Inside this Issue

3 .................................................................Curriculum

4 .................................................................Operations

5 .................................................................Research

6 .................................................................Engagement

7 .................................................................Community Events

8 .................................................................Leadership

10 .........................................................Sustainability Alumni Spotlight

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This past fall, the Office of Sustainability offered a freshman seminar class focused on Sustainability Skills. This course was developed after a 2018 campus sustainability survey indicated that offering such a course was the top academic initiative that students wanted to see implemented.

In the course, students participated in a series of hands-on workshops and demonstration of sustainable practices presented by UAlbany faculty, staff, and students. Included were:

- Dr. David Hochfelder from the History department discussing the energy market, his work on the Solarize Albany campaign and promotion and use of solar power and electric vehicles
- Dr. Paul Roundy from Atmospheric Science illustrating how he made his own home sustainable—a true MacGyver
- Maggie Hartley from Communications on reducing personal waste
- Science Librarian Irina Holden on gardening
- Senior Ryan Knight demonstrating homemade cleaning products
- Gary Ribis from Environmental Health and Safety on bike commuting
- Rev Sandy Damhof discussing ways to be an effective activist

In addition, the students took a field trip to the Radix Ecological Center, heard from Ken Ilgunas (a writer who hiked the length of the Keystone Pipeline) and calculated their carbon footprint in order to identify ways to reduce their impact. Ideally the students learned some valuable skills throughout the course that will last them a lifetime and benefit our planet.
Every spring we focus our education efforts on waste reduction so that means RecycleMania is in full swing! This is a friendly competition between colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. UAlbany has participated since 2006. RecycleMania gives national recognition to those with the best recycling rate over an 8-week period in February and March. The overall goal of the competition is to not only increase the amount of recyclable material being collected, but also to generate the least amount of waste on campuses. Recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions, saves energy, and protects wildlife from the ingestion of plastic that harms them. The Office of Sustainability hopes that UAlbany’s participation in RecycleMania motivates students and staff to increase their recycling efforts and reduce waste, and generates attention and support from the UAlbany community to other campus recycling programs.

2019 overall was a very successful year for RecycleMania with:

- Over 5 million college students, faculty and staff reached with 1.25 million actively engaged
- 69.5 million pounds of waste were recycled, composted, donated or used as biofuel
- 300 million single-use plastic containers were removed from the waste stream
- 99,254 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2E) prevented from being emitted into the atmosphere, equal to the annual emissions from 20,895 cars

UAlbany as a campus gathered a total of 116,080 pounds of recycled material last year during the competition with the help of students, faculty and staff. That’s equivalent to the weight of about 29 cars! We look forward to improving this year. Be on the lookout for special promotions designed to increase awareness and reward good waste reduction behaviors culminating in the annual Trashion Fashion show in April.
Universities and colleges from across the nation joined UAlbany for a three day conference that explored how higher education could strengthen preparedness, response, and recovery in the face of growing threats including a changing climate and extreme weather.

Development of this conference began in the wake of Hurricane María (2017). Hurricane María was one of the most deadly disasters in Puerto Rico’s history resulting in nearly 3,000 deaths and over $90 billion of economic loss. In the months following María, numerous universities and colleges from the US mainland traveled to Puerto Rico with the purpose of pursuing quick response research, service-learning, student exchange, and humanitarian relief. While these efforts to help communities in need were well intentioned, the post-María experience demonstrated several aspects of the university-community relationship in pre- and post-disaster environments that are seldom analyzed in the disaster literature, and urgently in need of study.

In June 2018, faculty from the University of Puerto Rico (led by RISE Co-Chairs Marla Pérez Lugo, PhD and Cecilio Ortiz Garcia, PhD) invited scholars and researchers from universities and colleges nationwide to Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. For three days, nearly 100 representatives from 26 universities examined the challenges and critical issues facing institutions of higher learning and the communities in which they serve during disaster and crisis.

RISE 2019 was designed to bring that conversation to the national level, providing a platform for researchers who are looking into the causes of disasters and ways to prepare and recover from them in an era of increasingly extreme weather.

During the three days of the conference, attendees embarked on a journey to explore how they could collectively create a better future for communities that have experienced disasters or are at risk of experiencing a disaster.
There’s this new program in our area that is a great fit for people who are considering a new heating or cooling system, looking to save energy in your home, or simply wondering what they can do to help address climate change. The campaign includes a team of six vetted regional heat pump installers and a building efficiency contractor that will provide free home evaluations as well as installations.

This program is called Heat Smart Capital Region and it is a community-based outreach, education and group purchasing campaign funded by the New York State Research and Development Authority and managed by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission. The campaign supports building efficiency and the adoption of energy efficient cold climate air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, and hot water heat pumps.

