

OBERLIN COLLEGE

# Environmental Studies

SPRING 2018

## From the Chair's Desk: New Light Through Old Windows\*

BY MD RUMI SHAMMIN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM

In 2017-18, the Environmental Studies Program has been undergoing a Program Review, which is a structured process to periodically evaluate, investigate and implement curricular changes and make other improvements to the program. It is a cooperative enterprise among the department, outside consultants from peer institutions, two extra-departmental inside consultants, and the Educational Plans and Policies Committee (EPPC) with direct engagement and representation of the Environmental Studies faculty, students and staff. During this process, we analyzed annual reports and student assessments over 11 years since the last review in 2006, conducted a survey of alums who graduated during this time and prepared a preliminary department report that identifies the opportunities and challenges facing the program. We take pride in the Program's capacity to provide an excellent, interdisciplinary liberal arts education to our majors and a supportive environment for faculty to advance their teaching, research and community engagement. At the same time, we recognize the importance of the Program Review process as an opportunity for us to take a critical look at our program and identify areas for further improvements. We are currently working to address the recommendations of the outside and inside consultants with appropriate, meaningful, and actionable responses.

As the world becomes more globalized and challenges facing human societies become more interdisciplinary, Environmental Studies as an area of study has a unique opportunity to create a space for creative solutions, bring together people from diverse backgrounds and interests, approach challenges from multiple perspectives, and foster conversations that would otherwise be constrained by disciplinary boundaries. As we navigate through our Program Review, we are exploring how we can continue to lead the discourse on a sustainable future for all, facilitate deep investigations on the evolving role of human societies as part of the natural world, advance conversations on justice and fairness, and critically consider the place of technology in the human enterprise. Our world is evolving far more rapidly than ever before – socially, environmentally, economically



Students cleaning the pond at the AJLC. Photo Credit: Tanya Rosen-Jones '97

and technologically. The lines between the natural world and the digital world are becoming blurred. These fast-paced changes are accompanied by gradual, persistent large-scale environmental and social transformations that threaten humanity, other species, and the rest of nature. Critical challenges are emerging at various scales – in local communities, regional jurisdictions, national and international arenas – necessitating coordinated responses at multiple levels.

We hope that Environmental Studies majors will play an important role in our responses to the challenges that lie ahead – thoughtfully, skillfully, passionately, and compassionately. We don't just strive to produce thinkers and professionals, we aspire to produce leaders who will dedicate their professional and personal lives to build a sustainable future. Oberlin's Environmental Studies Program has been at the forefront of this journey, and we are confident that the Program Review will shed new lights through old windows to better equip us to support our faculty, students and staff for the road ahead. There are 38 majors and 11 minors graduating in 2017-18. We wish you success and hope that your Oberlin education has prepared you well for your future endeavors. You will forever be part of Oberlin's Environmental Studies Family!

*\*Title of the article is inspired by an album by musician Chris Rea.*

# Environmental Justice and Local Knowledge in a Changing Climate

BY JANET FISKIO, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND COMPARATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

Since 2014 I have been collaborating with the community of Africatown, on the Gulf Coast of Alabama, which was founded by the last group of enslaved Africans brought to the United States on the ship *Clotilda* in 1859. The unique history of Africatown has been preserved since the 19th century by an oral history practice that includes knowledge of survival and resilience through forced relocation, enslavement, and segregation. Africatown's historical importance has only recently been formally recognized: it was granted a listing on the national registry of historic places in 2012, and is the subject of a scholarly monograph by Sylviane Diouf, *Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship Clotilda and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America* (2007). Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston visited Africatown as part of her groundbreaking ethnographic research in the 1920s. Her book project from this research, *Barracoon*, will be published for the first time in 2018.

Like many free Black towns in the South, over the years Africatown has been surrounded by polluting facilities, often located on former plantation grounds. Over the past

four years I have been honored to work with and learn from local organizations and leaders, including Major Joe Womack, Executive Director of the environmental justice group Clean Healthy Safe and Sustainable (CHESS), Anderson Flen, President of the Mobile County Training School Alumni Association (MCTS AA), Reggie Hill, Director of Success 4 the Future (S4TF), and Ramsey Sprague, President of the Mobile Environmental Justice Action Coalition (MEJAC).

This past fall, Assistant Professor Chie Sakakibara and I were awarded an NSF conference grant from the Arctic Social Sciences Program to hold a community history workshop in Africatown. The workshop was attended by Africatown elders, youth, nonprofit leaders, pastors, and members of the Oberlin College community, including librarian Eboni Johnson. It was held at the historic Union Baptist Church and led by the Samuel Proctor Institute at the University of Florida. The workshop was informed by emancipatory and decolonial research models, and the purpose was to engage community members as experts and researchers of their own history. The students and I stayed



Major Joe Womack of the Mobile Environmental Justice Action Coalition leads Oberlin students on a tour of Africatown. *Photo courtesy of Chie Sakakibara*



the rest of fall break in Africatown conducting research funded by the NSF, and Charles Peterson (Africana Studies) joined us later in the week.

George Edwardson and Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk, two Iñupiaq elders and environmentalists from the North Slope of Alaska, attended the workshop and shared their expertise as well as exchanging stories with local community partners. Mustafa Ali from the Hip Hop Caucus delivered a powerful keynote. This workshop marked the beginning of an innovative research project to bring two culturally and historically distinct, geographically distant communities- Africatown and Utqiagvik, Alaska-together to articulate narratives of environmental justice, climate change, and cultural identity among African American and Indigenous stakeholders. The environmental justice challenges that each of these communities face are rooted in long histories of settler colonialism, diaspora, and environmental racism. Chie and I are currently applying for an NSF EAGER grant to continue our collaboration with these communities. In addition, Reggie Hill (S4TF) and I received a Community Grant from the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. This grant will fund a youth-directed musical theater production that tells Africatown's story.

Oberlin students have been absolutely essential to the success of this project at every stage. All of the students in ENV5 230 attended the oral history workshop and worked

Above: Iñupiaq mentors from Alaska, Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk and George Edwardson. Right: Students from Janet Fiskio's ENV5 230 listening to George Edwardson, Iñupiaq elder from Utqiagvik, Alaska. Photos courtesy of Chie Sakakibara

to make it a success: Nathan Carpenter ('20), Kaylee Elliot ('19), Chizitere Ezech ('20), Kerensa Loadholt ('20), Oluwadamilare (Dom) Ogunjimi ('19), Eli Presberg ('20), Santiago Roman ('20), and Olivia Vasquez ('20). Ifunanya (Ify) Ezimora ('19), my long-term collaborator, served as TA and co-instructor. While in Africatown, students presented their research on topics chosen by MEJAC, including environmental justice issues like pollution, fishing advisories, and gentrification. Since this workshop, student researchers and I have been constructing the Africatown Digital Archive to help preserve and share Africatown's oral history tradition. This project is an opportunity for reciprocal learning between academic and community collaborators, which will contribute to the literature on the relationship between Indigenous and African diaspora communities, the literature on environmental justice, and methodological research on community-based collaborations, in particular the engagement of local youth. This is not what Maria Cotera calls "drive-by research"--that is, research focused on semester-long student projects oriented toward a grade, or toward a [faculty publication](http://www.aaup.org/article/reimagining-meanings-service-streets-detroit#VgyIOHh0WGs) (http://www.aaup.org/article/reimagining-meanings-service-streets-detroit#VgyIOHh0WGs). Rather, our collaboration is focused on building relationships and trust over the long term. Several of the students from the fall 2017 ENV5 230 class are continuing this summer as research assistants on the project and will return as teaching assistants and mentors to new students in fall 2018. Africatown community members have been generous guides and mentors to all of us in this process. Chie and I are very excited to expand our work with these two front-line environmental justice communities and to visit Utqiagvik with our community collaborators and students in the near future. I am profoundly grateful to the Africatown community and to Oberlin, the NSF, and ASLE for their support and for the opportunity to work on this project.



# Environmental Dashboard Advanced with Creativity and Energy of Oberlin Students

BY JOHN PETERSEN '88, PAUL SEARS PROFESSOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND BIOLOGY

The Environmental Dashboard project uses real-time feedback on the resource flows, environmental conditions and human thought and action to engage, motivate and empower sustainability and resilience in communities. Below are titles of student projects in the Practicum in Environmental Communication (ENVS 354) taught in the fall of 2017, followed by reflections from students in the class. John Petersen led this class with the excellent assistance of Dashboard Project Manager Augustus Arthur.

**Introducing and Integrating the Environmental Dashboard Community Calendar Into the City of Oberlin** - *Madeleine Gefke '19 and Ananya Gupta '20*  
This group worked to promote community-sourced Dashboard calendar software developed by Timothy Robert-Fitzgerald '19. The goal of the calendar is to promote interaction, collaboration and community engagement.

