Letters from Dr. Heidi Hutner,
Director of Sustainability Studies

Dear Friends of the Sustainability Studies Program:

We’ve had productive academic year in the Sustainability Studies Program in 2014-15. Our two newest faculty members, Drs. Karina Yager and David Taylor, settled in and taught highly successful courses. In the fall and spring semesters, we have had an exciting line up of environmental speaker and roundtable events, including speakers Dr. Martin Schoonen, Patti Wood, Mark Schapiro, Dr. Kate Brown, Dr. Marianne Sullivan, Leona Morgan, Rachel Clark, Dr. Chris Sellers, and the Hibakusha Stories Project (on nuclear war and its consequences)—to be filmed in Stony Brook University’s TV studios on May 7th.

(continued on next page)

Sustainability Tip of the Month

BYOB: Bring Your Own Bottle! We all need water to survive, but where you get your water matters! At Stony Brook University, you can find a filtered water bottle filling station in almost every corner of our campus! Carrying a reusable water bottle is a smart way to help the environment and save money.
Letter from the Director (continued)

Dr. Heidi Hutner, Director
Sustainability Studies Program at Stony Brook University

Our students continue to take on important internship and research projects, including the proposed nature trail, the organic greenhouse club, and local planning projects on campus and off with the help of our Environmental Design and Policy faculty, Drs. Donovan Finn and Jim Quigley. Dr. Sharon Pochron’s earthworm ecotoxicology lab continues to produce important undergraduate student research.

We are excited to be collaborating with SoMAS and College of Arts and Sciences faculty in teaching and research projects.

Our winter Costa Rica course, taught in an off-the-grid community and offering a permaculture certificate was highly successful and will run again next winter. Please contact the faculty leader, Dr. Marc Fasanella, if you are interested in participating.

We also have two other exciting sustainability travel learning options: Sustainability Turkana Basin, and Travel Abroad in Madagascar, which includes the study of lemurs, conservation, and sustainability. This summer, I will teach a section on ecofeminism as part of the Madagascar course, while prize-winning scientist and conservationist, Dr. Patricia Wright, will lead the primary part.

Earthstock—Stony Brook’s yearly Earth Day celebration—is coming up on April 24th! Visit our program’s table on the Academic Mall, and take a look at the many activities our students and faculty are involved in. That week, we will host our yearly Alumni Roundtable, an event where many of our successful Alums return to tell us about their work and offer mentorship to current students. All are welcome to attend and listen to this special panel of truly exceptional environmental stars!

It’s such a joy and privilege directing this vibrant group of students and faculty.

Our program blog is filled with fascinating articles! Please be sure to check in regularly for great updates on our projects, events, classes, and alumni and student activities.

Congratulations to our graduating seniors, many who are now off to attend prestigious graduate programs and begin awesome jobs.

After a long and cold winter, spring is here at last!

My best,

Heidi Hutner, Director

Sustainability Studies Program
Stony Brook University
Sustainability Studies Program Speaker Series

Each semester, our program invites distinguished scholars, academics and professionals of sustainability to share their wisdom here at Stony Brook University. “Meet” some of our most recent visitors:

**Fall, 2014. “The Navajo Nation and Uranium Mining & Tales from Fukushima”**

Leona Morgan is a Diné (Navajo) organizer who, since 2007, has worked with several community groups based in the American Southwest and focused on addressing the impacts of past uranium mining and the threats of new uranium mining operations in New Mexico. In 2014, she co-founded a network called “Diné No Nukes,” an initiative meant to nurture wide-scale awareness on the issues of nuclear and uranium development in the Navajo “Four Corners” region through educational and political actions.

**Fall, 2014. Public Roundtable: “A Conversation about Narratives of Environmental Danger and Disaster.”**

Dr. Kate Brown is a professor of history at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is the author of several award-winning books, including, most recently, Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters (Oxford University Press, 2013), an important study of the post-World War II nuclear industry in the United States and USSR. Brown is a 2009 Guggenheim Fellow and has been awarded several grants to help facilitate her work and research. Her next book, Dispatches from Dystopia, a collection of essays, will be published in early 2015.

