Greetings, Friends and Alumni of Environmental Studies at SUNY Potsdam.

Welcome to our first newsletter. We hope to make this an annual update to you. We also hope that you will take this as an invitation to stay in touch with us as well. We love hearing from our alum and learning what wonderful things you are doing out there in the world. Please drop us a line and stay in touch (see contact info request on reverse). **We would love to know where you are and what you are doing.**

Environmental Studies enjoyed an exciting and busy year in 2016-2017. Most significantly, we grew from program to department status. This will enable us to better serve our growing number of students (almost 90 majors and minors!) and to expand our curriculum. In the fall, we welcomed a new faculty member, Dr. Jessica Rogers, who enriches our program and has already made significant contributions to the dept. In the spring, we successfully completed a search for an additional faculty member, Dr. Ashley Reis. You can read more about both of them within these pages. They epitomize the interdisciplinarity of our program and we are excited about their excellent teaching and scholarship.

We are especially proud of our efforts to cultivate a sense of environmental citizenship and stewardship through service-learning and field experiences and a place-based curriculum. These include our Adirondack Experience FIG (First-year interest group) led by Professor Bill Brown, courses such as our Environmental Inquiry and Biodiversity Conservation, and two exciting new travel programs which we hope to offer in rotation on a regular basis for the foreseeable future:

- **Kenya-Urban and Savannah Studies** to be led by Dr. Jessica Rogers and Dr. Glenn Johnson (Biology) in the 2017-2018 academic year. This program has been recognized with a highly competitive SUNY-wide Chancellor's Grant for Innovative Study Abroad Programs.

- **Sustainable Communities: The Ecovillage Experience** to be led by me in the 2018-2019 academic year. This course incorporates domestic travel and short-term study abroad (to ecovillage projects in New York State and Ireland) as well as service-learning components at each community. It was recognized with a competitive campus-based award known as "The Bob," a grant to support applied learning activities in the curriculum.

Finally, I would like to note that we are deeply engaged in promoting sustainability on our campus and beyond. Several of us are currently working on a team of faculty and staff from across the campus to develop a minor in sustainability. In addition, many of us have been actively involved in the creation of the Associated Colleges Sustainability Day. Our second annual Sustainability Day will be held at SUNY Canton on Sept. 29th. If you are in the area, we’d love to see you there. For more info please see: bit.ly/sustainabilityday2017.

Thank you and best wishes,

Heather Sullivan-Catlin, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Environmental Studies

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**Professor Heather Sullivan-Catlin, Chair**, joined the Sociology Department in 2000 and has been active in the Environmental Studies program since its inception. Her primary areas of work in environmental sociology center on sustainable communities (especially cohousing and ecovillages) and community food security. She is actively engaged in applied learning and incorporates service-learning activities into many of her courses, involves students in community-based research projects, serves as sponsor for student interns, and leads travel courses abroad and field trips closer to home - all in an effort to provide students with important opportunities to develop into engaged global citizens. Putting these ideas into practice in her own life, Dr. Sullivan-Catlin has been active in local sustainability efforts, chiefly through her long involvement with GardenShare, a non-profit community food security organization for which she served as president from 2008 to 2013. She is currently active with the North Country 350 Alliance, an organization working on global climate change and sustainability. In between teaching and marching her favorite pastimes include reading eco-apocalyptic novels, canoe camping in the Adirondacks, hiking, biking, and having fun with her husband and two daughters.
Lecturer Bill Brown has been teaching with the Environmental Studies program for the past nine years. His interests are in conservation and sustainability—with a particular focus on the Adirondack/North Country region. Prior to teaching at SUNY Potsdam, he spent over twenty years working with several non-profit organizations and agencies—including The Nature Conservancy, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Adirondack Mountain Club, and Quebec-Labrador Foundation. Bill brings this field experience to the classroom in courses such as Biodiversity Conservation, Adirondack Ecology, and the Intro to Environmental Studies class. He also works with students completing internships for the ES major. He completed a BS in Biology and Environmental Studies at St. Lawrence University, and a Masters in Professional Studies at Cornell in Natural Resources, where he focused on developing a cooperative program to address the threat of invasive species in the Adirondack Park. Bill continues to enjoy exploring the lakes and woods of the northern forest, particularly the boreal bogs of the Adirondacks.