Maddie: "Students, including myself, often begin their Oberlin life with preconceived notions of a college-town divide-- the idea that the town does not want student interference, and that, as outsiders, we have no place to intrude. The whole-hearted enthusiasm for our project and, in general, for student engagement in the community has exposed me to the welcoming atmosphere of Oberlin outside of the college. People in the Oberlin community are inspiring; they have changed my perspective on my role as a college student and as a city resident. Engaging in this community is important in establishing a sense of place and connection to the home I am spending four essential and exciting years of my life in."

Ananya: "Oberlin is a community that loves interaction and strives to come closer together. Facilitate this, and you'll find a lot more people interested than you anticipated who may even make your idea better. The Oberlin community loves to be involved in each others' events!"

**Developing Content for Community Voices** - *Sarah Reddy '19, Natalie Phillips '18, Amy Wang '20, and Jonah Fox '20*  
The goal of the Community Voices component of Environmental Dashboard is to combine images and text to celebrate thought and action that advance sustainability and resilience in diverse communities. This group combined interviews with middle school children focused on art and

nature, interviews of local shoppers in Oberlin's locally-owned grocery store, and interviews with students who volunteer within the community.

Sarah: "I was surprised by the wise and inspirational words students in Langston Middle School shared about their relationships with the natural world in Oberlin. Children at Langston Elementary School showed me that they are thinking about our earth in a loving, genuine way; they will surely grow to be wonderful stewards of our natural world."

Natalie: "I've been really impressed and touched by the depth of insights middle school students have on art, imagination and the natural environment. After working in the public schools I think about myself more as a part of this community and see it as my responsibility to be thoughtful about my place here."

Amy: "My focus was on promoting local businesses and economic development. The connection I built with community members was valuable to me. I also supervised two students from the introductory ES course. I was nervous about designing the interviews and preparing meetings. I completed the semester with a great sense of accomplishment from the realization that these students learned something new every meeting we had together."

Jonah: "My goal was to foster stronger social norms of volunteerism on campus by highlighting Oberlin College students who volunteer in the community. Through my engagement with community members it became clear to me that not only do town residents not mind connecting with students, they crave it."



Student Dashboard assistants with IGA owner Leo Braido and an Oberlin community member. *Photo credit: Augustus Arthur*



dashboards in the Oberlin school system, because of their immense success at promoting student awareness of their environmental impact.”

James: “We presented our work to nearly thirty teachers in Toledo during an interactive workshop held in November of 2017. Over the course of the morning, I couldn’t help but notice the enthusiasm for the project. This really resonated with me, coming from teachers who actually engage with the Environmental Dashboard signs every day.

Otto: “Educators we worked with in Toledo Public Schools came up with unique ways to incorporate Oberlin’s Dashboard technology that were specific to the culture of their schools.”

**Encouraging Pro-Environmental Thought through Video Introductions to Citywide Dashboard-** *Rebecca Wood ‘19 and Antonia Offen ‘20*

Antonia: “My partner Rebecca and I focused our semester on creating introductory videos for the “Citywide Dashboard” component of Environmental Dashboard. We used Google Earth to “zoom-in” to the city of Oberlin from outer space. We would then researched various facts related to Oberlin’s resource use, and make short, informational statements from what we found.”

Rebecca: “Our videos are meant to situate Oberlin within the larger environment of the world, making connections between local resource use and global conditions, and vice versa. I became more aware of the environment that stretches up above me. The goal is for viewers to see themselves as an extension of our environment so that we recognize that protecting it is akin to protecting ourselves. Caring for my community is caring for my environment, and vice versa.”

Top: The Dashboard team and Toledo Public School teachers.  
Above: Augustus Arthur instructing a teacher during the workshop

**Redeveloping Building Dashboard and ED digital signage for the Toledo Public School System -** *James Cato ‘20, Lily Jones ‘20, and Otto Vock ‘19*

In collaboration with Palmer Conservation Consulting, the Oberlin Dashboard team has been working with Toledo Public School System to integrate the technology into their curriculum. As a result of this work, 42 public schools in Toledo have the Building Dashboard installed, including digital displays in the hallways of each of these schools.

Lily: “Our project focused on creating a new design for the screens that is both more attractive and can serve as an effective means of educating, motivating, and empowering students to conserve resources. We wanted to use the

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## THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM

### Speakers and Events

September 7, 2017 – Oberlin alumnus and director of Sightline Institute **Alan Durning '87** presented “The Power of Small: How building small means living large,” which highlighted the power of small spaces to improve individuals' lives and whole cities as well as provide insight about how personal choices can inform broader community action.

September 11, 2017 – ES major **Zia Kandler '16**, presented “Defense of Land and Territory in Guatemala: a fight for justice, recognition, and dignity” about her year as a human rights accompanier in Guatemala.

September 29, 2017 – Bon Appetit fellow **Claire Kelloway** visited campus to present, “The Story Behind the Food,” a discussion of the many social and environmental issues surrounding production, from climate change to farmworkers' rights.

October 10, 2017 – ES majors **Naomi Fireman '19** and **Yael Reichler '19** presented, “Exploring Organic Rice Farming in Japan: from family life to political dynamics,” about their summer 2017 research sponsored by the Doris Baron Student Research Fund.

October 24-25, 2017 ES Faculty **Chie Sakakibara** hosted a series of events titled “Ainu: Indigeneity, Environment, and Cultural Survival,” which were organized as part of her StudiOC course, No Art, No Voice - Marginalized Cultures and the Arts of Survival. The series featured a public performance by indigenous activist-musicians Oki and Nate Renner, as well as a public lecture by the two titled, “Ainu: Spirit and Environment of a Northern People.”

October 26, 2017 – ES major **Danyang Dong '18** presented his summer 2017 research sponsored by the Doris Baron Student Research Fund in the talk, “Combating Global Illegal Wildlife Trade.” Danyang spent 10 weeks in China working with the NGO TRAFFIC, exploring strategies of demand reduction, supply monitoring, and promotion of sustainable trade.

October 26, 2017 – Oberlin participated in the nationwide film screening of an *inconvenient sequel: Truth to Power*. The event featured a live webcast and Q&A session with Al Gore.

October 30-31, 2017 - As part of the Luce Initiative on Asian Studies and the Environment (LIASE) event series, organized by Professor **Ann Sherif (EAS)**, **Albert Park**, Professor of History, Claremont McKenna College, presented a seminar on the Korean peninsula, environment, and sustainability. **Eleana Kim**, Professor of Anthropology,

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## Environmental Dashboard, CONT.

### Spreading Oberlin's Environmental Orb Technology - *Tara Santora '18 and Sophie Maffie '20*

Orbs are colored and pulsing displays of light designed by Oberlin students and faculty, starting in 2006, to communicate information about current rates of electricity and water consumption to building occupants. Tara and Sophie conducted extensive user testing to design a more intuitive color spectrum for displaying water use. The orb control software they used was developed by Jeremy Feinstein '19.

Tara: “The orbs currently have one color spectrum for electricity (green-yellow-red) and one color spectrum for water (blue-purple-pink), showing low-medium-high resource use respectively. However, many students have found the water spectrum confusing. Our job was to design and test a new all-blue water spectrum that was more intuitive than the current blue-purple-pink water spectrum.”

Sophie: “I have really come to understand the importance of connecting your ideas to your audience. Without relating your content to other people, your audience is not likely to care or understand your ideas. I am excited to continue developing my environmental communication skills and continue researching the effectiveness of the Environmental Orbs in the pilot study next semester.”



Tara Santora '18 and Sophie Maffie '20 with one of the Dashboard's glowing orbs. Photo credit: Augustus Arthur

# Notes from the ESPC Student Reps



2017-18 ES Student Reps Sky Davis '18 and Ify Ezimora '19. Photo courtesy of Ify Ezimora

Taking the role as a student representative on the Environmental Studies Programming Committee has been a very enriching experience. From planning a student-led conference, to providing input on course designation and approval, to coordinating and organizing students to give input in the Program Review process, I've been able to dip my toes in a variety of responsibilities that have given me experience and skills I can use post-graduation, such as developing personal emails, planning and coordination skills, and leadership skills. - *Ify Ezimora '19*

Hello everyone! My name is Amy Wang and I am a rising Junior Theater and Environmental Studies major, focusing on Urban Sustainability. I am very interested in studying conserving resources in buildings as well as acting. I am THRILLED to be an Environmental Studies student rep. (2018-19), and I am really looking forward to organizing events and to bonding ENVIS majors and minors with the department together! - *Amy Wang '20*

Hi, I'm Ramsha Babar, a third-year Environmental Studies and Economics major. Home for me is Pakistan and therefore, a lot of my research, in-class and external, is based on climate change impacts in developing countries. On the side, I really enjoy travel photography, dance, and making friends. - *Ramsha Babar '19*

Hi! I'm Ananya Gupta (she/her/hers). I'm an international student from India. I'm a sophomore, Environmental Studies, and English major and my area of focus is Politics, Policy and Law. I hold two other positions in the Oberlin community, as the Content Manager for the Environmental Dashboard and the Arts & Culture Editor at The Oberlin Review. I play badminton and write poetry in my spare time, and am an active participant in South Asian Student Association events. - *Ananya Gupta '20*



2018-19 ES Student Reps Amy Wang '20, Ramsha Babar '19, and Ananya Gupta '20. Photo credit: Rosalind Soltow

## ES PROGRAM EVENTS, continued

University of California, Irvine presented a talk titled "Pursuing Peace and Life in the Korean DMZ."

