeping the Lewis Center running. As they say, it takes a village to raise a child. It also takes a village to run a Living Machine. Each week a team of 12 student workers, myself included, maintains and monitors the Living Machine to keep it functioning properly and to ensure that the water coming out is safe for use in the center's toilets. We monitor the water quality daily for nutrient levels and pathogens. Since the plants in our tanks continuously grow, we cut them back each week to keep our greenhouse from turning into a jungle. Each spring during Oberlin's annual Ecolympics, we run our Poop Campaign to raise awareness on campus about the Living Machine and to bring in more "donations" to the system. Last year, we had our most successful poop campaign to date with a record number of participants.

Despite being online for 12 years, the Living Machine still generates

surprises. Unpredictable events such as broken pipes, continuously flushing toilets, or plant pest infestation interrupt the ecological rhythms of water treatment. These events force us to work together as a team to bring the Living Machine back into balance. These challenges allow us to learn more about how this complex, ecologically engineered system works and to expand our understanding of wastewater treatment.

As operators, we also collect data that is used to observe long-term trends in the Living Machine. Students study how it could be more effective in nutrient removal and how the plant life changes over time. Overall, our knowledge of alternative wastewater treatment continues to grow just like the plants in our living machine. In the next year we look forward to organizing and formally sharing our experiences and findings from the Living Machine to help other groups interested in alternative wastewater treatment.



Top: Team of Operators gathered outside the Living Machine. Above: Caroline Summa '16 and Dana Colihan '17 working in the laboratory, where Living Machine samples are processed.

## Oberlin Team Leads Expansion of Environmental Dashboard to Four Other Campuses and Communities

BY MD RUMI SHAMMIN

Oberlin College, in partnership with Albion College, Antioch College, DePauw University, and Hope College, has been awarded a grant from the Great Lakes College Association (GLCA) as part of its Expanding Collaboration Initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project's purpose is to use the Environmental Dashboard technology and approach developed at Oberlin to foster programs of teaching, research, and community outreach across college campuses and within college towns. The goal is to heighten awareness of how human behaviors affect the well-being of the natural environment, as well as the sustained vitality of human society in local settings and the broader global context.

The project, called Environmental Dashboard

Implementation in Multiple GLCA Colleges to Foster Collaboration across Campuses, includes collaborative initiatives that seek to educate populations on college campuses, in public school systems, and in local communities about how changing practices can result in a more vibrant and sustained future for humanity. I am leading the project in collaboration with 16 faculty and staff members from the five campuses as part of the core team. Oberlin's participants include professors Cindy Frantz from psychology, John Petersen from environmental studies, and Deborah Roose of the Oberlin College Educational Alliance Network. Staff members at Oberlin include Dashboard Project Manager Danny Rosenberg and Sustainable Technology Coordinator Samuel Hartman.

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## Chair's Report CONTINUED

research fellow. His position is split between environmental studies and Oberlin's Office of Environmental Sustainability—funded by research grants associated with the Environmental Dashboard project and by the college. As is abundantly clear from Sam's comments in the faculty and staff notes section of this newsletter, he brings enormous talent and energy to his work in managing and further developing technology that is designed to positively transform both thought and behavior at the college and in the larger community.

In fall of 2014 we hired Catherine

Hoyle as the Lewis Center's new facilities manager and community outreach coordinator, replacing Sean Hayes, who moved to the position of executive director of the Oberlin Project. Congratulations to both! Catherine, husband Robert Hoyle, and daughter Maia have settled into our Oberlin family well. Robert will join Oberlin's computer science department in the fall of 2015 as a visiting faculty member.

In the fall of 2014 we also conducted a national search to hire a cultural geographer to replace Camille Washington

Ottobre. Changes occurring in demography and human culture are simultaneously driving and responding to the large scale changes underway in the earth's biophysical systems. We therefore sought a new faculty member capable of bridging relationships between ecological, cultural, and social systems during this era of change. The response to this search was phenomenal—our dedicated ES hiring committee reviewed 169 applications (yes, we carefully reviewed every single file)! And we were fortunate to hire not one but **two** faculty to fill this position; we are very pleased to welcome Chie Sakakibara and Karl Offen, who will join us in the fall of 2015. Chie researches human-animal-environment interactions and indigenous peoples' adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change. She will join us as a full-time faculty member. Karl (who happens to be married to Chie) has had a distinguished career on the faculty of University of Oklahoma since 2000. His research and teaching focus on resource conservation, environmental history, political ecology, and cultural rights of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in Central America and Colombia. Karl will be teaching half time in environmental studies. We are very excited about the new opportunities for focus and collaboration that our newest faculty members afford the program. In combination, this addition to the ES faculty will allow the program to cover courses when members of our core faculty go on leave. We very much look forward to the additional stability in teaching this provides to our students.

In the spring of 2015 we made our last critical hire of the academic year. Working with Oberlin's economics department, we hired Ben Fitch-Fleishmann as assistant



Eastern side of the Lewis Center, with a stormwater retention pond.

professor of economics and environmental studies. Ben's recent research has focused on estimating the effects of extreme climate conditions on health outcomes and economic activity in developing countries. In addition to teaching environmental economics, Ben will teach a new course in behavioral economics and the environment.

Outside of what we call "core" faculty in the program, we were very pleased to welcome several other faculty with strong interests in the environment. For example, Christie Parris in sociology, Cheryl Cottine in religion, and Evangeline Heiliger in LGBT / queer studies and comparative American studies are all teaching new courses that contribute to the environmental studies major. We are excited by the expanding collaborative opportunities that these hires represent for both our students and our faculty.

I want to offer special thanks to both Sarah Knuth and Darrick Evensen who served as visiting faculty during the 2014-15 academic year. It is challenging for a scholar to transition from the unique pressures of researching and defending a dissertation to full-time teaching. Both Sarah and Darrick accomplished this with remarkable poise—teaching both our introductory course and existing and new upper level classes that they designed. Both have been wonderful additions to the program, earning reputations as fine young teachers and wonderfully collaborative and congenial colleagues. We wish them luck as they further develop their careers and trust that they will look back fondly on their time at Oberlin!

Danny Rosenberg, who has done extraordinary work as the project manager for Environmental Dashboard, will also be moving on from Oberlin in the late summer

of 2015. His unique community organizing skills, excellent research and writing skills, and contagious enthusiasm will be sorely missed by all who have worked with him during a year-long position that extended into a year and a half.

In addition to welcoming new faculty and bidding fond farewell to our visitors, it is my pleasure to also recognize an important change in leadership within the Environmental Studies Program. David Orr served for over a decade as chair. Together with an extraordinarily committed group of faculty from across the college, he helped to build one of the most respected ES programs in the country. He also managed to raise funds for and build a landmark facility to house our program; the Lewis Center continues to serve as an icon for the green building movement. While David's shoes would be impossible for anyone to fill, in 2006 I assumed the role of program chair. Roger Laushman has graciously spelled me for several semesters, but I have been on duty six-and-a-half of the last eight years.