You can sign up for an evaluation of your home or join the campaign as a volunteer. To learn more, visit: www.heatsmartcapitalregion.com

For more information call Todd Fabozzi, Campaign Manager, at 518-453-0850 or email todd@cdrpc.org.
New York Solar Energy Society Conference

*Tuesday, February 4th from 7:45 am-5:30pm at 235 Hoosick St, Troy, NY*

Speakers at the conference include UAlbany Professor Richard Perez. The topics being discussed include: Energy Efficiency & Renewables, Workforce Development, Energy Storage and Solar Development. This event will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn Troy, Osborne Auditorium. For more info visit [https://nyforcleanpower.org/events/new-york-solar-energy-societys-conference/](https://nyforcleanpower.org/events/new-york-solar-energy-societys-conference/)

Climatologist Speaker: Dr. James Hansen

*Thursday, February 6th at 7pm at Kingston High School, 403 Broadway, Kingston, NY*

Columbia University Climatologist and former NASA astronomer Dr. James Hansen will lead a Catskill Conversation, alerting students and community members to the present day climate emergency.

There is a $10 fee to attend. Tickets available at the link below.


Zero Waste Cooking: Fermentation!

*Saturday, February 8th at 2pm at Honest Weight Food Co-op, 100 Watervliet Ave (Teaching Kitchen)*

Learn how to make every dollar spent on food go a long way! In this class we explore the need for us, as consumers, to better and more responsibility utilize our food. We will share fun ideas, recipes, tips, and storage/preservation methods. Culinary Institute trained Chef Morgan and team will demonstrate some of these techniques so that you can taste and recreate at home.
On December 6th, multiple members of the UAlbany community took part in a Climate Strike and staged a sit-in at the NYS Capitol. On the night before the strike, many students gathered in the Massry Center for Business on campus to make different posters and t-shirt designs to be worn on the day of the strike. The next day dozens of students gathered on the first floor of the Capitol Building on the Million Dollar Staircase.

Students from the Office of Sustainability, the Sunrise Movement, and UAlbany Students for Sustainability are some of the campus groups that took part in this strike for change.

The strike called for a Green New Deal, an end to fossil fuel campaign donations, accountability of fossil fuel executives, a citizen’s assembly, an end to industrial agriculture, the protection of indigenous rights, a just transition to renewable resources and climate refugee protections. During this sit-in, many individuals read letters they created to call on elected officials to make changes that are imperative to save our planet.
Students gather on the Million Dollar staircase of the Capitol Building to call for change.

Audrea Din speaks on the importance of climate action in NYS

The Office of Sustainability’s own Bradley Hershenson addressing the protestors at the Million Dollar Staircase
1. What year did you graduate?
2015

2. What was your major/minor?
I graduated with a PhD in history. My focus was environmental history, and I had an interdisciplinary committee that included several historians and an ecologist.

3. What was your co-curricular and student organization involvement on campus?
I was on the UAlbany Sustainability Committee (now UAlbany Green Scene), President of the History Graduate Student Organization, a graduate representative for the Living, Learning Community for Law and Justice, and a graduate assistant for undergraduate writing workshops. I was also a teaching assistant for various courses in the history department and for an ecology course.

4. What are you doing now? Where do you live?
I work as an environmental historian for a company called Historical Research Associates, Inc. We are a consulting firm that conducts research for government agencies, attorneys, private organizations, public relations firms, etc. My projects are usually interpretive exhibit development, histories for the National Park Service (I just finished a history of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and I’m currently working on one for Jewel Cave National Monument (in South Dakota) and the Columbia River Gorge (between Washington and Oregon)), or research for our environmental litigation work, which involves researching polluted sites to figure out who put what where when. I started with HRA in our Seattle office, but as of this summer, I moved back to Albany to open up a new HRA office here. We have a lot of clients in the northeast but never had an office here before now. I love Albany and am very happy to be back!

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?
While I was at UAlbany, we were doing a lot with getting local food on campus, which changed the way I eat and think about food, farms, and land management and affected the way I eat and the way I write about land management in my current job. I used a lot of the communications skills and content I learned with the sustainability movement in jobs I had with environmental policy organizations, Parks & Trails New York, the Environmental Advocates of New York, before I took my current role. And since then, I’ve served on the Sustainability Committee for a professional organization I belong to, the National Council on Public History. The community around sustainability and environmental issues at UAlbany was a supportive and interdisciplinary place where I met great people and learned a lot-- that spirit of cooperation and integration is something I try to bring with me in all parts of life and work.

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.