February 23, 2018 – ES faculty member **Karl Offen** hosted guest speaker **Jennifer Goett**, Associate Professor of Comparative Cultures and Politics at James Madison College, Michigan State University. Goett presented "After Territorial Recognition: Afrodescendant Land Dispossession in Multicultural Nicaragua," a lecture based on her recently published book, *Black Autonomy: Race, Gender, and Afro-Nicaraguan Activism* (Stanford University Press 2016).

March 29, 2018 – As part of the LIASE event series "Asia and the Environment," Simon Avenell, Professor of History,

Australia National University, presented "Environment as Method: Postwar Japanese Activism and East Asia."

March 30, 2018 – The ES Program hosted a Career Center presentation by Associate Director of Career Education Patrick Keebler, titled "Navigating Oberlin's Online Resources for Opportunities in Environmental Studies."

April 14, 2018 – Environmental Careers Day, organized and hosted by the ES Program, featured a panel discussion and series of alumni talks on topics such as urban sustainability, land preservation and conservation, environmental justice, and natural resource management.

## AJLC: A Year in Review

BY BENJAMIN HOBBS, AJLC FACILITIES MANAGER

**THE ADAM JOSEPH LEWIS CENTER**, home to the Environmental Studies Program, had an outstanding past twelve months. Energy consumption decreased from the previous year, enabling a lower than average solar year to have minimal impact on our net energy budget.

The AJLC was designed to be a net exporting building with respect to electricity. 2017-2018 was one of our best net exporting years since the building reached this achievement. Over the last year, the solar arrays, both the roof and the carport, generated just over 142,000 kWh of electricity for use in the building; however, the AJLC used a little under 99,000 kWh over the same time period. This represents a net excess of a bit over 43,000 kWh, a 44% production overage. During the best solar months of the year, May through August, the arrays produced between 330% and 415% of the electrical needs of the building.

The building will also be undergoing several changes over the coming weeks and months, some subtle, some not so much. Several pear trees located near the west entrance were lost to a fire blight infection and had to be removed. They are being replaced with native Pawpaw trees that will yield fruit new to the edible landscape. The experimental hazelnut agroforestry plot located north of the AJLC Annex has matured to the point that we can begin the process of coppicing them, beginning



with the northernmost rows. Lastly, the AJLC has been awarded a Green Edge Fund grant to replace the lighting in the atrium, entryways, and bathrooms with efficient LED bulbs and to upgrade to the control module to one that will allow for scheduling, astronomical controls, and internet enabled management.

## New Environmental Careers Day a Success

BY ROSALIND SOLTOW '08, ES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AND FLORENCE GUAN '18

On Saturday, April 14th, the Environmental Studies Program hosted its first annual Environmental Careers Day. The newly created event aims to establish a platform for vibrant, in-depth and long-term networking between professionals in environment-related industries and Oberlin College students, as well as build a bridge to promote mutual understanding between college academicians and real-world practitioners. The event was organized by administrative assistant Rosalind Soltow and Environmental Studies major and student event coordinator Florence Guan '18. Several local professionals and recent alumni who are currently working in fields related to the environment were invited to participate in the event and present on their career trajectory and experience working

in those fields. In total, 22 alumni and 2 local professionals took part in the event. The event was publicized across campus, especially targeting students with interdisciplinary environmental interests and backgrounds.

The day's first event, a panel discussion on the topic of "Shaping a Meaningful Career in Environmental Studies," was moderated by Taiyo Scanlon-Kimura '15, Career Exploration & Outreach Coordinator from Oberlin's Career Development Office. The panelists were Kendrick Chittock, Project Manager at Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Kristin Hall, Director of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, Cleveland, and Sophie Weinmann '11, Regional Recruiter for Peace Corps. In addition to an overview of each speaker's role at their respective organization, the panelists



Careers Day Panel members Kendrick Chittock, Kristin Hall, Sophia Weinmann '11 with moderator Taiyo Scanlon-Kimura '15 *Photo credit: Rumi Shammin*

spoke on topics such as how to decide what field and industry to choose, how to best pursue a job, how to tailor application materials to a particular job, and the importance of internships and networking.

After a lunch social in the AJLC atrium, there were ten sessions on various career fields featuring representative alumni participating not only in person, but also remotely via Skype. ES program faculty members Rumi Shammin, John Petersen, Karl Offen, Chie Sakakibara, Paul Brehm and Environmental Dashboard Project Manager Augustus Arthur moderated the afternoon sessions, helping to facilitate meaningful discussion among alumni speakers and students.

The first session Sustainability in Technology, featured Lyrica McTiernan '04, Sustainability Manager for Facebook. Lyrica is responsible for the company's strategy on public sustainability disclosure and reporting, internal alignment, goal-setting, and analytics, including managing projects focused on carbon tracking and reduction and resource efficiency. Lyrica detailed her rather entrepreneurial path to Facebook, telling how after completing an MBA, she and a friend pitched a sustainability plan to Facebook and ended up being hired as interns and then full time.

The Environmental Consulting session featured alumni Peter Nicolson '91 and Michelle Torres '10, who spoke about the importance of the transferable skills they learned while at Oberlin, which they now apply in their daily work. Peter, founder of Foresight Design Institute, uses the communication and project management skills that he picked up from his experience working in Oberlin's co-ops to help clients solve problems. As a geologist at Bowser-Morner Environmental Services Group, Michelle stressed how frequently she uses the teaching and writing skills that she honed while at Oberlin and during her time as a TA when earning her Master's degree.

An Urban Planning and Sustainability session was led by Isabella McKnight '15 and Savannah Sullivan '11. Isabella is a Program Manager for the Cleveland 2030 District, which is an environmental nonprofit that works with

new and existing commercial buildings to become more operationally efficient, engaging them to reduce energy and water consumption, as well as commuter transportation emissions, by 50% by the year 2030. She relayed her experience working for a small organization and how she gained more skills working in that environment. Savannah is the Sustainability Programs Outreach Coordinator for the City of Cincinnati. She emphasized how she honed in on her passion before pursuing a graduate degree.

Agricultural Sustainability and Animal Welfare was the topic of a session with Lenore Braford '07, founder of Piedmont Animal Farm Refuge and Andrew DeCoriolis '07, Director of Strategic Programs and Engagement, Farm Forward. Lenore detailed her experiences caring for rescued livestock animals and educating people about the issues surrounding animal agriculture and promoting veganism. Andrew spoke about working with corporations to lower their reliance on animal products and improve the standards of care for the livestock they source toward a goal of eliminating factory farming.

The session, Urban Parks: Design, Equity, and Community, was presented by B Chatfield '01 and Dyaami D'Orazio '16. B is a landscape architect for the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation. Dyaami serves as Catalyst Organizer for Partnerships for Parks at the City Parks Foundation in New York. Topics broadly ranged from navigating life and the job search after Oberlin and describing their daily work, to addressing gentrification in urban areas. They both spoke about their interactions with varying constituencies related to their work in urban areas and how that impacts their projects.

Natural Resource Management, a session featuring Max Herzog '15 and Annika Sullivan '12, focused on the topic of water management through technology and engineering. Max is currently working on next-generation water technology and intelligent water systems with the



Savannah Sullivan '11 and Isabella McKnight '15 speak to students during their session on Urban Planning and Sustainability in the AJLC's Hallock Auditorium. *Photo credit: Rumi Shammin*

## Environmental Careers Day CONTINUED



B Chatfield '01 speaking to students via Skype. *Photo credit: Rumi Shammin*

Cleveland Water Alliance, an innovation engine based in Northeast Ohio that is focused on generating and monetizing solutions to the greatest challenges facing Lake Erie and its watersheds. Annika's work as a hydrologist for Environmental Science Associates includes engineering design for creek and wetland restoration, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling and analysis, and field data collection for geomorphic assessment.

Alex Deeter '13 a marketing assistant for AMECO Solar and Noel Myers '14, a senior account manager for Carolina Solar Systems, hosted the the Solar Energy session. Alex and Noel shared their thoughts on choosing the solar energy industries as opposed to other renewable sources. Both of the them, as recent alumni, illustrated how a meaningful winter term experience or gap year after graduation can be beneficial before jumping into the job market.

Social Justice and Policy featured Peter Saudek '15, Senior Investigations Coordinator for the Fair Housing Center for Rights and Research in Cleveland, and Kat Johnston '91, founder/owner of New Liberty Farms, and past director of the Greene Environmental Coalition, Southern Ohio Neighbors Group, and Ohioans for Health, Environment and Justice. Kat touched on the importance of figuring out how one likes to work (e.g. independently vs. with a team, at a desk vs. in the field) before one decides what one wants to do and emphasized the power of small groups of people working for environmental justice. Peter talked about his work investigating housing discrimination and the way that housing, as the most immediate environment people experience, relates to health, safety, and other aspects of justice. Both panelists encouraged students to use their privilege to work for justice and to maintain an open mind toward career paths, recognizing the many ways of pursuing a career and the many ways of finding fulfillment in life outside of a single job.