I take pride (though not necessarily credit!) in the growth and development of the ES program during my tenure as chair. Taking full advantage of David Orr's legacy and continued support, the very able members of the Environmental Studies Program Committee were able to add new positions and hire new faculty in the important areas of environmental humanities and cultural geography. During my time as chair, we also substantially revised the ES major, introducing "curricular pathways" to enhance intentionality and focus for ES majors. I am particularly pleased at the ways in which the ES program has forged deeper collaborative ties with the larger Oberlin community and within the larger region. As is clearly



Gavin Platt '06, John Petersen '88, and Michael Murray '03—in a womb chair with Lucid staff behind them—in the Oakland, Calif., office of Lucid. John is holding a newly designed environmental orb based on Oberlin's prototype.

evident from the stories within this newsletter, community-based learning and the co-production of knowledge with students, faculty and community members is central to what we do in environmental studies at Oberlin.

In the summer of 2015, the distinction of chairing Oberlin's Environmental Studies Program will turn over to Rumi Shammin, who will be returning from a year on sabbatical. Rumi's highly collaborative style of leadership is evident in both his teaching and research. I am confident and excited about the opportunities for further growth and development that the program will realize under his very able leadership. I very much look forward to supporting Rumi in his new role.

# Graduating Seniors

## PETER SAUDEK



As an environmental studies major, I've learned about the need to understand and revere processes, namely, *how* everything that appears in front of us on any given day got to where it is. During my junior year I took a course called Street Law & Community Development, a program

that combines Oberlin high school and college students in one classroom to discuss issues of legal, social, and environmental justice in our community. Our class chose to focus on food justice for youth in Oberlin, specifically issues of accessibility to different food sources in town, where food in Oberlin comes from, and what our dining halls serve. Some students took on individual projects, turning the topic of food justice into spoken word poetry or a series of sketches, while others examined the nutrition and content of the food in the school cafeteria.

The program culminated in a celebratory feast in which students, teachers, and community members worked together to gather produce and meat from farms in Oberlin. We spent a day prepping, chopping, and cooking at the high school and ate together outside the following day. Seeing the entire process through—getting the food from the soil and animals to our plates—was a new and unifying experience for many of us. Once we saw where our food had come from and the hands it passed through, we appreciated in a new light the rigorous labor that takes place behind the scenes and all that goes into nourishing us. These processes can't be fully taught or felt in the classroom; it was from the wider Oberlin community that I learned how issues of environmental justice are at the roots of the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the materials and objects we come into contact with. I'm grateful to the ES program for encouraging this type of learning.

## SOPHIA "ZO" PAUL

I came to Oberlin not having a particular major. Throughout my first year, I enjoyed many classes but didn't connect with any one department. I did, however, connect with OSCA (Oberlin Student Cooperative Association) and quickly became passionate about cooperative living and taking on leadership roles within the organization.

One thing that drew me to OSCA was how it challenges the ways society taught me to interact with resources and people. I found this challenge to dominant narratives and emphasis on relationships echoed in environmental studies classes, and I declared it my major midway through my

second year. I also started an internship with Oberlin Community Services. By working with the OCS food pantry and partnering with community gardens, I was able to explore food justice issues in a very practical way.

I've enjoyed the chance to engage with people and to do meaningful work with OSCA and OCS. My environmental studies coursework often supported my work with communities through projects or simply as frameworks in thinking about cooperatives, alternative economies, and food justice. Through the new President's Public Service Fellowship, I spent a very fruitful summer working at OCS, coordinating a gardening internship for local high school students. I had the chance to share what I have been learning with younger students and to build relationships with them. My extracurricular experiences have been some of the most meaningful and memorable parts of my time at Oberlin. I have been very lucky to be part of a major in which I can connect these experiences with what I am learning.

## JACKSON KUSIAK



If there's anything I've learned at Oberlin, it's that organizing needs to be rooted locally. Here in Lorain County, northeastern Ohio, we're nested at the intersection of the Rust Belt and the agricultural Midwest. When we look at global environmental issues, we need to remain grounded in our

unique socio-bioregional location.

I grew up in the Northeast and came to Oberlin with a particular interest in energy, extraction, and climate change. Though fracking was not an issue I was familiar with, I quickly began learning about the unfolding disasters associated with the fracking boom in Ohio. I met community members affected by well water contamination, man-made toxic earthquakes, and the erosion of a sense of safety or peace in their homes. Through the Environmental Studies Program, I learned environmental justice frameworks and system thinking, which helped me see that fighting fracking was an important part of working toward systemic change.

Many mainstream environmentalists incorrectly assess "the problem" as people not being aware of environmental issues. I would posit that people are painfully aware of the conditions of their own oppression. When we listen to lived experience, we find that people care deeply about issues affecting their health, safety, land, air, and water. "The problem," therefore, is that most environmentalists have their own frameworks and agendas, ones not tailored to their

specific place nor relevant to community members. If we listen carefully, convene intentional dialogues, and educate and train ourselves, then we can act alongside community members who are struggling for survival and empowerment. During my time at Oberlin, I've come to love rural Ohio and the Rust Belt. I've made connections that will sustain me into the future, and I no doubt will continue to build community and grow roots in this beautiful place.

## RACHEL BERKROT



I arrived at Oberlin wanting to engage both in social and environmental activism. By taking part in environmental justice organizing throughout Ohio, I quickly learned how the two were interconnected—and often were one and the same. I spent my time learning how environmental injustice interacts

with racism, classism, sexism, capitalism, and other forms of systemic oppression. Majoring in Africana studies as well, I have focused specifically on race and the environment. I've participated in and supported struggles for energy justice, specifically within the anti-fracking movement. I feel lucky that I have been able to concretely connect what I learned in

the classroom with work I participated in outside of school.

The focus of my academics and activism most clearly came together while working with the organization Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice. There I helped produce research, literature, and training materials about fracking in Kettleman City, California—a small, almost entirely Latino town where this dangerous form of natural gas extraction had recently begun. The town was already feeling the cumulative health impacts of toxic dumping, proximity to highways, and incinerators. While working with Greenaction, people from Kettleman city taught me how they had successfully engaged in previous environmental justice struggles, which I later shared with my friends at Oberlin engaged in anti-fracking work. This single experience represents the incredible exchange of information, strategy, and ideas about resisting environmental oppression that I have witnessed across the country—in Appalachia, the Rust Belt, and on the East and West Coasts. While the interconnectedness of systemic oppression and environmental injustice often feels overwhelming, I have seen communities form, work together, and learn from each other to resist.

I will be leaving Oberlin, perhaps more cynical and certainly more critical, but still incredibly inspired by all those working toward social and environmental justice that have surrounded me for the last four years.

## Grant Connects Study of Asia and Environment

**OBERLIN IS STRENGTHENING** its approach to teaching Asian studies through the lens of environmental studies and sustainability with a yearlong exploratory grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.

With the Luce Initiative on Asian Studies and the Environment grant, Oberlin is expanding its study of Asia and the environment through classes, research, public presentations, and faculty seminars. The grant directly funds seminars for faculty from a variety of disciplines to explore sustainability and resilience; curriculum development grants for faculty; and intensive study trips to China and Japan for students. The trips are designed to introduce them to issues of sustainability and resilience, to experience Asian culture firsthand, and to meet colleagues and students in China and Japan.