**Fall, 2014. “Living in an Increasingly Toxic World: How to Stay Healthy and Promote Positive Change.”**

Rachel Clark is a Japanese independent interpreter, co-founder of nonprofit startup “ABLE” and volunteer staff member of Peace Boat U.S. (New York Office). She holds a degree in international studies from Ramapo College in New Jersey. Clark has translated for several important official figures, from former Prime Minister of Japan Naoto Kan at the Coalition Against Nukes Symposium in October 2013 and Mayor Susumu Inamine of Nago City, Okinawa (Japan) on his official visits to Washington D.C., in the spring of 2014.


Dr. Heidi Hutner is director of the Sustainability Studies Program and a professor of environmental humanities at Stony Brook University. One of her recent and ongoing projects has been to interview victims of the March 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Hutner is author of several books and articles, including two coming works: The Ecology of Education, which explores Hutner’s journey into environmental teaching as well as her ecological pedagogy, and Nowhere: An Atomic Memoir, a tale of mothers and daughters, healing and redemption, set against the backdrop of anti-nuclear activism in the 1960s.

**Spring, 2015. “Energy Sector Vulnerabilities to Climate Change.”**

Dr. Martin Schoonen is a professor of geochemistry at Stony Brook University and associate laboratory director at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL). At BNL, he leads the Environment, Biology, Nuclear Science and Nonproliferation Directorate. Schoonen joined Stony Brook University’s Geosciences Department in 1989 after receiving a Ph.D. in geochemistry from Penn State. In 2006, he was appointed Dean of Stony Brook Southampton and led the development of sustainability curriculum, now offered through the Sustainability Studies Program at Stony Brook University.

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**Dr. Marianne Sullivan** is an assistant professor of public health at William Paterson University in New Jersey. She is also a historian and served as an epidemiologist for Public Health-Seattle and King County in Washington. Sullivan has recently completed a valuable work on the historical impacts of several smelters across the United States, titled Tainted Earth: Smelters, Public Health, and the Environment (Rutgers University Press, 2014). She is the recipient of several grants, and has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed public health journals.

**Dr. Christopher (Chris) Sellers** is a professor of history at Stony Brook University. He is a historian, physician and has authored several books and articles focusing on the topics of environment, culture and health, particularly in the modern United States, including the award-winning The Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America (University of North Carolina Press). Sellers’ most recent work has involved conducting interviews for a comparative study of smelter and oil refinery towns in Texas and Mexico, The Uneven Development of Industrial Hazards: Lead and Oil in the U.S. versus Mexico, a project supported by a National Science Foundation grant.

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**Patricia (Patti) J. Wood** is founder and executive director of Grassroots Environmental Education, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the health risks of common environmental exposures. Wood also serves as a visiting scholar at Adelphi University, lecturing on the environment and related health issues in the College of Nursing and Public Health. She has directed and co-produced several documentary films, has written a book and co-hosts a radio show—all focused on aspects of environmental health and safety.
The Latest from the Sustainability Studies Program

A peek at some of the great things our students and faculty have been up to recently:

**Dr. Jim Quigley** has continued his audio series “Sustain It: Conversations in Sustainability.” The 20 to 30-minute interviews are audio recordings of colleagues and guests that have been broadcast on the Stony Brook University radio station, WUSB 90.1 FM. The interviews are also available as podcasts and can be found at: http://bit.ly/1NzP33i. Have an idea for someone to interview? Wish to do one yourself (faculty or student) and add it to the program? Please email Dr. Quigley at: harold.quigleyjr@stonybrook.edu.