Mark Frey '00 and Abby Halperin '12 discussed Land Conservation and Policy, drawing on their experience as Biologist for the National Parks Service and Climate Change Consultant for the Pacific Forest Trust. Mark oversees the National Park Service Exotic Plant Management Team and has also served as the Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources for Mount Rainier National Park, and Project Director for the National Invasive Species Council. For the Pacific Forest Trust, Abby conducts research on forest conservation, water, and climate change to advance policy efforts in California and Oregon. Mark and Abby also encouraged students to try out different types of jobs in all fields to find their true interests and to find an environment where they could teach people as well as learn from them.

Academic Careers was the topic of discussion for the session led by Professor John Petersen '88 and Kate Weinberger '06, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute at Brown University for Environment & Society. Kate's research focuses on improving our understanding of the links between climate change and human health, especially changes in temperature, air pollution, and aeroallergens. Both John and Kate spoke about their experience as students at Oberlin, how they ended up in their respective fields of research and how they decided they wanted to teach at the college level, and the importance of a positive relationship between student and faculty research mentor while in graduate school.

Feedback from both guest speakers and student attendees was very positive, which suggests that this type of event is extremely valuable for students and should continue to be offered. Planning for next year's event will begin in Fall 2018. If you're a recent alum and would like to be included in the next event, please contact us at [envs@oberlin.edu](mailto:envs@oberlin.edu).



Event organizers Florence Guan '18 and Rosalind Soltow '08. *Photo credit: Rumi Shammin*

# Environmental Studies Majors Win Top Honors

## Kieran Minor '19 Named 2018 Truman Scholar

BY TYLER SLOAN '17, EDITORIAL FELLOW, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

After an intensive application process, Kieran Minor '19 has won the prestigious Harry S. Truman Scholarship. Awarded to outstanding college juniors who have demonstrated a strong commitment to public service, the \$30,000 prize will help fund Minor's postgraduate studies.

For those who know Kieran Minor, his Truman Scholarship probably comes as no surprise. Even before attending Oberlin to major in environmental studies and economics, Minor had a sense of what he hoped to accomplish and who he wanted to work with in the field of environmental justice. Now, his mission will be supported with one of the premier postgraduate fellowships for public service in the United States.

"I am humbled to be part of a truly inspiring class of Truman Scholars this year," says Minor, who was selected from 756 applicants. "Before arriving at Oberlin, I spent

a year living and working for youth and media nonprofits in remote indigenous communities in the American Southwest and Central Australia. These experiences, and the relationships I formed, grounded me in what I wanted to study at Oberlin and what I want to do after I graduate. For me, Truman acknowledges what I have done so far and motivates me to keep going."

Minor eventually plans on pursuing a joint JD/MA degree in environmental management with a focus on environmental law and policy, but he won't be slowing down between now and then. In addition to the Truman, Minor also won a Davis Projects for Peace award of \$10,000 to finance his work this summer with a collaborative arts education program for Navajo youth in Chinle, Arizona. He hopes to help small rural communities that are disproportionately affected by climate change by finding

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## EnviroAlums Builds Capacity and Supports Oberlin Students

BY ANDREW DECORLIOS '07, CHAIR, ENVIROALUMS STEERING COMMITTEE

This past year reminded me of the incredible impact that student leaders and student movements can have. From students in Parkland, Florida leading a national movement for gun control, to New York City announcing that it is divesting from fossil fuels, a divestment movement which started on college campuses, the power of students and progressive institutions to drive positive change is clear. EnviroAlums' dual mission to empower Oberlin students as sustainability leaders and to support the college's transition to climate neutrality continues to be vitally important.

This year EnviroAlums announced our fourth round of Sustainability Fellowships, which provide funding for Oberlin students pursuing summer internship opportunities in sustainability fields. Last summer the fellowship supported Sami Mericle '17 and Maya Sosland '19. Sami worked at the Sierra Magazine, where she wrote articles about the fight over fossil fuels in Portland and the ongoing battle for public lands in Utah. Maya spent her summer at the Acadia Center in Providence RI, which advocates for clean and renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable

transportation. Read more about Sami and Maya and all our past Fellows on the [new EnviroAlums website](http://www.oberlin.edu/alumni-association/groups/enviro/fellowship) ([www.oberlin.edu/alumni-association/groups/enviro/fellowship](http://www.oberlin.edu/alumni-association/groups/enviro/fellowship)).

In addition to the fellowship, EnviroAlums members participated in the new Environmental Careers Day event, where we shared our experience with current students. We look forward to partnering with ENVS next year on this important event and hope to expand our engagement to offer one-on-one mentorship opportunities for current students and recent grads.

EnviroAlums continues to engage with faculty, staff, and student organizers to support Oberlin's pursuit of climate neutrality. We look forward to engaging more in this vital work in the year to come.

We welcome all new ES Program alums to join EnviroAlums—membership is free and we encourage anyone interested in sustainability to join. Simply visit [www.enviroalums.org](http://www.enviroalums.org) and fill out the form. Alums can also join our [Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#) groups where we share news, job information, and announcements. Join us today and help empower the next generation of leaders.

# A Glimpse into the Environmental Studies Program



**A.** Janet Fiskio and Oberlin-in-London program students in the field **B.** John Petersen, Shane Clark'14, Rumi Shammin at the ES Honors Information Session. Shane is a graduate student in sustainable design at the University of Philadelphia and shared her honors research with prospective honors students via Skype. **C.** At the ES Fall Picnic - Maya Sosland '19, Grant Sheely '19, Brian James '19, and Naomi Roswell '18 **D.** ES majors navigating the pond during the ES Fall Picnic at John Petersen's house **E.** Marissa Ramirez '20 and ES student rep Sky Davis '18 **F.** Oki Kano, Chie Sakakibara, Nate Renner at Fairchild Chapel after Ainu music public performance **G.** President Ambar with Ann Sherif and Karl and Chie's daughter Kaia at the Green Legacy Hiroshima Tree Dedication Ceremony



**H.** Shansi fellow Hyacinth Parker '18 (front) with Natalia Garcia-Sanabria '18 and Jen Krakower '18 in Labuan Bajo, Flores, Indonesia **I.** College community members with the ginkgo sapling from Hiroshima, Japan, planted during the Green Legacy Hiroshima Tree Dedication Ceremony **J.** Yijia Gao '19, Swapna Pathak, and Chie Sakakibara **K.** Maddy Samet, Sophie Maffie '20, Jordan Bettencourt '20, and Anna DeGolier '20 enjoying the ES Fall Picnic **L.** Chie Sakakibara and 2017 Oberlin Honorary Doctor of Humanities recipient Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk **M.** Augustus Arthur teaching local elementary school students about the Environmental Dashboard

# Grants, Awards, and Scholarships

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## SCHAENING MEMORIAL FUND AWARDS

The Ann Marie Schaening '87 Memorial Fund provides support for students pursuing Winter Term projects related to the environment. Four students were granted awards in January 2018:

**Ify Ezimora '19** returned to Amsterdam to visually document the environmental landscapes of the city, highlighting the lack of green spaces around city centers and the accessibility of green spaces that are outside city centers.

**Charlotte Price '20** participated in the Oberlin Students in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (OSSGUA) Winter Term trip, studying Spanish, meeting with lawyers and human rights activists, and staying with the Copalaa community of Alta Verapaz.

**Francesca Scola '20** traveled to rural Nepal with a small group of Oberlin students to work closely with Maya Universe Academy, Nepal's first free private school, and work on their small organic farm.

**Quinn Shu '21** took the course "Wolves and Northwoods Carnivores: Predatory Ecology" at the Audubon Center in Minnesota and completed research on the comparison of the communication systems of wolves and dogs.

## DORIS BARON FUND

The Doris Baron Environmental Studies Student Research Fund supports independent research projects proposed by students and designed to increase knowledge of and appreciation for environmental studies. This year the fund will support two group research projects:

**Kieran Minor '19** and **Rashad Saleh '19** will travel to Chinle, AZ on the Navajo Reservation to lead an original environmentally focused youth arts workshop. Their project, Project Hózhó, will take place over four weeks, comprising of morning film classes and afternoon songwriting classes geared toward empowering local youth to become the next generation of environmental storytellers. The project will culminate in a weekend of presentations in Chinle and in Window Rock (the seat of the Navajo Tribal government), as well as in a website, where student work will be preserved and published for a wider audience. They have the support of several local collaborating organizations, including Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Chinle Indian Health Service Hospital, and Chinle Unified School District,

and, in addition to their Doris Baron award, secured a foundational \$10,000 Davis Projects for Peace Grant to cover base costs of the program.