Through the study of sustainability and resilience, Oberlin faculty, staff, and students will be better prepared to understand the “interdependencies between human societies and the natural world,” says Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Rumi Shammin. Grant activities

will allow the college as a whole to address problems that harm ecosystems and human communities when confronted with slow environmental changes such as water and air pollution. The project also lays the groundwork for revised curricula that build bridges among the natural sciences, the humanities, social sciences, and the Conservatory of Music.



An Oberlin team visits the operations of a strawberry grower during a study trip to China in January.

# Faculty and Staff News and Notes

## ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM COMMITTEE (ESPC)

In this section of the newsletter we focus on biographical updates from faculty and staff who have principal appointments in environmental studies. However, environmental studies is a *program*, not a department, which means that a larger group of faculty with strong teaching, research, and/or personal interests in the environment serve on our governing body—the ESPC. ESPC members serve as advisors for students majoring in environmental studies and share equal responsibility for all hiring, faculty evaluation, and curricular decisions in the program. Members of the larger committee (outside of the “core”) who served this year include Ben Schiff (politics), Dennis Hubbard (geology), Matthew Elrod (chemistry), Roger Laushman (biology), T.S. McMillin (English), Thomas Newlin (Russian), and Tom Lopez (TIMARA/conservatory). Student representatives include Darrell Davis ’16, Lila Bhide ’16, and Peter Saudek ’15. In recognition of his long service to the ESPC (since 1993) and dedication to the program and environmental concerns, Roger Laushman was appointed to the new David Orr Professorship of Environmental Studies this year. He continues his appointment in biology.

We are very pleased to welcome several new and returning ESPC members next year, including Cheryl Cottine (religion), Ann Sherif (East Asian studies), Christie Parris (sociology), and Cindy Frantz (psychology). The priority that Oberlin’s ES program places on cultivating the development of deeply interdisciplinary and collaborative perspectives on defining problems and developing solutions is well-reflected in the diversity of our ESPC faculty. We are honored and privileged by the creativity and dedication of this team!



### BEV BURGESS

As I write these words, it’s spring again at the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies. Birds are singing, apple and pear trees are covered with

a blanket of beautiful white blossoms, and student gardeners are busy planting the kitchen garden. It’s wonderful to enjoy the sunshine and warmer temperatures after the long, cold, snowy winter of 2015!

Spring semester is especially busy in ES with a flurry of activities: honors and research presentations, guest speaker visits, and Ecolympics events. I wish especially to extend congratulations to Janet Fiskio on her promotion! We look forward to Commencement/Alumni Weekend—the highlight of the year, as we celebrate with our graduates

and their families their accomplishments. It’s a delight to welcome back alumni at the ES open house and learn about their adventures and accomplishments after their time at Oberlin.

As the administrative assistant for the ES program, I have enjoyed working with the students and faculty. Many changes have been made over the years, but the students’ enthusiasm for all things environmental is always energizing! I enjoy learning about the research and travels that take them all over the world.

I looking forward to my summer break, when I’ll be gardening, traveling, and playing with our grandsons! *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens...a time to plant...a time to laugh...He has made everything beautiful in its time. Ecclesiastes 3*



### DARRICK EVENSEN

What an experience! As I write this, it has been one year to the day since I interviewed at Oberlin for a one-year visiting assistant professor position in environmental studies. I started this academic year by teaching ENV5 101 and a special topics seminar

on Fracking and the Policy Process. As a new professor, teaching the introductory course is a fantastic way to gain a feel for the department and meet a large number of students. Teaching the fracking course was singularly the most positive academic experience I have had to date. My students were alive for the material and engaged in our class activities from day one. In the midst of the fun, excitement, and humor experienced in this course, my students helped me learn a great deal.

This spring semester, I’ve been teaching two new courses: one focused on promoting environmentally oriented behavior on campus through a strategic communication campaign designed by my students, and a second focused on research methods. Both classes have substantial independent research projects; it has been to a joy to guide students as they come into their own as budding researchers.

A final academic project I’ve been advising this semester is a project with three ENV5 students examining how shale gas development is represented and framed in Ohio newspapers. We are on our way to completing an academic journal article that we plan to submit for publication by the end of the semester. Wish us luck!



**JANET FISKIO**

This has been an exciting year at Oberlin and beyond. In June 2014 I attended the final Healing Walk north of Fort McMurray, Canada, where I volunteered at the registration table. The Healing Walk is a ceremony

led by First Nations that prays for the healing of the earth damaged by tar sands mining. While working the table I met two members of the Mobile Environmental Justice Action Coalition (MEJAC) from Africatown, Alabama, who had traveled to the Healing Walk as a solidarity action between these two communities; Africatown has been targeted for a bitumen pipeline and a storage tank facility. In December 2014, ES hosted two speakers from MEJAC, and students from my American Agricultures (ENVS 302) and Community Engagement (ENVS 301) classes traveled with MEJAC to visit with the Detroit Environmental Justice Coalition and tour Detroit. MEJAC then invited Oberlin to visit Africatown over spring break, and we gladly accepted. This past March I went with six students to Africatown and conducted soil samples and participated in a community health survey while learning about the environmental issues impacting Africatown. This thread is a good example of the way research, teaching, and community engagement synergize in my work at Oberlin. The Healing Walk and Africatown bring together my research on tar sands activism and climate justice, which are central themes in the book I'm currently writing: *Counter Friction: Poetics, Politics, and Performance of Climate Justice*. In addition, I remain involved in researching, teaching, and collaborating on food justice in the Rust Belt and the Great Lakes region. And since I've just been given the good news that I've been awarded tenure, I look forward to continuing this vibrant engagement for many years to come.



**BEN FITCH-FLEISHMANN**

I am thrilled to be joining the Environmental Studies Program and the Department of Economics at Oberlin this fall. My soon-to-be wife, Faith, and I will pack up our home in Oregon in June and move to

Oberlin via our hometown in Montana, where we'll pause to get married and float the Clark Fork River. I am especially excited to join a liberal arts college community that

has such a long-established tradition of being at the leading edge of environmental thinking. While economists and environmentalists frequently find themselves at odds, I am excited to teach courses on topics at the intersection of these fields. I think that better communication and collaboration across these fields is essential to confronting the environmental challenges of our time.

My training is in applied microeconomics, and my main research interests are in environmental and development economics. In my current work, I match data on household-level economic activity in developing countries with historical climate conditions. This allows me to estimate the effects of extreme climate conditions (such as heat waves and hurricanes) on health outcomes and economic activity. My interest in economic development was fueled by my study-abroad experiences as an undergraduate, and I'm eager to learn about the questions and research ideas that current students are discovering during their time abroad. This year I will teach environmental economics as well as a seminar in behavioral economics and the environment.



**SAM HARTMAN**

Hello! I am proud to be part of the Environmental Dashboard team here at Oberlin, borne from the legacy of research and education of the Environmental Studies

Program. I joined the team in August 2014 with the title of sustainable energy technology research fellow, also reporting to the Office of Environmental Sustainability with regards to energy management and campus-wide metering technology. Working on this project has been a whirlwind of experiences, from climbing through dark mechanical rooms to deciphering archaic computer code. Through the help of my coworkers, supervisors, and great student workers, we've been able to update, change, and manage an intricate system of software and hardware, all with the goal of creating a real time feedback system, not just for the college, but for the entire community of Oberlin, Ohio. As we continue to work toward that goal, while making technology work for us and not against us, our progress is often dictated by changing the hearts and minds of those who don't understand, and may even condemn, this forward-thinking approach to resource conservation and pro-environmental thought. Our perseverance, however, is predicated on the belief that by leveraging the power of social norms, we can foster real change by showing our shared connection to the systems we all inhabit,

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## Faculty/Staff News CONTINUED

from dormitory, to college, to city, to the Rust Belt, and beyond. There's plenty of work left to do, and we have some strong people to do it!



