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1. **What are some of the topics that you cover in your course?**

This year I taught the course a bit differently. In choosing the content I followed the recommendations of the Ecological Society of America’s Four-Dimensional Ecology Education Framework (www.esa.org/4DEE/). These four dimensions highlight the importance of i) core ecological concepts, ii) cross-cutting themes, iii) human dimensions, and iv) science practices in ecology education.

2. **Why were you interested in teaching this course?**

Ecology is an interesting and challenging topic to teach. The breadth of topics and scales is huge, and the techniques and methods for data collection and analysis can be really diverse and challenging to follow for the non-expert. Thus, finding the right level and keeping students engaged is a challenge, but it’s fun for me to read more broadly than I otherwise would.

3. **Which of the UN Global Goals does your course embody?**

Goal 10: reduced inequalities. We had a week focused on environmental justice, where we had a wonderful guest lecture about environmental justice by Kristen Hessler from Philosophy, and we discussed a recent book chapter on the effects of race, class and ethnicity on vulnerability to natural disasters. (A book, I discovered after the students selected it, that was edited by our President!)

Goals 13/14/15: we cover climate change, ecosystem services, pollution, conservation, restoration, pulling examples from terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

4. **Is there anything else you want students to know about this course?**

Maybe they should take it? As a note, I will be offering it alternate years going forward. It will next be offered Fall 2020. In Fall 2019 I am teaching a course on the Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases, with a focus on wildlife systems.
No, that isn’t a typo. We are proud to announce that the renovation of Onondaga Hall on Indian Quad recently received LEED Gold Certification. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and indicates that a building was designed and built to meet certain standards in sustainability site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. The ratings range from LEED certified up to LEED platinum, depending on the number of points the building accumulates from the checklist of actions. There are currently nine LEED certified buildings at the University at Albany. One platinum, five gold and three silver. Thanks to all of those in the Department of Facilities Management that work on the construction and design of these buildings and make UAlbany a more sustainable place.
Mohawk Tower on Indian Quad - LEED GOLD

Onondaga Hall on Indian Quad - LEED Gold

Data Center - LEED Gold

Liberty Terrace - LEED Gold

Massry Center for Business - LEED Gold

Building 25 - LEED Platinum
Professor Hormes and Sydney assessed study participants on their beliefs and attitudes regarding the use of animals in food, clothing and research and surveyed them on their ownership and relationship with any childhood pets. Participants were asked about the number and types of their childhood pets, how often they were responsible for their animal(s) care and how close they felt to the animal(s). As a result, they found:

- Those who owned pets in childhood were significantly more likely than those without pets to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet as an adult.
- Those who owned a variety of pets (i.e. hamsters, dogs and cats, as opposed to just dogs) were more likely to avoid a wider range of animal products (e.g., refrain from all animal products as opposed to only meat) than those who owned fewer pets.
- A wider variety of pets led to a stronger opposition towards animal exploitation, which in turn led to less animal product consumption.
- Closeness to ones’ pet was a significant predictor of a person’s likelihood to refrain from animal products as an adult.

Sydney indicates that: “motivation for adhering to a low-meat or meat free diet is complex, and there are factors that influence our behavior of which we may be unaware. Our findings show that factors from our childhood, specifically, the variety of companion animals, appear to influence our attitudes towards animals, which then in turn appears to influence our dietary choices. These
Professor Julia Hormes (left) and graduate researcher Sydney Heiss (right) with their dogs.

choices have far reaching impacts, ranging from health, animal welfare, and the environment.”
She further states “past work has shown that closeness to companion animals in childhood has an influence on dietary choices in adulthood. We’ve expanded on this to find that regardless of closeness, the variety of animals plays a key role. This supports the hypothesis that with a greater variety of animals, we may be more capable of generalizing to other animals, specifically farmed animals. It seems as though this may lead to an expansion of our circle for moral consideration of other animals. The study of vegetarianism, and especially veganism, is still largely in its youth. What we’re most excited about is to show that these topics – pet ownership, attitudes towards animal rights, and vegetarianism – can be studied in a scientifically rigorous way. We hope that this may lay some groundwork for continued interest and focus in the area.