**Nathan Carpenter '20, Kaylee Elliott '19, Ify Ezimora '19, and Santiago Roman '20** will travel to Africatown, Alabama for a week during Oberlin's 2018 fall recess to record oral history interviews with members of the Africatown community and lend support and resources to the community as they continue to engage in the fight for environmental justice. Their work during this week will build upon an existing oral history archive of Africatown that was initiated in October 2017 by Oberlin College students in collaboration with residents of Africatown and under the supervision of Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Janet Fiskio. Over the course of the week, they will record many oral history interviews with elders of the Africatown community with the intention of expanding an oral history archive that reflects the community's rich history of oral tradition and preserves local knowledge about the impacts of industrialization and environmental racism.

## 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.

During summer 2017, Professor John Petersen worked with **Ethan Ableman '18** and **Olivia Vasquez '20** as members of a faculty (including Cindy Frantz and Rumi Shammin), staff and student team focused on research and development related to enhancing the efficacy of Environmental Dashboard as a tool for communication, teaching, learning and community transformation.

Associate Professor Janet Fiskio supervised **Julia Cooke '19** during a summer 2017 community-based internship at Vel's Purple Oasis garden and community kitchen in University Circle, Cleveland. Work at the site included researching and constructing raised beds within the high tunnel, planting and cultivation in the high tunnel and garden beds, purchasing and planting starts and seeds, harvesting and weeding, and work with volunteer groups.

In fall 2017, **Katherine LaTourrette '18** and **Katherine Maleckar '18** worked with Associate Professor Janet Fiskio as research assistants, helping with preparations for the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London program in spring 2018. Both students participated in the London program in 2017.

They conducted research on museums, walking tours, and other sites to help with syllabus planning.

**Yijia Gao '19** worked with Assistant Professor Chie Sakakibara in fall 2017, serving as the coordinator for on-campus events featuring indigenous activist-musicians Oki Kano and Nate Renner, as research assistant for ENV 327 Indigenous Environmentalism, and as editor for Chie's upcoming book on climate change and indigenous cultural resilience.

**Sean Kerns '20** and **Brian James '19** served as interns at the AJLC, supervised by Facilities Manager and Community Outreach Coordinator, Ben Hobbs. They managed and maintained the building's grounds, organic garden, Living Machine, and Plum Creek monitoring program.

### JOYCE GORN MEMORIAL PRIZE

Joyce A. Gorn Memorial Prize is awarded to one or more students for outstanding work on an extracurricular or off-campus environmental project.

### Danyang Dong '18

Danyang devoted most of his winter terms and summers to exercise his goal to "strengthen the informational bridge between scientific and political communities and cultural bridge between Chinese and English-speaking populations on environmental and sustainability issues." With an Oberlin Shansi In-Asia Grant, Winter Term Grant, Ann Marie Schaening '87 Memorial Fund Award, and Doris Baron Award for Environmental Studies, he was able to use internships around the world to interrogate environmental NGO development in China, regional urban development environmental consulting, illegal wildlife trafficking and international green product trade. Each time he returned Oberlin, he made presentations to the campus community about his extracurricular experience, for which his double major in biology and minor in politics enabled him to assess environmental issues through synthetic lenses. Danyang also served as board member and chair of Green Edge Fund committee and as student assistant for the Luce Initiative for Asian Studies and the Environment (LIASE) during his time at Oberlin.

### Christopher Kennedy '18

Christopher has held various environmental leadership roles with organizations on campus, including Students for Energy Justice, which recently has been working to educate the community and resist the Nexus pipeline that is scheduled to run through Oberlin. As a role model for environmental justice activism on campus, he has supported other students, worked on initiatives to

benefit the community, and make real change against the injustices he sees. He also served as the Garden Intern at Oberlin Community Services, and is involved with the faith community through Christ Church.

### Naomi Roswell '18

Since her first year, Naomi has engaged in a wide variety of extracurricular activities that have contributed to the life of the college and the larger community. She has served for multiple years as a student representative on the Committee for Environmental Sustainability. She was one of a small group of students who spearheaded a student motion to the Oberlin Trustees that they divest from fossil fuels. Her work in the larger community has included serving as Assistant Director for Oberlin Drama at Grafton. (Mission: "Oberlin Drama at Grafton prepares residents of the Grafton Reintegration Center for a successful return to society through increased self-knowledge, social understanding, and enhanced life skills gained from studying and performing meaningful drama.") Naomi also did a poetry residency in a 7th grade class at Langston Middle School and has been involved with Girls in Motion throughout her time at Oberlin.

### SENIOR HONORS

#### Madeline Moran '18

"An Environmental and Cost Comparison Between Polypropylene Plastic Drinking Straws and a "Greener" Alternative"

### OTHER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

**Kieran Minor '19** Harry S. Truman Scholarship and Kathryn W. Davis 'Projects for Peace' Award

**Emily Stanford '18** Thomas J. Watson Fellowship

ES major **Brian Rubin '18** and Benjamin Steger '18 were awarded Launch U's second place prize of \$10,000 for their startup Virtu.Academy, an online music lessons service that connects Oberlin Conservatory students to middle and high school students across the state of Ohio.

**Tessa Emmer '11**, a graduate of the Environmental Studies Program (ENV 327/ECON double major), along with her business partners Catherine O'Hare '11 (BIOL), and Avery Resor received LaunchU's first place award of \$20,000 for their venture Salt Point Seaweed in the 2018 LaunchU pitch competition. The company sells high-quality nutritional seaweed sustainably harvested by hand in northern California. The three are committed to using their business as a force for environmental protection, community development, and food system transformation.

## Majors Win Top Honors CONTINUED

sustainable solutions that promote energy independence, economic and educational opportunities, health and wellbeing, and cultural resilience.

Aside from serving on the boards of the Green EDGE Fund and Student Union, Minor tutors through Oberlin's Ninde Scholars Program, has starred in multiple theater productions, sings in an a cappella group, and takes secondary voice lessons in the conservatory. For his Truman application, he cited organizational experience with the boards as examples of formulating ideas and working with different legislative organizations.

"Oberlin celebrates creativity, collaboration, and exploration like no other place," Minor says. "Only here could I imagine myself having two majors and a minor (with room for courses outside these areas), being involved with student



Kieran Minor  
Photo credit: Jennifer Manna

legislative and public service organizations, as well as doing theater and taking secondary lessons in jazz voice. Being a part of this community has taught me to celebrate these differences, as well as to combine different interests in ways I would not have thought to before."



## Emily Stanford '17 Receives Watson Fellowship

BY AMANDA NAGY, ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR OF MEDIA RELATIONS, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Emily Stanford '17 will spend a year traveling alone as a Watson Fellow to Australia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Madagascar, and Malawi to explore how different cultural perceptions of bats influence their conservation. Stanford, who double majored in biology and environmental studies, says bats are the world's most misunderstood mammals.

"Bats are unique, diverse, and fascinating. Bats are also very important for economies and ecosystems—they disperse seeds, pollinate plants, and consume crop-harming insects," explains Stanford, a native of Tyler, Texas, who graduated in December 2017. "Despite these benefits, bat populations across the globe are declining due to human-caused activities such as deforestation, wind turbines, hunting, and active



Emily Stanford  
Photo courtesy of Emily Stanford

persecution. Bat conservation is further complicated by the fact that people are often wary of bats, associating them as signs of evil."

Throughout her Watson year, Stanford wants to understand how people in different cultures view bats, asking, "Are they

creepy or cute? Do they try to protect them or kill them? What are the main threats to bats, and can we find a way to peacefully exist with them?"

To explore these questions, Stanford will interact with various stakeholders involved with bat conservation. "I plan to volunteer at bat rehabilitation centers, assist local conservation organizations, shadow disease researchers, live among communities that hunt and eat bats for survival, stay with isolated groups that mine guano for a living, and much more."

The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship is a one-year grant for purposeful, independent exploration outside the United States, awarded to graduating seniors nominated by one of 40 partner colleges. Fellows conceive original projects, deciding where to go, who to meet, and when to change course. They do not affiliate with academic institutions and may not hold formal employment. The fellowship provides a one-year stipend of \$30,000.

Stanford says the Watson Fellowship provides a rare opportunity to deeply engage with and explore a topic in conservation work that she is passionate about, and she expects the project to push her to her limits.

"There will be many nights when I am lost, alone, stuck, confused, scared, and embarrassed; nights where I don't have a bed to sleep on, if I sleep at all. There will be times when I am drenched in sweat and covered in mosquitoes—uncomfortable at best. But I am excited to embrace these challenges as I think it will make me stronger and help put my life in perspective."

Stanford says the classes she took at Oberlin, such as Disease Ecology, helped her develop the ability to think critically and holistically about problems. She also credits the support and mentorship she received from faculty.

“At Oberlin, I felt comfortable speaking about my ideas in class, I felt at ease when I made mistakes, and I felt free enough to debate my professors about the nuances of a free-response question,” she says. “Having the opportunity to know my professors well paid off in many respects. I gained mentorship, friendship, and strong recommendation letters, which in turn helped me as I applied for summer

programs. These smaller stepping stones built my experience and ultimately made the Watson Fellowship come within my reach.”