### CATHERINE HOYLE

I am happy to share that I am the new building manager and outreach coordinator for the Adam Joseph Lewis Center. I joined the team to build on the exciting work of Sean Hayes,

who is now executive director of the Oberlin Project. Sean spent the fall working two jobs, as I started at the Lewis Center in mid-November; my 5-year-old and I moved to a snowy Oberlin during the first cold snap. As background, I bring with me experience in wastewater treatment, program and tour development, engineering, teaching, nutrient cycling research, and organic farming. This job combines my past work into one amazingly fun job. One of the best aspects is mentoring students. I have about 20 on staff and a few doing research. Now that the snow has melted and spring has come, the students are pruning the orchard, tapping maple trees, and helping me plan for an Lewis Center open house as part of Ecolympics. I am very glad to be here, enjoying the seasons, mentoring students, monitoring the building's performance, giving tours, and learning about Oberlin.



### SARA KNUTH

I've greatly enjoyed my year as a visiting assistant professor in the Environmental Studies Program. While here, I've taught Environment and Society, Urban Political Ecology, Energy and

Society, and Environmentally Responsible Investing. I've learned so much from Oberlin faculty and students in my first experience teaching at a small liberal arts college. I have been particularly inspired by the students' energy, insightfulness, and passion for social and environmental justice. I look forward to seeing them in graduate programs and in the field. Meanwhile, after eight years in California, Oberlin has re-instructed me in the (arguable) joys of a lower Great Lakes winter. While at Oberlin, I have had journal articles and special issues accepted at *Antipode* (on the urban political ecology of green building), *The Canadian Journal of Development Studies* (on financial institutions' role in contemporary land grabs), and

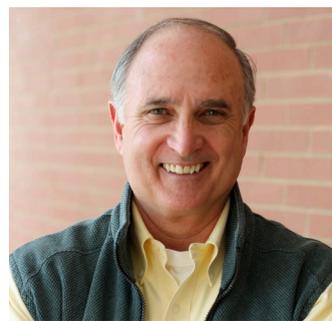
*Environmental and Planning A* (on the legal geographies of finance). Next year, I head off to a postdoctoral research fellowship on sustainability at the University of Michigan.



### KARL OFFEN

I am delighted to be joining the Environmental Studies Program in the fall of 2015. I was raised in California and studied at UC Santa Cruz before joining the Peace Corps, where I taught science and math to high school students in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Later, I turned my attention to Latin America and toward questions of resource conservation, environmental history, political ecology,

and cultural rights of indigenous and Afrodescendant peoples in Central America and Colombia. After completing a master's degree in Latin American studies at Ohio University and a PhD in geography at the University of Texas, Austin, I taught a range of courses at the University of Oklahoma for the last 15 years. I serve as chair of the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers and book reviews editor for the *Journal of Historical Geography*. I have diverse research interests, but at the core am interested in how people come to establish, maintain, and represent meaningful relationships with particular places and how these change over time. At Oberlin I'll be teaching Political Ecology, Environment and Society, and hopefully a course related to Latin America. I look forward to joining a great team and working with Oberlin's wonderful and inquisitive students.



### DAVID ORR

Since officially retiring from the faculty, I serve as counselor to the president (of Oberlin), chair of the board for the Oberlin Project, and as the Stephen Minter Fellow at the Cleveland Foundation.

Within my the first two roles, I've worked on the Peter B. Lewis Gateway Center, which will replace the Oberlin Inn. On completion in late 2015 or early 2016, it will be an entirely solar-powered, LEED-Platinum hotel and conference facility located on the southwest corner of College and Main streets. It is also the keystone for the Oberlin Project and a major driver in Oberlin's economic development.

At the Cleveland Foundation, I work on issues relative to the role of philanthropy and climate destabilization with an emphasis on northeast Ohio. Colleagues at Case Western University and I are also working to build a framework for regional collaboration among anchor institutions with the goal of shifting institutional purchasing and investment into sustainable and climate-neutral economic development projects.

Within the past year, I've lectured in Abu Dhabi, Australia, the U.K. Spain, Israel, Morocco, Mexico, and Canada and at several dozen colleges and universities in the U.S. I hope to finish my eighth book by summer's end. I also serve on the boards of the Bioneers, the WorldWatch Institute, and the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado.



### **JOHN PETERSEN '88**

Teaching at Oberlin is always a bidirectional phenomena. A random sampling of things I learned (or relearned) from and with students this year: there is a heck of a lot more carbon stored deep in the soils of Oberlin College than one might think, Oberlin public school children and teachers are inspirational learning resources for those of us in the college; small, well-organized, thoughtful groups of Oberlin students are a powerful force for changing the world (and the college)!

My research continues to focus on “sociotechnical feedback” technology as a mechanism for engaging, educating, motivating, and empowering change in thought and behavior. I remain blessed with an outstanding and expanding set of faculty collaborators at Oberlin including Cindy Frantz, Rumi Shammin, and Deborah Roose working on our Environmental Dashboard project ([www.environmentaldashboard.org](http://www.environmentaldashboard.org)). As described in a separate article, Rumi spearheaded a successful grant proposal to expand dashboard into four other Great Lakes Colleges!

Engaging students in all aspects of research continues to be one of the most gratifying aspects of teaching at Oberlin. Danny Rosenberg '12, Emily Heck '17, Evan Holliday '15, Rose Benjamin '15, and Melissa Cabat '17 all served as co-presenters at various national conferences. It is always satisfying to see research moving toward publications as well as public presentations. Student coauthors on papers submitted to peer-reviewed journals this last year include Shane Clark '14, Evan Tincknell '14, Noel Meyers '15, Joel Ginn '14, Danny Rosenberg '12, Erika Brandt '13 and Jake Grossman '08.

This last year I had the significant honor of being appointed the Paul Sears Professor of Environmental Studies, a position formerly held by David Orr.



### **DANNY ROSENBERG DANERI '12**

The year and a half I have spent as project manager for Environmental Dashboard (ED) has been eventful for me and for the project. Further development of the technology and implementation in communities has quite tangibly enhanced ties

within the larger Oberlin community, between the college and town, and between our college and other colleges. In the city of Oberlin, we installed five new digital ED displays. Sites include Oberlin Community Services, Oberlin Early Childhood Center, Ben Franklin, Oberlin Business Partnership, and the Kendal at Oberlin Senior Living Community. As I write this, we are in the last week of the Ecolympics competition in the Oberlin Public Schools (concurrent with a competition among college dorms). Prospect Elementary (grades 3-5), the likely winner, has achieved a whopping 35 percent reduction in electricity use. Students at Eastwood (K-2) noticed unrealistic patterns of water use displayed on the dashboard, which led them to discover a substantial water leak that will soon be repaired. As a whole, the public schools are on track to save thousands of kilowatt-hours of electricity and thousands of gallons of water. The level of engagement in the schools of administrators as well as students during the competition is quite apparent—the administrative offices at Prospect are so dark you can be fooled into thinking it's closed!