Assistant Professor Jessica Rogers, a North Country native, has returned after receiving her undergraduate degree at Princeton University and her masters and PhD at Columbia University. She is currently an Assistant Professor in Biology/Environmental Studies at SUNY Potsdam. Her research interests look landscape conservation: more traditionally through deforestation changes in protected areas using GIS (Geographic Information Systems), as well as well as examining practical methods of conservation in the North Country. See more information about her research and teaching at www.drjessicarogers.weebly.com

Assistant Professor Ashley E. Reis (B.A. English, University of Kentucky; M.A. Literature and the Environment, University of Oregon and University; Ph.D. Environmental Humanities, University of North Texas) is engaged in a teaching and research agenda that focuses on environmental justice. Her book project, With the Earth in Mind: Ecological Grief in the Contemporary American Novel, introduces a series of post-World War II and contemporary U.S. novels that show a correlation between environmental degradation and mental illness. She calls the environmentally-induced trauma and depression that results from environmental degradation “ecological grief,” and explores novels that deal with dams, nuclear threat, and mountaintop removal to argue that literature can illuminate the material connection between earth and mind. A self-proclaimed “WyOhian,” Ashley grew up splitting time between northwest Wyoming and southwest Ohio. In her free time, she can be found hiking, running, and mountain biking usually with her dog, Banjo, by her side. Ashley is eager to familiarize herself with the Adirondack region, and to encourage and guide Potsdam students as they explore their environmental interests, concerns, and goals.

Dr. John Omohundro retired in 2011 and has become a permanent Saranac Lake Resident—finally an Adirondacker! He helps out a little with Clarkson’s Sustainability semester in Saranac Lake and remains active in Adirondack Mountain Club and Protect, for which he serves on the research committee. He’s paddling, hiking, and skiing the rest of the time.
Faculty /Student Research

Researching Invasive Species
Two environmental studies students, Matthew King and Robert Luckman, got to spend 4 weeks this summer working with Dr. Jessica Rogers mapping invasive species in the North Country. The New York Power Authority’s St. Lawrence River Research and Education Fund has funded Dr. Rogers’ research focuses on a specific aquatic plant, Purple Loosestrife. This invasive plant, while beautiful when it blooms in late July, is taking over our native cattails in St. Lawrence County. This is the first year of a multi-year research program attempting to get rid of this plant in parts of St. Lawrence County. Matt and Rob, along with Dr. Rogers, collected data about where the Purple Loosestrife was located and in what intensity. Next summer, working with the St. Lawrence/Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM), Dr. Rogers and future students will begin the process of removing plants by hand, and introducing specific insects that only eat loosestrife. By participating in this project, Matt and Rob get an up close look at the requirements for environmental management, from field work to collect data, to working with local land owners as well as the State of New York, and a local environmental organization to best manage our ecosystems.

Alumni Updates:

Mike Szymkowicz earned his bachelor’s degree from SUNY Potsdam in 2014, majoring in sociology and minoring in environmental studies. He soon relocated to Nashville, TN where he became involved with The Land Trust for Tennessee, as a passionate stewardship volunteer. Today, as a full-time member of the non-profit organization, Mike serves as the stewardship coordinator. Now Mike is tasked with working alongside landowners across the state to ensure the conservation values of lands protected by The Land Trust are upheld. Although the winters are a little different in the south, Mike credits his time in the North Country and at SUNY Potsdam with his success.

We would love to know where you are and what you are doing.

Please use the link below and fill out the form to update the Alumni Association about yourself, and your contact information.

https://www.potsdam.edu/alumni/services/update

You can also e-mail the Department Secretary, Lynne Durant (durantlm@potsdam.edu) with any updates to your contact information.
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You can support the students/faculty/programs, etc. in the Environmental Studies Department by visiting http://secure.potsdam.edu/giving/ or by mailing a check made payable to The Potsdam College Foundation-Environmental Studies Department to: 44 Pierrepont Avenue, Potsdam NY 13676. Please specify if you have a preference as to the types of activities/needs that can be supported by your gift.

Yes, I (we) will support SUNY Potsdam! Please use my (our) gift for:

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- Other __________________________

My gift will be:

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My check payable to Potsdam College Foundation is enclosed.

I am enclosing a matching gift form from my or my spouse’s employer.

Company Name: _______________________

Check www.potsdam.edu/matchinggift to see if your employer matches gifts.

Note: In an effort to save money and conserve natural resources, please let us know if you would prefer to receive the Alumni newsletter as an e-mail attachment instead of hard copy. Send an e-mail message to Lynne Durant @ durantlm@potsdam.edu if this is the case.