Stanford participated in the Oberlin debate team, was a varsity swimmer for one year, and served on a biology majors’ committee. She has also been a tour guide and interviewer in the admissions office. Following her Watson year, Stanford says she would like to give a TED talk about her travels, and she intends to pursue graduate programs with the goal of working in conservation and science education.

## Reflections of Graduating Seniors

### DANYANG DONG ‘18

Environmental Studies 101 class was the most interesting class to me when I was in freshman year. The idea of people’s negative impacts to the earth’s systems have become pervasive, ingrained, and almost irreversible appalled but also appealed me. It’s a grant challenge and mind shift that our generation needs to take in. Moreover, global actions must happen within our generation. Being an international student from China, I see the importance of cross-cultural and cross-continental coalition on environmentalism, and this led to some of my course choices such as global environmental policy/politics and Climate Change problems. My second major Biology and minor in Politics also served me well in these lines of inquiry. Besides school work, I had many internship experiences between China and the U.S., with support from multiple on-campus scholarships (many from ENVS department). During those internships, I explored themes such as urban sustainability, environmental NGO development, international green good trade, and international wildlife trafficking. Furthermore, because ENVS’ strong alumni network, I was able to meet many practitioners at various organizations. Apart



Danyang pointing at a native orchid in China *Photo courtesy of Danyang Dong*

from all these great academic and practical experience, I also enjoyed the campus events offered by ENVS a lot. From the handicraft social night and guest speakers to the Green EDGE

Fund and rallies, these opportunities make ENVS a close-knit community, and the one that will always be in my heart. Lastly, I’d like to thank Prof. Offen, Prof. Shammin, Prof. Peterson ‘88, Prof. Pathak, Prof. Laushman, and Prof. Sakakibara for their precious help along the way.



Naomi Roswell *Photo courtesy of Naomi Roswell*

### NAOMI ROSWELL ‘18

While Oberlin boasts that one person can change the world, many of us know that we need collaboration, partnerships, and movements to make meaningful change. Here at Oberlin I have investigated how such change is made at different levels through a combination of academic, theoretical, and applied practices. To understand the mechanisms at the global levels, I researched intergovernmental approaches to addressing climate change and the roles transnational environmental movements. To influence intermediate institutions, I served on several Oberlin College committees where I moved administrators to envision and enact a better Oberlin despite fiscal constraints. At the most local levels, I facilitated transformative performing arts programs including creating poetry and dance with middle school students and theater with men in prison. Through each of these, I learned to build, maintain, and support meaningful relationships, develop creative solutions, and seek enough information and context to understand (and helpfully participate) in complex dynamics -- from the level of international conflict to the middle school classroom.

# Faculty and Staff News and Notes



## AUGUSTUS ARTHUR

On April 25, 2018, I was honored to receive the Staff Excellence in Community Engagement award. I want to first take this opportunity to share this award with all the students, staff and faculty who work tirelessly with the Environmental Dashboard to engage, educate, motivate and empower communities to embrace sustainable thought and action across scales.

Three years ago I was given the opportunity to be a part of this august institution and to work with such incredible and amazing colleagues made up of faculty staff and students in the Environmental Studies program. I have also had the welcome role of working closely with the Oberlin community on a daily basis. The journey so far has been nothing short of a worthwhile experience. A lot happened in the span of a year. One of the highlights of this period has been the successful rollout of the brand new Oberlin Community Calendar. Before we introduced the calendar, organizations such as the Oberlin Business Partnership have for many years received and entered events into their organizational calendar. Events are submitted by members of the Oberlin community.

This tedious process limited the submission of events to one or two people with access to the OBP calendar. What we have done with the new calendar is to decentralize the process where any member of the Oberlin community with an event is able to go online and submit the event or volunteer opportunity to be vetted and displayed both on at [environmentaldashboard.org/calendar](http://environmentaldashboard.org/calendar) and on our 15 digital signs located all over the community. We have also developed a useful newsletter that anyone can sign up for. Events for the coming week are automatically collected and sent by email every Friday morning to all newsletter subscribers. A lot of preliminary work on this calendar was done in partnership with Madeleine Gefke and Ananya

Gupta, who worked with us give presentations and organize and implement workshops.

We have also expanded the reach of Dashboard digital signage in a big way. Over the last year, new screens have been installed at the City of Oberlin office, the finance office of the City of Oberlin, Oberlin IGA grocery store, Oberlin Fire Department, and at the Board of Education office for Oberlin City Schools. This expansion increases our tally of screens to 17 screens in total.

We have collected data in a time 1 survey to assess the effectiveness of the new community calendar at the IGA store. This work was done in collaboration with students from an ENVS 101 project group and was also done before the installation of the new screen at the store.

I would like to thank all the faculty and also students I have worked with on the dashboard project and on non-dashboard related tasks. I would say that I have enjoyed working with everyone I have had the privilege to work with. Let's see what the next year brings!

## PAUL BREHM

I was very excited to join the Environmental Studies Program in Fall 2017 after completing my PhD in Economics at the University of Michigan. As a joint appointee with the Economics Department, I have the privilege of working with two great sets of faculty members. At Oberlin this year, I have enjoyed teaching environmental economics, energy economics, and the principles of economics. All three courses are new for me as an instructor, and I have relished learning how to present the material and learning from my students as they interact with it for the first time.

One of my favorite parts of class has been the Electricity Strategy Game, a simulation that we run in Energy Economics. This simulation has seven teams of students that each own an electric utility. We explore how utilities



strategically interact during wholesale auctions, as well as the effects that lower natural gas prices, carbon taxes, and renewable electricity generation have on electricity prices and carbon emissions.

My research focuses on energy and environmental economics, with a splash of industrial organization. In

recent work, I study secondary market efficiency in the context of an oil lease lottery in Wyoming and the effect of hydraulic fracturing technology on greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity sector. In a current project, I am examining the effects of resource booms on Indonesia's manufacturing sector. My current work involves several Oberlin undergraduates as research assistants. I was excited to be able to present some of my work this March at the Midwestern Economics Association's annual conference in Evanston, IL



### JANET FISKIO

Hello from London! 2017-18 has been a busy and exciting year in terms of both teaching and research. I was very grateful to receive a curriculum development fellowship from Oberlin for 2017-18. With this fellowship, I attended the University of California, Berkeley's Advanced Summer Oral History Institute in August 2017. This workshop has been crucial to preparing me for teaching my new course, ENVS 230: Environmental Justice and Local Knowledge and facilitating the creation of a digital archive for Africatown (see my update on Africatown in this newsletter for more information about the class). This spring I've been teaching in the Danenberg Oberlin-in-London program with my friend and mentor, T.S. McMillin. We are co-teaching the course "Nature, Culture, London," and I'm also teaching the course "Landscapes of Resistance." One of the most exciting parts of this program is the chance to use the city of London as a classroom. We've also taken field trips to Brixton, Manchester, and Cornwall, and in the next weeks will travel to the Lake District and Stonehenge. These courses have given me the chance to explore concepts of deep time, geohumanities, and radical history with my students.

This has also been a productive year for research. I've published two chapters: "Dancing at the End of the World: The Poetics of the Body in Indigenous Protest" in *Ecocriticism and Indigenous Studies*, and "Building Paradise in the Classroom" in *Teaching Climate Change in Literary and Cultural Studies*. I was also thrilled to work with my former student, now colleague, Sophia Bamert '14

on a third chapter, "New Directions in Ecocriticism," for the Cambridge University Press volume *American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010*. I've visited Africatown three times for community-directed fieldwork, accompanied by my wonderful students.

Outside the classroom, I've been enjoying exploring London and beyond. I'm looking forward to getting back to crossfit when I return to the States. My partner bought a house in the Rothrock State Forest in Pennsylvania, so I'm going to spend the summer cutting firewood, driving the tractor, and avoiding bears.

### BEN HOBBS

Normally, in early April I spend my time managing the flurry of activity surrounding the preparation of the garden and grounds for the spring planting season. This spring, however, I seem to be spending more time watching the flurry of snowflakes from my office window as we have yet to emerge from what has been one of the longest winters in recent memory. I know it will come, but summer and the warmth it provides could hurry up a bit.

I've spent my second year at Oberlin engaging more with the Oberlin community through the ENVS 101 Community Based Education program, improving and expanding our Living Machine Operator hiring and training process, and working to improve and update the Adam Joseph Lewis Center. Specifically, plans are underway for an LED lighting retrofit to the atrium, entryways, and bathrooms, and we replaced all the blinds in the building with a cradle-to-



cradle option that provides better daylight management in both classrooms and offices. I also built new seed starting racks for the greenhouse. Additionally, I had the opportunity to speak about

the Environmental Dashboard program at the Water Management Association of Ohio's annual conference in Columbus this past November, and I attended the High-Performance Buildings and Workplaces conference in Dallas this past May.