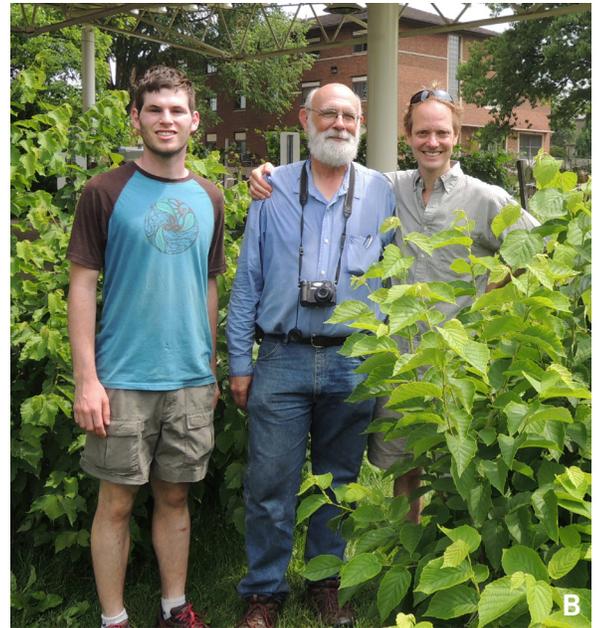
It is deeply gratifying to have played a central role in the development of a technology and approach explicitly designed to foster connectedness to place and to strengthen community. Having now spent seven years—the bulk of my adult life—working in the Oberlin community, it is bittersweet to be moving on to pursue other interests and opportunities. I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to all whom I have worked with in the town and college for making my life so enjoyable here. In particular, I'd like to thank Professor John Petersen for his support and friendship and for trusting me with the responsibility of managing such an important project.

### **CHIE SAKAKIBARA**

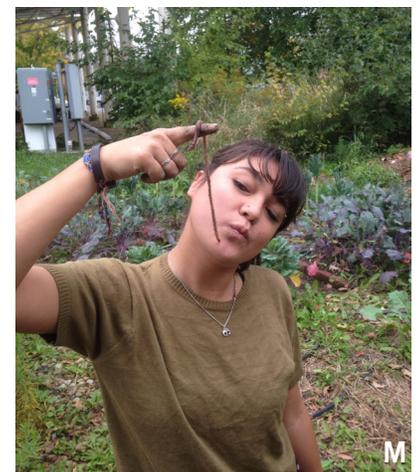
I am very excited about joining Oberlin's Environmental Studies Program this fall. As a Japanese native, my love of animals led me to pursue academic degrees in the

*continued on page 18*

# A Glimpse into the Environmental Studies Program



**A.** An example of the diversity of food produced in the Lewis Center's kitchen garden and sent to Oberlin Community Service's food shelf. **B.** Jake Nash '16, Philip Rutter '70, and John Petersen '88 in the Lewis Center experimental hazelnut orchard during the first year of nut production. Woody agriculture expert Philip Rutter, director of Badgersett Research Corporation, donated the hazelnut trees that are part of an experiment on the impact of different fertilization levels on tree growth and nut production. **C.** Ava Nicolai explaining Environmental Dashboard to members of the public at the Oberlin Cultural Festival on Tappan Square. **D.** Sydney Garvis '17 and Miriam Bar-Zemer '15 working with children creating Ecolympics posters at Prospect Elementary. **E.** Sharon Pearson (program coordinator for the Oberlin Project), Glory Holt (of Oberlin Municipal Court), and Aubrey Pongluelert '15 discussing Environmental Dashboard at the Oberlin Cultural Festival. **F.** ENVS fall picnic canoeing fun!



**G.** Aubrey Pongluelert '15 and Arthur Davis '16 using the apple cider press made by Griff Radulski '14 for the first time. **H.** Ecolympics float at the 2015 big parade. Oberlin College students helped organize a highly successful three-week-long electricity and water reduction competition among the four public schools. Engagement was particularly high at Eastwood Elementary (K-2) and Prospect Elementary (grades 3-5), which reduced electricity use by 27 percent and 31 percent respectively. **I.** Developing hazelnut fruit up close and personal. **J.** Apples being processed by an apple cider press made by Griff Radulski '14. **K.** Derrick, Katherine, and their daughter Aurelia at the ENVS Picnic. **L.** Joyful members of the Oberlin community celebrating the earth and each other at the first all community Lewis Center Open House during Ecolympics. **M.** Aubrey Pongluelert '15 and a worm in the Lewis Center garden.

# Student Awards, Fellowships, and Grants

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## SENIOR HONORS THESIS

**Sophie Becker's** thesis, "Performance and Resilience: Performance, Storytelling, and Resilience Building in Post-Katrina New Orleans," uses a mixed-method approach of semi-structured interviews, participant-observation, and scholarship from the fields of performance studies and environmental studies to investigate the role of digital storytelling and contemporary performing arts in building resilience in communities affected by climate change. Her project focuses on post-disaster landscapes, particularly post-Katrina New Orleans, in investigating the capability of storytelling platforms and performance spaces to facilitate the creation of social networks and social capital. Janet Fiskio served as Sophie's primary advisor.

## JEROME DAVIS RESEARCH AWARD

This fund was established in 1924 to support Oberlin students who "worked with labor" to facilitate "mutual understanding and cooperation in the field of industry" and was later expanded to also support "honors and other well-qualified students in the social sciences at Oberlin to assist them in doing fieldwork in a community as part of their academic programs." **Sophia Becker '15** received the award in 2014 to support travel to New Orleans, where she conducted interviews as a key component of her successful honors research in ES, described above.

## BONNER CENTER COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

This award is given to support original student research proposals conducted in collaboration with a community organization. Projects are designed to produce knowledge and solve problems for the organization while building the student's knowledge of relevant research methods. **Ava Nicolai '16** will collaborate with John Petersen at Oberlin and Liz Schultz at the Oberlin Heritage Center. During the summer of 2015 she will research and develop a curriculum for teaching Oberlin youth to conduct interviews with their parents, grandparents, and other community members. Content from these interviews will be featured on the Community Voices portion of the Environmental Dashboard.

## PHI BETA KAPPA

Five ES majors were elected to the Phi Beta Kappa honors society: seniors **Rachel Berkrot**, **Jackson Kusiak**, and **Stephanie Szarmach** and juniors **Emily Belle** and **Hugh Milner**. Two out of the seven Oberlin juniors awarded this distinction this year were ES majors!

## DORIS BARON FUND

The Doris Baron Environmental Studies Student Research Fund was established to support independent research projects proposed by students and designed to increase knowledge of and appreciation for environmental studies. Projects typically involve close collaboration with existing organizations from local to international scales. A community-based focus—especially work that connects local agricultural initiatives with projects in developing countries—are favored. This year the Fund supported four research projects:

**Colin Brown '16** conducted research focused on outlining the best practice guidelines for implementing natural infrastructure projects and he presented "Natural Infrastructure for Water Research at World Resources Institute" at a public campus venue. The results of the project aim to provide guidance for future municipalities and cities seeking to implement natural infrastructure into their own water management systems.