**Dr. Karina Yager** and her colleagues from NASA/SSAI (Science Systems and Applications, Inc.) have received a research grant to build upon their studies of climate change in the Andes. The project, funded by NASA ROSES Land-Cover/Land-Use Change Program, will investigate the “Climatic and socioeconomic drivers of land-cover and land-use change in tropical Andean alpine wetlands.” The project will commence in late summer 2015 for a three-year duration of investigation.

**Dr. Marc Fasanella** led this year’s Sustainability Studies Program Costa Rica study abroad course: ENV 310—Sustainability and Renewable Energy. The group lived and worked at an off-the-grid educational community called “Punta Mona.” There, students learned about renewable energy and waste, as well as various organic and sustainable farming methods, including permaculture.

**Hannah Mellor**, a Stony Brook Sustainability Studies Program senior majoring in Environmental Design, Policy and Planning has been working on a proposal for a wooded walking path for the past year. The “SBU Nature Trail” would be a five-mile dirt trail wrapping around the Stony Brook campus. Its purpose is to promote health and environmental awareness in the Stony Brook University and Stony Brook Village communities. Hannah is looking for student volunteers to help her see this project come to fruition. Please visit the SBU Nature Trail Facebook page to learn more. If you are interested in lending a hand, please email Hannah, at: hannah.mellor@stonybrook.edu.

**Dr. Arlene Cassidy** is working with Dr. Devinder Mahajan from Stony Brook’s Chemical and Mechanical Engineering department and two Sustainability Studies Program students, Nicole Libretto and Sean Paul, on a collaborative research project examining “The economic feasibility of corn-based ethanol vs. lignocellulosic-based ethanol.” Nicole is a chemical and molecular engineering major with her minor in Sustainability Studies. Sean is completing a double major, Economics and Sustainability Studies.

**UPCOMING:**

The Sustainability Studies Program presents: “Hibakusha Stories: Taking a Novel Approach to Nuclear Disarmament Education”

“Hibakusha” is the Japanese word for atomic bomb survivors, who, in their advancing age, have a very limited opportunity to share their firsthand witness.

On Thursday, May 7, 2015, from 3:00-5:30pm, two Hiroshima bombing survivors, Reiko Yamada and Nobuko Sugino, will pay a visit to Stony Brook University to share their stories of the bombing and their subsequent work for nuclear disarmament. Accompanying Yamada and Sugino will be award-winning writer, Dr. Kristen Iversen (Full Body Burden) and Hibakusha Stories Program Director, Dr. Kathleen Sullivan.

The event will take place in Stony Brook University’s Film Studio A. The event will be filmed. Seating is limited; first come, first served. Please contact Erica to reserve your seat: erica.cirino@stonybrook.edu
Alumni Spotlight: see where some of our alumni are now studying and working!

Marisa Conte
Antioch University
New England, MA
Environmental Education

Shawn Nuzzo
President of Ecological Engineering of Long Island; LEED Accredited Professional

Anna Weiss
University of Texas at Austin, PhD
Paleontology

Alexandra Santiago
Bard College, MBA Sustainability; Host at Impact Hub NYC; Project Aide, Stony Brook Storm Surge Group

Shane (Jordan) Mahoney-Barnett
Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo, MA City and Regional Planning

Melanie Magdits
Southern New Hampshire University, MBA Sustainability & Environmental Compliance; Greenville Humane Society

Shameika Hanson
Volunteer Coordinator, Clearwater; Media Coordinator, Women’s Earth & Climate Action Network International

Melissa Hebenstreit
Volunteer, Co-organizer at Community Solidarity, Inc.

Nia Padilla
Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Communications Intern

Adam Meier
New Ecology, Inc., Senior Associate; Environmental Leadership Program, Regional & Senior Fellow

Andi Burrows
Environmental Education Intern with N.Y. State Parks

Mariah Donohue
Stony Brook University, MS Ecology and Evolution
Student Spotlight:
Sustainability Studies Program students shine - both in and outside of the classroom!