Personally, the previous year has been focused on family and home. Weekday evenings continue to be filled with soccer practices, swim lessons, and homework. Weekends are often spent building a swing set and a fence in the backyard and built-in cabinets and shelves in the laundry room.

### BRAD CHARLES MELZER

This year I have been very focused on projects in our Great Lakes bioregion and the local Oberlin community, working hard to increase awareness of important environmental issues that we face, reaching out with community education initiatives, and as always, implementing practical, hands-on solutions. With ES, I have continued the Agroecology practicum at the George Jones Farm, including making connections with regional agroecology projects such as the Rid All Green Partnership, Lettuce Heads Aquaponics, Green City Growers, the Ohio City Farm, and Refugee Response. I've been working with ES students on a Sustainable Agriculture private reading, which has included working with a local supermarket to better source and market local produce on their shelves. Also, I spoke at a Permaculture Convergence in Akron, Ohio hosted by the Great Rivers and Lakes Permaculture Institute and landscape architect Sabrena Schweyer APLD. With regional Permaculture organization The Green Triangle, I am working to offer another Permaculture Design Certification course and have taken on the role as Board Secretary. I have also consulted on a project for the nascent medical cannabis industry in Ohio offering local connections and sustainable cultivation and process techniques. I am also very proud to have worked closely with Prospect Elementary, where both of my children attend, in Oberlin this year, teaching young students about biomimicry as well as working with the Principal (and the Orchestra Director – my wife, Audrey) to install an educational perennial garden - restoring a neglected courtyard. I have also begun working with regional all-star plant nursery Petitti's Garden Center (who provided the plants for the Prospect Courtyard), who grow all of their plants in the region and who host an impressive 50 ft high by 40 ft wide greenhouse structure with cathedral ceilings! I am very grateful to be able to work on all of these projects and look forward to doing more in the future to help our community and region to be national and global leaders in addressing climate issues and creating sustainability.



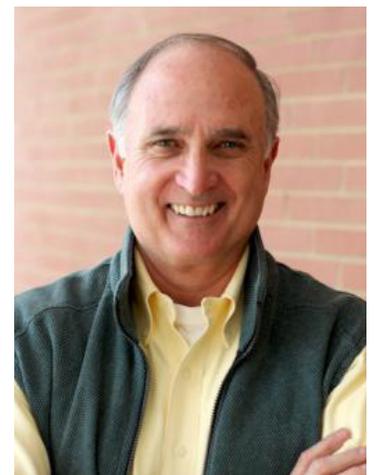
### KARL OFFEN

I've kept busy by teaching ENVS 101 every semester and serving as faculty advisor for the Green Edge Fund and Students for Energy Justice. I also serve as the campus representative for the Udall Undergraduate Scholarship. This year, the college nominated two students for the highly competitive award. I also sit on the Latin American Studies

and International Studies program committees and have been involved in hosting several speakers this past year. A highlight of my year was my participation in a Winter Term course titled "Natural" Disasters, Culture, and Sustainability in Indonesia, led by Professor Jennifer Fraser of the Oberlin Conservatory. Four faculty and eight students spent 17 days learning from colleagues in Banda Aceh and Jogjakarta about the devastating 2004 tsunami and a 2010 volcanic eruption respectively. We made a short interlude to Bukit Lawang where we hiked in Gunung Leuser National Park and saw Orangutans in the wild. The significance of this last Orangutan sanctuary in Sumatra was made all the more poignant by the fact that we had to drive for two hours through unending palm oil plantations to get there. On the research front, I've pushed through the editorial process for my chapter "Environment, Space and Place: Cultural Geographies of Colonial Afro-Latin America" for the Cambridge Press book *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction*, which will be out later this year.

### DAVID ORR

With the completion of the Peter B. Lewis Center (hotel and conference center) I have officially retired from Oberlin College. I am now working on an effort to better understand the historic and institutional origins of our political dysfunction ([www.stateofamericandemocracy.org](http://www.stateofamericandemocracy.org)) and what can be done to repair and strengthen



democratic institutions. The opening State of American Democracy Conference was held on campus on November 15-17, 2017 and featured 32 speakers including Jane Mayer, Ganesh Sitaraman, and Reverend William Barber. Subsequent events will take place in Denver, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. I am also working on an edited book to help turn the present confusion, anger, and angst into positive and constructive post-2020 political change.

I am also writing a book on the future of democracy in a hotter world. An earlier book, *Dangerous Years* (Yale University Press, 2016) is now available in paperback.



### SWAPNA PATHAK

I was on a junior sabbatical leave during the year 2017-2018. While I missed teaching and my students, the time away from Oberlin accorded me the much needed opportunity to focus on my research, reorganize my courses, and do some hiking! After having taught continuously at Oberlin

for many years, I started my sabbatical last summer with a couple of long hiking trips in Iceland and Norway. This was my first experience of seeing glaciers this up close and the thought that we will lose something so beautiful was overwhelming. I also spent a considerable amount of time last year conducting interviews for the two projects I have been working on. One focuses on the coordination between various non-governmental organizations in the climate change negotiations, and the second analyzes the strategy adopted by small countries to gain leverage in climate change negotiations. I have been thinking a lot about my course on Environmental Policy (ENVS/POLT 208). Given the state of our government and all the environmental policy rollbacks I felt the need to rethink the course and organize it to fit the current political milieu. I am excited to discuss some of this new material I have been looking into during this process in my classes in the future. I look forward to returning to my wonderful colleagues and amazing students this coming Fall.

### JOHN PETERSEN

Our ES newsletter always compels me to wrestle the experiences of a year into discrete accomplishments. Many things happened, a few of which I remember and will mention. My sabbatical ended. I advised some wonderful student projects in my Systems Ecology and Environmental Communications classes and through the various other

contexts in which I collaborate with students. Together we developed and promoted the adoption of a super cool new community calendar for the City of Oberlin that has already been widely adopted. We further researched the ES Program's experimental hazelnut orchard as a model of a "woody agricultural" alternative to conventional crops. Together with faculty colleagues, we developed new approaches to measuring "systems thinking" capacities. We designed a next generation of "Environmental Orb" technology and initiated new research on the efficacy of this and other new approaches to promoting pro-community and pro-environmental thought and behavior. Much time was spent executing a \$50,000 grant that Cindy Frantz and Rumi Shammin and I were awarded from from the Ohio EPA, "Pilot integration of Environmental Dashboard in Ohio: Teacher Training and Curriculum Development." Through this grant, Augustus Arthur and I with Oberlin student collaborators had the pleasure of working with teachers from Oberlin, Cleveland, and Toledo public schools. Much appreciation goes to Augustus Arthur for his dedicated service to the Environmental Dashboard project! With co-authors Cindy Frantz and former students Evan Tinknell and Chris Canning I published a paper, "Systems thinking is enhanced in response to an animated visual representation of real-time resource flows through a community" in the journal *System Science and Behavior*. In January of 2018, Lucid, the company that I co-founded in 2004 with three former students, Vladi Shunturov, Gavin Platt and Michael Murray was sold to Acuity Brands. Vladi and Gavin remain the Ben and Jerry's of building monitoring, analytics and display technology. I'm still actively collaborating with this group. My parents and my children and I are all getting older. Oberlin students remain remarkably youthful and keep me so as well.





### **CHIE SAKAKIBARA**

My third year at Oberlin is coming to an end. Last semester, I enjoyed teaching a seminar titled Indigenous Environmentalism, with which I contributed to the newly implemented Oberlin Center for Convergence (StudiOC). In this seminar, the students from multiple majors and I explored

how the vitality of indigenous art today is evidence of an extraordinary process of survival and resilience. In conjunction with this seminar, I hosted Oki Kano, Ainu musician and activist from northern Japan, and Nate Renner, Ph.D. candidate in ethnomusicology from Toronto, for a public performance and guest lecture as well as for classroom visits. I'm grateful to the generous support provided by Environmental Studies, Luce Initiative on Asia Studies and the Environment (LIASE), History, East Asian Studies, and StudiOC to make these events possible.

Oberlin's collegial environment encourages my research to inform my teaching and vice versa. Just as I work in a collaborative spirit with indigenous communities, do I seek to build the same relationships with our students. Professor Janet Fiskio and I were recently awarded with a NSF conference grant (\$40,000) from the Arctic Social Sciences Program to support a community-partnered conference on oral history and environmental justice. This conference successfully took place in Africatown, Alabama, October 16-18, 2017 by bringing together residents of Arctic Alaska and Africatown (see Janet's report in this newsletter). We sincerely hope that this project, our mentoring effort, and our ongoing collaboration with the communities contribute to the empowerment of underrepresented student groups as well as the promotion of cross-cultural reciprocity.

As of this year, I hold a courtesy appointment with the Department of East Asian Studies. I enjoyed working closely with my colleagues in both Environmental Studies and East Asian Studies, especially with Professor Ann Sherif who chairs the LIASE Committee and also serves on the Environmental Studies Program Committee (ESPC).