View the UAlbany article here.
Our 12th annual Energy Campaign wrapped up in mid-November and the campus community came together just before Thanksgiving break to celebrate our accomplishments. Overall, we saved 779,474 kilowatt hours or 291 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. This is equal to the annual electricity use of 43.6 homes for an entire year or taking 62 cars off the road for one year or the carbon sequestered by 7,542 trees. The top performing academic buildings were Art & Sciences, Biology, Life Sciences and the Science Library. The top performing living residences were Alumni Quad and Empire Commons.

The semester Terra Awards, recognizing faculty, staff and student innovation with regards to sustainability went to:
Dr. David Lewis, Geography and Planning
Bridget Collins, Dewey Library
Rebecca Benjamin, PhD candidate in the School of Education.

And congratulations to the School of Education on winning the Take the Stairs Tuesday contest!
Vegetarian Dinner - Celebrating The Styrofoam Ban in Albany County

Wednesday, December 19th from 6:00PM– 8:30PM

Dinner will take place at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, 85 Chestnut Street (people with cars can park in the lot near the door). All-you-can-eat lasagna dinner, with vegetarian and vegan options, salad, garlic bread and delicious desserts. Only $12 for adults, $6 for students, and $2 for children. People who make reservations are served first. For reservations, please leave a message for Rezsin Adams at 462-0891 or email pinebush@mac.com. See: https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Albany-executive-signs-foam-product-ban-13224607.php

Almost Full Moon Hike

Friday, December 21st at 6 pm at the Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center

Enjoy the Pine Bush at night under an almost full moon. Participants should meet at the Discovery Center for the 0.9 mile hike at Karner Barrens trailhead. Reservations are required for all attendees (regardless of age). Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Make reservations by calling 518-456-0655 or visit www.AlbanyPineBush.org/events

Snowshoeing in the Pine Barrens

Saturday, December 29th from 10:30 AM at Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center

Have you tried snowshoeing? The Albany Pine Bush Preserve is a great place to get started with this fun sport. This is a 0.9-mile hike on snowshoes exploring the frozen landscape of the pine barrens and learning the basics of snowshoeing. Snowshoes will be provided to program participants. If there is not enough snow on the ground, the hike will be without snowshoes.
1. What year did you graduate?
2013
2. What was your major/minor?
   Major: Environmental Science w/ Geography Concentration
   Minor: Atmospheric Science
3. What was your co-curricular and student organization involvement on campus?
   - Student Environmental Sustainability Council (Energy Chair, Administrative Chair, & Energy Audit Team)
   - Residential Life (Housing Manager)
   - Orientation (Orientation Assistant)
   - Academic Advisement Services Center
   - UAlbany Mixed Martial Arts
4. What are you doing now? Where do you live?
   For the last 3 years I had been serving as the Climate Programs Manager at Second Nature, a nonprofit based in Boston, MA. This fall I started a new role as the Data Manager in the sustainability@BU office at Boston University.
5. How have you applied your experience with the sustainability movement on campus and involvement with the Office of Sustainability into your post-college life and career?
   I started my role as Climate Programs Manager at Second Nature because of my knowledge of sustainability in higher education and understanding of the stakeholders that are involved in the decision-making process; from the senior leadership level to the students. It also helped that I knew about some grassroots action for energy conservation (from my days of breaking into the LCs), and how to identify and communicate with staff and faculty members. What I did not realize or fully acknowledge while I was involved with the Office of Sustainability was my affinity for climate and sustainability data. Over the last three years, while at Second Nature, I became very involved with understanding the data of over 500 colleges and universities; UAlbany is one of them. This includes data from greenhouse gas inventories, resilience assessments, and climate action plans. Ultimately, my experiences have served as a motivation for me to become the new Data Manager at Boston University. Lastly, to give credit where credit is due, Mary Ellen is and has been a great mentor and resource in my post-college life and career.

The Office of Sustainability is proud of the successes of our sustainability alumni! They were essential in the early stages of the sustainability movement at UAlbany and have shaped where it is now. Take a moment to read about them in our “Sustainability Alumni Spotlight” section of the Sustainability Bulletin each month.