**Laura Messman '15** conducted a series of statistical models and mechanistic field tests on old fields in the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in central Minnesota. She presented "What Happens When the Farming Stops: Investigation into the Long Term Stability of Plant Communities Established in Abandoned Farm Fields" at a public lecture on campus.

**Zia Kandler '15** was awarded funding for her project, "In the Name of Land and Communities: Stories of Resistance of Three Guatemalan Communities." She will visit four communities in Guatemala in the summer of 2015 to conduct interviews and document stories that capture the relationships among environmental justice, land, community, and sense of place. The goal is to create an audio production that will be aired on the radio and used for workshops.

**Mary (Mae Kate) Campbell '16** and **Megan Curiel '15** were awarded support for their project, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Community-Driven River Restoration Project in Yungjuan, China," (Sichuan Province). They will spend three weeks in China collecting GIS data soil and sediment samples to fingerprint current sources of sediment to the valley bottom. Once analyzed, the findings will be communicated back the community to aid in restoration efforts.

## SCHAENING MEMORIAL FUND AWARDS

The Ann Marie Schaening ('87) Memorial Fund, established by the family and friends of Ann Marie Schaening, provides support for students pursuing winter-term projects related to the environment. Four students were granted awards in 2015:

**Paige Funkhouser '17** served at the Museum of Natural History of Los Angeles County as an invertebrate paleontology intern for the invertebrate paleontology collections and library. Her project involved creating a database of fossils from Los Angeles area rock formations.

**Gabriela Goldsmith '16** explored liberation theology and urban political ecology with two University of Toronto faculty members through the lens of the beautiful and diverse city of Toronto, Canada.

**Jenny Goldsmith '15** collaborated with Foresight Design, a Chicago-based non-profit, on a sustainable development project on Caohagan Island in the Philippines.

**Brendan Nuse '17** interned with the Sierra Club in Sarasota, Florida, serving in the office and collecting readings of water samples.

#### **ARTHUR BLANK FELLOWSHIPS**

Established by the Arthur M. Blank Foundation, this grant enables Oberlin students to undertake research and educational opportunities in collaboration with Environmental Studies Program faculty.

Professors John Petersen (ENVS and biology), Cindy Frantz (psychology), and Rumi Shammin (ENVS) collectively supervised six students focused on a range of important projects that advanced the Environmental Dashboard (ED) while providing students with hands-on experience in multiple aspects of research, development, and communication.

**Melissa Cabat '17** managed and further developed the “Community Voices” component of ED, which combines thoughts, ideas, and actions of community members obtained through interviews with photographs to celebrate and empower positive action towards sustainability.

**Shane Clark '14** worked to translate her research on the impact of ED-based lessons on the development of “systems thinking skills” in fourth- and fifth-graders in Oberlin public schools into a manuscript that is being considered for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

**Jasper Clarkberg '17** developed the computer code for a new version of “citywide dashboard,” which is an animated display of current electricity and water use and environmental conditions in entire organizations and communities.

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#### **THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

sponsored talks and workshops by a range of seminal thinkers on environmental issues this year. Here is a sampling:

**Hector Aristizabal**, activist and performer, presented “Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop.”

**John Bergen '14**, an international human rights activist, presented “No Friends But the Mountains: Kurdish Resistance to ISIS.” He focused on the stories of Kurdish people resisting occupation, economic and environmental exploitation, and oppression by foreign powers, fossil fuel companies, and their own government.

**Clayton Daughenbaugh**, conservation organizer with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, presented “A Wilderness Icon: America’s Red Rock Wilderness.”

**Manvendra Dubey**, senior scientist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, presented “Chemistry, Carbon, and Climate Science for Global Environmental Security.”

Many sustainability and social justice-related events and lectures take part in **Ecolympics**, a three-week electricity and water conservation competition held each spring in conjunction with the nationwide Campus Conservation Nationals.

The workshop “Connecting the Humanities, Social, and Natural Sciences through Digital Innovations” provides hands-on experience in using **Environmental Dashboard** technology as a digital platform to foster collaboration, curriculum development, research, campus sustainability programs, and community outreach.

**Michael J. Fitzgerald**, magazine and newspaper journalist and author of *The Fracking War*, presented “How I Became an Eco-Terrorist: Homeland Security and Fracking Protest”

**Jesse Gerstin '07**, global coordinator for the Clinton Foundation’s Forestry Program, presented “Carbon Markets and their Potential Role in Reducing Global Climate Change: Avoiding Deforestation in Indonesia.”

**Tatiana Ginsberg and Aimee Lee '99**, artists and paper-makers, presented “Papermaking in Asia as Sustainable Practice.”

**Jenny Goldsmith and Max Herzog** presented “Stories from the Philippines: Memories and Lessons from a Sustainable Development Winter Term on Small-Island Southeast Asia.”

**Steven Hamburg**, chief scientist for the Environmental Defense Fund, presented “Natural Gas and the Environment: Integrating Being a Scientist and Environmentalist.”

**Sam Hartman**, Olympic weightlifter, and **Bridget Flynn**, figure bodybuilder, presented “Where Do You Get Your Protein?,” a presentation and discussion on plant power athleticism.

*continued on page 16*



Using the apple cider press made by Griff Radulski '14.

## ES PROGRAM EVENTS, continued

**Guinevere Jones**, from the department of ecosystem science and management at the University of Wyoming, presented "Life in the Clouds: Functional Diversity of Cloud Forest Insect Communities."

**Steven Mann '73** former U.S. State Department principal deputy assistant secretary of South and Central Asia and U.S. ambassador to Turkmenistan, worked for the past six years as an international affairs specialist for ExxonMobil. He held a lunch discussion with students titled "ExxonMobil's Supply and Demand Projections for Global Energy: An Insider's Perspective."

**Donna Mitchell**, executive director of the Mayor's Office of Strategic Initiatives in Mobile, Alabama, and **Joe Womack**, member of the Mobile Environmental Justice Action Coalition, presented "Africatown: A Story Worth Telling, A Fight Worth Fighting, A New Plan."

**Peter Nicholson '91**, founder of the Foresight Design Initiative, presented "Developing a Meaningful and Fulfilling (Sustainability-Related) Career: Tips, Tricks, and Answers."

**Sandra Steingraber**, ecologist, activist, and Distinguished Scholar in Residence in the department of environmental studies and sciences of Ithaca College, presented "A New Environmentalism for an Unfractured Future."

**Students for Environmental Sustainability** presented "Stories from South Central," a workshop and discussion on the impact of the January 2014 chemical spill in West Virginia and the growing resistance to mass incarceration and extractive industries.

**Sylvia Hood Washington '80**, environmental engineer, community activist, and creator of the People of Color at the People's Climate March, held a lunch discussion.

**West Virginia Clean Water Hub** presented "West Virginia Water Crises: The Chemical Spill and Beyond," a discussion of disaster response and the systematic violence that perpetuates an ongoing water crisis.

## Awards CONTINUED

**Joel Ginn '14** was the data guru for the summer. He oversaw surveys conducted in locations in which we installed new ED digital signage in the community and conducted statistical analysis on a variety of studies assessing the impact of ED.