During my upcoming junior faculty leave, I will live in Kyoto, Japan, to teach and research at Dōshisha University as a Visiting Faculty Fellow. In addition to the enrichment

of my professional life, I also have an ambition to enhance my repertoires of sanshin, the three-stringed instrument covered in snakeskin, an iconic musical instrument from the Ryūkyū Islands



### **MD RUMI SHAMMIN**

It has been an exciting year for me – both in terms of development of new research and in my role as Chair of Environmental Studies. I have continued my research projects on socio-technical feedback and environmental communication using the environmental dashboard and measuring and mapping urban food access in

Cleveland. I am also developing a new project as part of my long-term research interest on energy and climate change issues and initiatives in developing countries, with a particular focus on Bangladesh. The emergency preparedness programs in climate vulnerable coastal areas of Bangladesh have been in place for over two decades and are often cited as successful examples of early warning and emergency preparedness systems that have been able to greatly minimize the impact on marginalized populations in coastal areas. These systems are now integral parts of climate change adaptation programs in Bangladesh. I am investigating whether we learn from the Bangladesh model of early warning and emergency preparedness programs to inform the disaster preparedness programs in coastal U.S. communities that are vulnerable to natural hazards exacerbated by climate change. This project is still in early stages where most of my efforts are directed towards developing local contacts, gathering baseline information and building my own knowledge on this topic. In 2017-18, I made two trips to Bangladesh to meet with people in relevant agencies including the International Red Cross, The World Bank, non-governmental research teams, and several local academic institutes. I am currently working with research assistants at Oberlin to synthesize and analyze the data and information collected thus far, conduct literature review, and design detailed research plans for the coming years. I am also soliciting internal and external funds to support this project phase of my research on climate

change in developing countries. In the coming years, I will be investigating opportunities for north-south knowledge exchange on emergency preparedness as part of climate change adaptation. I am also working with my colleague Swapna Pathak and other collaborators in Washington, D.C., and Vancouver, Canada, on a project to study financing and programming opportunities in Bangladesh and other developing countries under new climate funds committed as part of the Paris Agreement. However, this project has been trumped and currently undergoing the process of re-envisioning.

**ROSALIND SOLTOW '08, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

I celebrated my first anniversary of joining the ES Program family in March - this year has flown by! I have enjoyed getting to know more of the ES majors, matching names to faces, and working closely with some of them on major projects. This academic year was marked by several key events, most notably the ES Program Review activities and the new series of career-focused events hosted by the program. Having never worked for an academic program on campus before, being thrown into a program review process at the beginning of the fall semester was intense, but I was glad to be a part of the process. In April, I was pleased to be able to organize the Environmental Careers Day along with student event coordinator and ES major, Florence Guan. It was great to get in touch with so many ES Program alumni and hear what they're doing now. Outside of the office, I had a busy season as a member of the Firelands and Mansfield Symphonies and as a substitute player with the Canton, Akron, and Ashland Symphonies. The concert I enjoyed the most was a live performance of the full score for a special screening of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone in Akron. As President of the Board of Trustees for the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, I have been working to put our new 3-year

strategic plan into place and make preparations for our 50th Anniversary season celebration and fundraising campaign next year. My summer will be spent making updates to my house, growing my graphic design skills, traveling to visit friends, and hanging out with my 1-year-old pup, Maya.



**DARREL TREMAINE, ENERGY AND RESOURCE SENIOR MANAGER (OES) AND INSTRUCTOR**

This has been a very productive and rewarding academic year. In July of 2017, I accepted the position of Senior Energy and Resource Manager for the college and became a full member of the Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES). Although the focus of my work shifted slightly, it was very important to me to maintain a strong connection with the students and faculty in Environmental Studies. Therefore, I collaborated with John Petersen and Rumi



Shammin to design a practicum course entitled "Resource Reduction in the Built Environment." This practicum offers students an extremely 'hands on' practical experience using data from our Environmental Dashboard to drive efficiency project here on campus. Five groups of students collaborated with numerous campus stakeholder groups

like Facility Operations, Facility Planning and Construction, OES, the Dashboard Team, Cindy Frantz's Social Psychology Lab, Building Managers, and the Green Edge Fund to identify issues, propose funding solutions, and to prepare a path forward for project completion.

Given the tenacity, resourcefulness, and resilience of OC students, it's no surprise that the practicum projects were very successful. In just one semester, we tackled lighting upgrades in Conservatory Central and Robertson Hall, installing water bottle fill stations in every dorm, designing a living wall to shade the eastern side of the AJLC atrium, creating a machine-learning based approach for automated water-leak detection and notification, and measurement of temperature and humidity in multiple spaces throughout numerous dorms to inform our understanding of the technical challenges of maintaining comfort in aging buildings. When completed, these projects will not only result in hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost savings, but will act as stepping stones for future students to collaborate with campus stakeholders to drive OC toward our goal of carbon neutrality by 2025.

## CONGRATS GRADUATES!

### ES MAJORS

Emma Ayzenberg  
 Gabrielle Bemby  
 Eliza Cuevas  
 Nathan Daniel  
 Skyler Davis  
 Danyang Dong  
 Owen Ellerkamp  
 Nicole Estrada  
 Rae Friedman  
 Dana Goldstein  
 Rong (Florence) Guan  
 Stephanie Gunter  
 Benjamin Jennings  
 Margaret Johnson  
 Sam Kalb  
 Jorge Kalil  
 Rebecca Kalish  
 Christopher Kennedy  
 Rowan Maher  
 Alex Maki  
 Anna Moore  
 Madeline Moran  
 Magdalen Musante  
 Jenny Pham  
 Cara Potter

Naomi Roswell  
 Bryan Rubin  
 Cyd Sacks  
 Bridget Schiff  
 Emily Stanford  
 Morgan Stein  
 Andrew Styles  
 Suzanne Tarkulich  
 Samuel Tunick  
 Megan Van Breemen  
 Jane Wernitz  
 Daphne Williams  
 Laurel Wolfe Wawrzynek  
 Muci (Alain) Yu

### ES MINORS

Hannah Cook  
 Caroline Edwards  
 Sydney Garvis  
 Katherine LaTourrette  
 Caitlin McCuskey  
 Julia Ranney  
 Claudia Scott  
 Theo Ser-Ramin  
 Nicolas Vigilante  
 Clara Weinstein

## Oberlin to Host Next NCSE Student Conference

This September, members of the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) will convene on Oberlin's campus for its 2018 Student Sustainability Leaders conference. The one-day conference will be organized by Oberlin's ES Program student reps and faculty in partnership with NCSE's other Ohio member institutions, the Hanley Sustainability Institute at the University of Dayton, the University of Toledo, the Ohio State University, the University of Findlay. Last year's conference, 'Student Sustainability Leaders: Networking Our Future' was hosted by the University of Dayton.



The event is intended to be a student-run, student-centric conference celebrating undergraduate and graduate contributions to the interdisciplinary field of sustainability. Following last year's event format, the day will be split into two sections: a poster and exhibitor session in the morning, followed by small panel-led breakout sessions in the afternoon. The breakout sessions will feature professionals in a variety of different sustainability themed careers including the public sector, private sector, and nonprofit organizations. Panelists will share their career stories in sustainability with students and offer career advice.

All Ohio students of all disciplines are invited and present research and scholarship. Registration will be free for students and will include a free one-year membership to NCSE. Full details and event schedule will be announced in August.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM

### Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies

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 440.775.8747  
[www.oberlin.edu/envs](http://www.oberlin.edu/envs)  
[www.oberlin.edu/ajlc](http://www.oberlin.edu/ajlc)

### FACULTY & STAFF

#### Md Rumi Shammin

*Chair and Associate Professor of Environmental Studies*

#### Augustus Arthur

*Sustainable Technology Research Fellow*

#### Paul Brehm

*Assistant Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies*

#### Janet Fiskio

*Associate Professor of Environmental Studies and Comparative American Studies*

#### Benjamin Hobbs

*AJLC Facilities Manager and Community Outreach Coordinator*

#### Brad Charles Melzer

*Visiting Instructor of Environmental Studies*

#### Karl Offen

*Professor of Environmental Studies*

#### David Orr

*Emeritus Professor of Environmental Studies*

#### Swapna Pathak

*Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies*

#### John Petersen

*Paul Sears Professor of Environmental Studies*

#### Chie Sakakibara

*Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies*

#### Rosalind Soltow

*Administrative Assistant*

#### Darrel Tremaine

*Energy and Resource Senior Manager and Instructor*

### ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM COMMITTEE

**Md Rumi Shammin, ES (Chair)**

**Paul Brehm, Economics**

**Janet Fiskio, ES**

**Cindy Frantz, Psychology**

**Ben Hobbs, ES**

**Dennis Hubbard, Geology**

**Roger Laushman, Biology**

**Thomas Newlin, Russian**

**Karl Offen, ES**

**Swapna Pathak, ES**

**John Petersen, ES**

**Charles Peterson, Africana Studies**

**Chie Sakakibara, ES**

**Ann Sherif, East Asian Studies**

**Peter Swendsen, TIMARA**