GLENN DREYER STEPS DOWN AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In July of 2015, the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment had a shakeup in its administrative structure. Glenn Dreyer, Executive Director of the Goodwin-Niering Center stepped down from his position; a position he has held for almost twenty years. We should mention that Glenn hasn’t left the center completely; he is still an active and involved fellow! We wouldn’t let him get away that easily. So, while Glenn still remains on campus as Arboretum Director, we did want to find out about his bittersweet decision to leave the center and what the center has meant to him.

“I suppose my favorite part of being in the center is the people; the staff, faculty and students. One of the great aspects about our certificate program is that there are students from many different majors; even art and theater – all who care deeply about environmental matters and bring different perspectives to discussions and projects. The fall welcome back event in Buck Lodge is always another highlight. The seniors share their recent center internship experiences and are always so excited about what they learned and what it means for their Senior Integrative Projects and their futures.”

Aside from being the designated photographer at all of the center events such as the annual fall welcome, Glenn’s duties were usually much more administrative. Tasked with managing the budget and supervising the small handpicked staff, Glenn hired Diana Whiteleaw as the first Assistant Director; the rest of the team consisting mostly of student interns during the fledgling years of the center.

“The beginning of the center was really faculty initiated. Bill Niering, Dick Goodwin and others envisioned an environmental center that could concentrate faculty and student environmental research interests and attract funding and other forms of support. In 1993 a faculty discussion group crystallized as The Center for Conservation Biology and Environmental Studies, with Robert Askins and William Frasure as co-directors. The first interdisciplinary conference was organized around the status and future of New England’s forests. President Claire Gaudiani, who brought the undergraduate certificate model to the college and started CISLA, insisted the new environmental center also have a certificate component. Professor Robert Askins was able to secure a grant from the Mellon Foundation which allowed us to start the certificate program, and gave us time to fundraise for an endowment to support the center over the long term. In 1997, I was Arboretum Director and was asked to also become the Executive Director of the center, and Bill Niering was named the Faculty Director. We started up the newsletter and website, and eventually got the endowment to around three million dollars.”

Now twenty odd years later, the program has evolved into a very robust program, with two paid staff positions who work side by side with rotating faculty directors.

In addition to the certificate program, the center also puts on a biennial conference that Glenn is very proud of. “The conferences have been a successful way for the center and the College community to examined different environmental issues through a multidisciplinary lens. The Feeding the Future topic this year was by far the most successful and well-funded conference the center, and possibly the College, has ever produced.”

When asked about the future of the center, Glenn sees only good things ahead. “I’m certain it is in very good hands — intelligent, passionate and dedicated people all. I think the center namesakes, Niering and Goodwin, would approve of what we have become, and especially of the involvement by students with such diverse majors and interests.”
O
n May 16, certificate seniors, family & friends, and center faculty & staff joined together to celebrate the achievements of our fifteenth graduating certificate class. As we pass this milestone, it seems like a good time to reflect on what has been accomplished over the program’s fifteen year history. I recently had the occasion to read through our 1999 Newsletter and found the article announcing the creation of the Goodwin-Niering Center’s new student certificate program. In perusing it, I was struck by how very true we have stayed to our roots and mission, while at the same time recognizing how the center and its certificate program have evolved, grown, and blossomed. Our core identity and commitment to the environment and conservation have remained steady and kept us grounded, while in literally all aspects of the certificate program we have added both breadth and depth.

From the beginning, the goals of the program were strongly interdisciplinary, reflecting the College’s dual-track approach to environmental studies, drawing heavily on both the natural and social sciences. Beyond environmental studies, the center also began with a strong commitment to land conservation, reflecting the pioneering work in the field of both Dick Goodwin and Bill Niering. While student projects were often built around conservation issues, however, this was not a formal element of the certificate program. Internships were there from the very beginning, but focused very much on local and U.S. issues and opportunities. Likewise, participation in the center’s biennial conference was a founding component of the program, but also emphasizing issues of local concern. The certificate seminar was designed to bring all classes of the certificate program together - sophomores through seniors - to engage in conversation, mentoring, and sharing of experiences, culminating in senior presentations of their integrative projects. All of these structural features have remained central to the certificate program.

However, this structural constancy belies the contextual changes that have been wrought by the many faculty, staff, and students who have worked with the certificate program over the past fifteen years. First, the interdisciplinarity of the program has now stretched into almost all departments and majors at the College. The mainstays of biology & botany, government & economics are still represented in the program, but now student majors span the entire spectrum, from geophysics to English, art history, music, and theater. This expansion has been driven by both student interest in integrating the environment into fields less traditionally linked to environmental studies, and growing faculty interest in environmental sustainability, as well as environmental and social justice. The cohort of faculty working with our students has thus expanded tremendously over the past fifteen years, now numbering over 20 faculty and - in a recent twist - bringing in local faculty from other universities and programs, including the Williams-Mystic Program, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, University of Connecticut, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. In fact, in a first, our USCGA colleague, Karina Mrakovitch, is teaching the certificate seminar this fall, enriching the certificate experience through her expertise in fisheries management.

The land conservation piece has also now been formally integrated into the certificate program through the creation of a sophomore service learning course, developed by Professor Doug Thompson during his directorship. For a semester, sophomores now work with a local land trust, Avalonia, helping the organization in whatever ways are needed and line up with student interest and expertise. The service learning course has now run three consecutive years, allowing sophomores to build on what juniors and seniors have done in previous years.

The possibilities for junior and senior mentoring for incoming sophomores participating in the program are extensive and are likely to be more formally integrated into the...
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2015!

In the Spring of 2013 (photo above), we welcomed them into the Goodwin-Niering Center as eager sophomores! On May 19, 2015 (photo right) we celebrated their accomplishments, not only as Goodwin-Niering Center scholars, but as budding environmentalists. We couldn’t be prouder of this group!