**Henry Shulevitz '16** was our technical wizard. He worked to advance our ability to use a radio-based system to collect electricity consumption data from individual houses in Oberlin.

**Evan Tincknell '14** helped draft several manuscripts based on research on ED.

Lewis Center Facilities Manager and Community Outreach Coordinator Sean Hayes supervised three students focused on summer management and improvement of the Lewis Center. **Rose Benjamin '15** and **Aubrey Pongluert '15** focused on caring for the Lewis Center's landscape, including the garden and orchard. **Jake Nash '16** focused on caring for the experimental hazelnut orchard and the continued monitoring of water quality in the Plum Creek. All three cared for chickens and the Living Machine and engaged in lab procedures to document water quality.

Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Janet Fiskio supervised student **Tanya Tran '15**, who worked as a research assistant on the project "Democratic Agrarianism in the Urban Core: Race, Immigration, and Food Justice." Shelley Lee (Comparative American Studies /History) and Dru Baker (Geology) also collaborated on this project, which included research trips and interviews at food justice and urban gardening sites in Milwaukee. Tanya conducted interviews, did research through participant-observation of garden and farmers market events, and worked to transcribe and analyze interviews.

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Swapna Pathak supervised student **Hallie Neuhaus '15** and **Kyla VanBuren '16**, who worked as her research assistants on a project studying the discourse on climate change negotiations. As part of their work, Hallie and Kyla assisted in reviewing literature on environmental justice in climate change negotiations. Hallie collected various speeches made by different U.S. presidents and other leaders made at the UNFCCC and other significant forums. Both Hallie and Kyla will continue to work on the project during 2015-16.

Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Md Rumi

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Shammin supervised student **Isabella McKnight '15** in summer 2014. Isabella compiled an inventory of urban sustainability programs in Cleveland and created network maps to illustrate interconnectedness between various initiatives and organizations. She presented a poster on her work at the fall 2014 Celebration of Undergraduate Research at Oberlin College. Isabella continued her assistantship during the 2014-15 academic year, working on youth engagement in urban agriculture, school gardens, and alternative food networks in Cleveland and Lorain County.

### **JOYCE GORN MEMORIAL PRIZE**

Each year the Environmental Studies Program awards the Joyce Gorn Memorial Prize to one or more graduating seniors for outstanding work on an extracurricular environmental project. This year we are pleased to bestow the award on four worthy recipients:

**Rachel Berkrot** has served in leadership positions in various Oberlin College environmental organizations, including Students for Energy Justice. In this capacity she has organized solidarity events with anti-fracking activists in Youngstown, civil disobedience trainings, and numerous educational events. Rachel also volunteered and interned with Stories from South Central/RAMPS and has taught in the Eastwood Outdoor Classroom.

**Jackson Kusiak** has collaborated extensively with community members around Oberlin, Lorain County, and in Youngstown to promote sustainable energy initiatives as alternatives to hydraulic fracking. Jackson has developed a reputation as an effective organizer and a valued coalition builder who helps bring people together and into conversation from across Northeast Ohio.

**Sophia (Zo) Paul's** extraordinary level of commitment to community building is evident to anyone who has seen her in action at Oberlin Community Services and various community gardening initiatives around Oberlin. As described in our prior newsletter, Zo was awarded a President's Public Service Fellowship in the summer of 2014.

**Peter Saudek** has worked extensively with youth at Oberlin High School and at the Bridge Community Technology Center. His work has included a food justice initiative at Oberlin High School and collaboration with Janet Fiskio in support of urban gardening projects in Cleveland. Like Zo, Peter was a 2014 recipient of President's Public Service Fellowship, which supported his work as a tutor and mentor for the largely low-income population served by the Bridge.

## **EnviroAlums Announces Sustainability Career Fellowship Program**

BY ANDREW DECORLIOLIS '07  
CHAIR, ENVIROALUMS

**FORMED IN 2002**, EnviroAlums is a group of Oberlin Alumni dedicated to promoting environmental education and advancing environmental stewardship at Oberlin College. In spring of 2015 EnviroAlums launched a new fellowship program funded by its members. Our goal is to help students build professional skills and connections through summer internships. Our hope is to help prepare Oberlin students for satisfying and productive careers in sustainability related fields.

We are excited to announce our first two fellows, Cria Kay and Scott Hulver. Cria will work at the Chicago Field Museum, which has a long history of sustainability leadership among major science museums. There, she'll work on a paleontology project and conduct research on mammal fossils from North America. Scott will work with the Oberlin Project, helping to build a local food business incubator in Oberlin.

EnviroAlums are proud to support both Cria and Scott, and we look forward to seeing the contributions they make. We will publish Cria's and Scott's stories from their summer internships on the EnviroAlums website in the fall.

In other news, EnviroAlums added five new members to our steering committee. We welcome Peter Nicholson, Amanda Medress, David Roswell, Hanni Muerdter, and Molly Danielsson.

EnviroAlums founder and longtime chair Carl McDaniel has retired from EnviroAlums—though he is still a passionate sustainability activist at Oberlin. Thanks, Carl, for all of your past and future leadership.

If you'd like to become a member of EnviroAlums, or want to learn more about our new Fellowship program and Student Sustainability Grant program, visit us at [new.oberlin.edu/office/alumni-affiliate-groups/enviro-alums/](http://new.oberlin.edu/office/alumni-affiliate-groups/enviro-alums/).

## CHIE SAKAKIBARA, CONT.

United States, where I specialized in the cultural geography of human-animal-environment interactions. My ethnographic research focuses on the human dimensions of global climate change in Native North America, and specifically on cultural resilience and socio-environmental justice in Arctic Alaska. I also collaborate with the Center for Ethnomusicology at Columbia University for its community-partnered



Iñupiaq music heritage repatriation project, and I will be thrilled to introduce the people and environment of the Arctic to Oberlin students.

As much as I enjoy research, I strive to become a dedicated teacher. Having taught both large and small classes at the University of Oklahoma, Columbia University and Appalachian State University, I have come to appreciate the opportunity to teach and reciprocate with students across various disciplines. At Oberlin, I will teach Environment and Society (ENVS 101), Nature, Culture, and Interpretation (ENVS 201), Native Peoples and Climate Change (ENVS 225), and Indigenous Peoples and Resources (ENVS 327). When not in the classroom or the field, I enjoy spending time with my family, especially my 2-year-old daughter, Kaya, and 4-year-old (canine) son, Giro. I look forward to calling Oberlin home and cannot wait to begin the collaboration with my colleagues and students in the community and beyond.

## RUMI SHAMMIN

I was on sabbatical leave during the 2014-15 academic year and have focused my energy on three threads of scholarship. I spent the early part of my leave working on a successful grant proposal to the Great Lakes College Association to expand Environmental Dashboard into four other schools and communities; this work is described in a separate newsletter article. I am also a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor this year through the OK/UM grant and have been spending part of my time there. So far I have attended classes, given lectures, and spent considerable time trekking through and appreciating the vast library resources at Michigan. I have forged a new collaboration toward a multi-campus grant proposal that, if funded, will bring a couple of student fellowships to Oberlin around issues of food access and food justice. The third project involves research on climate change mitigation and adaptation in Bangladesh, including an evalua-



tion of disaster preparedness programs. I spent a few weeks this past winter in Bangladesh developing new research collaborations and making field visits to sites most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Apart from these main projects, I have been interacting with the urban sustainability research community in north-east Ohio, participating in

the ongoing Environmental Dashboard Research Group, and building resources for my evolving urban agriculture and food access research. I am also serving as cochair of the 2015 Joint Biennial Meeting of the U.S. and Canadian Societies for Ecological Economics scheduled to be held in Vancouver in early October. I have also continued to advise environmental studies majors during my leave. However, I tell my students that I am invisible for all practical purposes. After all, it is during leave that one can afford to take refuge in a secret location or be visibly invisible!