SVERRE OFSTAD, a Sustainability Studies major, is currently studying abroad in Kenya. In addition to his coursework, Sverre is working as Climate Change Division officer of international sustainability organization “happy 4 life.” Currently, Sverre is drafting a proposal for a tree-planting program in Kibera, a small neighborhood in Nairobi.

EMILY NOCITO a Coastal Environmental Studies major/Ecosystems and Human Impact minor, traveled to Israel’s Negev Desert this past winter, where she worked on an organic farm. In February, Emily was accepted into Bard College’s C2C (“Campus to Capitol, to City Hall and to Corporation”) Fellows program. Besides attending workshops, fellows are given access to a network of sustainability professionals and professions. Fellows are mentored by professionals working in various sustainability fields.
2014-2015 Highlights

This semester, students in Dr. Donovan Finn's Environmental Design Project course, EDP 404, are working with the non-profit group Sustainable Long Island as part of that group's comprehensive study of recycling on Long Island. Students are gathering information on current recycling policies and procedures in the region's towns and cities and will be creating comprehensive recycling profiles based on this research. Additionally, students will conduct surveys about recycling and develop case studies of other U.S. and international communities that have developed successful and innovative recycling programs. More information on this project can be found at: http://bit.ly/1FzHktU

Last Fall Dr. Finn's The Built Environment II course, EDP 302, worked with the Sustainability Office of the campus Facilities Department to conduct a study of the two bus drop-off zones serving the Academic Mall (SAC loop and Engineering Express loop). Their report, "Stony Brook University Academic Mall Transportation Study," was received enthusiastically by the Facilities Dept. This semester, the students in Dr. Finn's Theories and Design of Urban Settlements course, EDP 307, are working with the Facilities Dept. again, now developing their own suggested urban design interventions for Stony Brook University's Academic Mall.

From October 29 to November 5, 2014, Dr. David Taylor and several colleagues from Texas traveled to Cuba under a cultural visa from the Cuban Ministry of Culture to collaborate with Artes Escenicas, Cuba's leading performing arts organization, to film performing arts groups in Cuba doing environmental outreach.

Dr. Taylor's documentary work is meant to help him better understand the creative process, the daily lives of the artists and community members, and the connection between art, community and positive social change. He and his colleagues gathered over 25 hours of film footage of performances and interviews as well as thousands of photos of locations and performances. The products of their research will include published essays and interviews, short documentary films and eventually a longer work on Cuban arts and the environment.

Artes Escenicas has already invited Dr. Taylor's group to return and collaborate more extensively in 2015. This year the group will work more intensely with Teatro Cabotin and Teatro de los Elementos, and will also travel to Las Tunas to film Teatro Tuyo and its latest theatrical work, Gris. The director of Teatro Tuyo, Ernesto Parra, explains that the purpose of Gris is to raise awareness of the importance of environmental protection.
In fall 2014, Drs. Arlene Cassidy and Anthony Dvarskas created a completely paperless course, SBC 401: Integrated, Collaborative Systems, based on the use of electronics. This allowed Drs. Cassidy and Dvarskas to minimize the class’ environmental impact while maintaining high educational standards and increasing students’ exposure to the use of technology in education.

The professors used an “E grant” (a college grant for the use of technology for educational purposes) to obtain electronic tablets for each student. All correspondence and communication done outside the classroom, and distribution of class materials, was facilitated online to eliminate the need for paper items, including: printed textbooks, exams, presentations, homework, scheduling forms and other course-related paper items for their course.

More Highlights

Thanks to all who attended our fall sail aboard the Clearwater Sloop! We are now looking forward to Clearwater’s Great Hudson River Revival festival this June. Each year our students and staff have the opportunity to volunteer at this important event. Learn more about the festival here: http://bit.ly/19Zp9Tw

Photo credit: Dr. Donovan Finn

Contact Us

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