## CONGRATS NEW GRADS!

### Graduating ES majors and minors\*

Ari Benjamin	Isabella McKnight
Sophia Becker	Laura Messman
Rachel Berkrot	Allison Monroe
Enzo Cabili	Clara Monsma
Benjamin Davenport	Alice Newman
Caroline DeVries	Yuran Pan
Matthew Edmonds	Sabrina Paskewitz Drew*
Mary Esler*	Sophia Paul
Jackson Evans	Julia Pearlstein-Levy*
Hillary Ezcurra	Emily Polstein
Lila Fried	Aubrey Pongluelert
Jordan Golding*	Lukas Raffanti
Gabriela Garcia Greco	Thomas Rathe
Luzmaria Gusman	Rebecca Riedman
Zachary Harvey	Willa Rowan
Evan Holliday	Emanne Saleh
Kristina Horensky	Peter Saudek
Rory Kaip	Max Schenk
Jake Klinkenborg	Anna Shugoll
Jackson Kusiak	Stephanie Szarmach
Benjamin Marks	Jesse Wiener
Christina Marquette	Eric Xue

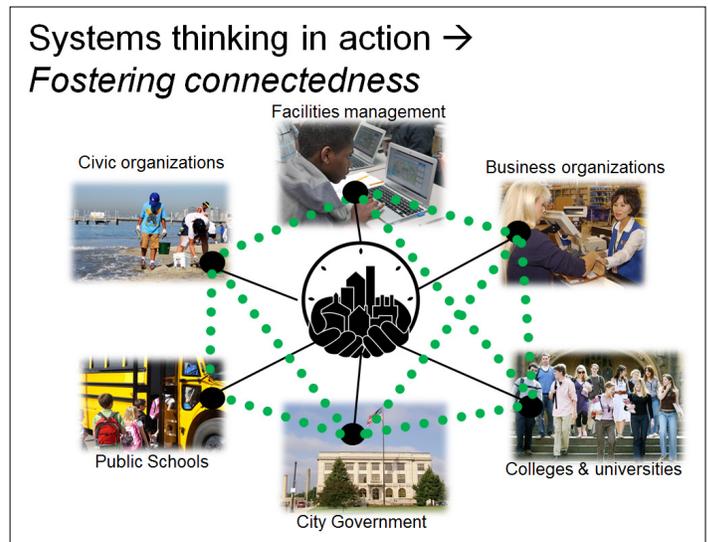
# Environmental Dashboard CONTINUED

The Environmental Dashboard ([www.EnvironmentalDashboard.org](http://www.EnvironmentalDashboard.org)), developed at Oberlin College, is a communication technology that combines a real-time display of water and electricity use in buildings, organizations, and whole communities with photographs and words contributed by community members that celebrate positive thought and action. Using electronic signs and websites, Environmental Dashboard employs compelling graphics to reconnect people with the natural world by making flows of resources visible, thus promoting sustainable behavior.

During the 2015-16 calendar years, a core team of faculty and staff from campuses of the five participating GLCA member institutions will install the Environmental Dashboard technology to engage their respective institutions in curriculum development, research, and community outreach around the tool and instill cross-campus dialogue and collaboration. They will be joined by an extended team of up to 25 faculty members from multiple academic disciplines in addition to staff members. Presenting workshops at each of these campuses, and meeting with an expanding group of faculty collaborators at these institutions, kept Cindy, Deborah, Danny, John and me busy in the early spring of 2015!

To recruit the extended team members and energize the campuses to engage with the Environmental Dashboard, the Oberlin team traveled to all participating campuses this spring to lead faculty and staff workshops at each. This created opportunities for engaging in cross-campus dialogue and collaboration around common commitments to environmental and community sustainability that the campuses are addressing in distinct ways. Faculty who attended these workshops have submitted approximately 15 research proposals that are currently being considered for funding in summer 2015. We look forward to having three new faculty collaborators on board at Oberlin with the GLCA grant: Christie Parris in sociology, Evangeline Heiliger in LGBT/queer studies and comparative American studies, and Cheryl Cottine in religion. GLCA support will also allow for 10 additional projects in 2016 through another call for proposals across campuses.

Ultimately, the project seeks to foster connections between a diverse group of stakeholders, including faculty, staff, administrators, facilities personnel, sustainability officers, and students in the five campuses to make Environmental Dashboard a common digital platform for communication, collaboration and creativity.



From top: Systems thinking in action graphic for the Environmental Dashboard project. The Environmental Dashboard team gave a presentation and led a workshop at the National Center for Science and the Environment conference in Washington D.C. (from left: Sharon Pearson, Rumi Shammin, Evan Holliday, Barbara "Rose" Benjamin, John Petersen, Emily Heck, and Danny Rosenberg). John Petersen talks about the Environmental Dashboard at an Albion College workshop. Celebrating at the end of five spring workshops at a debriefing meeting in Columbus, Ohio, were (from left) Rumi Shammin, Cindy Frantz, Deborah Roose, and John Petersen. *Photos: Rumo Shammin*

## ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM

### Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies

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### FACULTY & STAFF:

**John Petersen**  
*Chair and Paul Sears Professor of  
Environmental Studies and Biology*

**Bev Burgess**  
*Departmental Secretary III*

**Darrick Evensen**  
*Visiting Assistant Professor of  
Environmental Studies, 2013-14*

**Janet Fiskio**  
*Associate Professor of Environmental  
Studies*

**Sam Hartman**  
*Sustainable Technology Research Fellow*

**Catherine Hoyle**  
*AJLC Facilities Manager and Community  
Outreach Coordinator and Instructor*

**Sara Knuth**  
*Visiting Assistant Professor of  
Environmental Studies, 2013-14*

**Carl McDaniel**  
*Visiting Professor of Environmental Studies*

**David Orr**  
*Special Assistant to the President*

**Swapna Pathak**  
*Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies*

**Danny Rosenberg**  
*Assistant Project Manager for  
Environmental Dashboard*

**Md Rumi Shammin**  
*Associate Professor of Environmental Studies*

## ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM COMMITTEE:

**John Petersen**, *Environmental Studies*

**Matthew Elrod**, *Chemistry*

**Janet Fiskio**, *Environmental Studies*

**Cindy Frantz**, *Psychology*

**Catherine Hoyle**, *Environmental Studies*

**Dennis Hubbard**, *Geology*

**Roger Laushman**, *Biology*

**Tom Lopez**, *TIMARA/Conservatory*

**T. Scott McMillin**, *English*

**Thomas Newlin**, *Russian*

**Swapna Pathak**, *Environmental Studies*

**Ben Schiff**, *Politics*

**Md Rumi Shammin**, *Environmental Studies*