GETTING TO KNOW THE GNCE FELLOWS: Rich King

If we were to pinpoint exactly what it is that makes Rich King such an asset as a Goodwin-Niering Center (GNCE) Fellow, we would be hard pressed to narrow it down. To complicate the matter further, Jen Pagach and Keleigh Baretinic had the pleasure of interviewing Rich at the Mystic Seaport this summer, at which time they quickly realized that what they knew about King barely scratched the surface.

What they knew, in a nutshell: King is a lecturer in Literature of the Sea with the Williams College at Mystic Seaport Maritime Studies Program. He has authored several books. His students love him. An amicable sort with a genuinely warm personality, and a slightly self-deprecating humor, King is unassuming and easy to talk to.

What they didn’t know (in a much larger nutshell): Prior to receiving his PhD in writing on an ORS scholarship from the University of St. Andrews, and right after receiving his master’s degree in teaching, King set out on an eleven month semester at sea, as a high school teacher aboard a Canadian tall ship. The trip brought him to the far off lands of the Galapagos Islands, Japan and Fiji, and proved to be a pivotal experience in King’s life, awakening a love of sailing and the sea.

“I’d never been to sea before, and I read Moby Dick for the first time.” King sheepishly noted.

Leaving teaching to pursue his PhD abroad, King’s newfound ardor was tabled for a time, but not forgotten. Williams College at Mystic Seaport Maritime Studies Program proved to be the perfect venue for the successful (and slightly polygamous) marriage of his loves; literature, teaching and the sea.

“Coming back here was good for me. I was in my thirties and knew exactly what I wanted to do. I love going to sea and talking to the students at sea. Being able to teach in an interdisciplinary program is very exciting.”

Outside of his teaching wheelhouse, King has achieved critical acclaim as an author. Not one to toot his own horn, he quickly glanced over the titles of his books and their accolades. Not satisfied with King’s humility, we took a gander at his author’s page (http://www.richardking.info). King’s interdisciplinary book, Lobster, was acclaimed by the New York Times and Wall Street Journal, while The Devils Cormorant: A Natural History, was named by Library Journal as one of the top five best science books of 2013 and short-listed for the Association for Literature and the Environment Creative Book Award. King’s recent book, Meeting Tom Brady, is an engaging memoir that supersedes the sports genre theme that one might expect from a book with this title. According to his author page, King is also, “the Series Editor for a forthcoming collection of books about America’s relationship with the sea published by the University Press of New England, and he has written

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CERTIFICATE SEMINAR

ES 290

GNCE has a fairly new course for sophomores only to take their first semester in the center. The ES 290 Certificate Seminar offered in the spring is a 2 credit service learning course taught by Jennifer Pagach, current Associate Director of GNCE. Designed to engage students in land conservation and hands on local project work and management, the course gives the new students something of their own to work on and helps bond them with their GNCE class. Through a partnership with Avalonia Land Conservancy, the class of 2017 Sophomores worked on projects for Avalonia all semester long, and projects were heavy on outreach and technology this year, likely because of the heavy snowfall.

Guest speakers in ES290 Service Learning Project were Beth Sullivan, Binti Ackley, and current and past Avalonia president Michele Fitzpatrick and Ann Whitlach. Glenn Dreyer presented on the history of land conservation and invasive management at Connecticut College. Roger Wolfe from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection’s Mosquito Management Program and Dr. Juliana Barrett from CT SeaGrant/UConn Extension Program presented on challenges of coastal management. The semester concluded with a very successful workday party at Dodge Paddock/Beal Preserve and a presentation of all project outcomes during the all classes certificate seminar. As a show closer, all Sophomores took Jen’s creative presentation challenge seriously and performed the many service learning/land conservation oriented haikus they had written.

Fall Seminar

During the fall semester, the ES 395 & 495 seminar was led by Derek Turner who had the students explore some of the connections between our understanding of what’s natural and our understanding of what’s healthy. With the upcoming food conference in mind, they explored what the word ‘natural’ might mean when applied to food, and what health means in general, i.e. is health an objective, biological concept or is it culturally relative? Speakers on health philosophies and concepts included Catherine Benoit from the Anthropology Department, Luzann Isaac from the Edith Stephens Wetland Park, Cape Flats, South Africa, and Leif Peterson from the Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa. There were several speakers who explored and questioned the notion of “ecosystem health”, namely Bob Askins from the Biology Department, Chad Jones from the Botany Department, and Jason Krumholtz from the Long Island Sound Study initiative. The semester ended with a “healthy” potluck in which future foods such as “Soylent”, an alleged complete meal replacement were reluctantly sampled by almost all.

Spring Seminar

The spring Certificate Seminar led by Derek Turner used the seminar to prepare the students for the March 27 and 28 Feeding the Future Conference. Readings from guest speakers at the conference were used extensively, including Dr. Marlene Zuk’s “Paleofantasy” which examines the Paleo diet through a critical evolutionary biologist lens, and Dr. David Montgomery’s book “Dirty: The Erosion of Civilizations”, in which the geomorphologist poses that the soil erosion crisis he feels he argues is poised us for massive failure like so many civilizations before. Students also discussed many of Dan Barber’s writings including his new book “The Third Plate” and read other food philosophies by Wendell Berry and others.

Director Jane Dawson also presented on her research on the carbon footprint of foods, especially meat. By the end of the seminar the students were very prepared for shadowing the speakers and had extremely mature discussions on many challenging food topics and angles.

WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2017!

Back row, l-r: April Zhao, Sarah Spound, Julia Serafin, Moriah McKenna, Mei Reffin and Katie Alerman Front Row, l-r: Mariisa Gildea, Nako Kobayashi, Nikki Caspers and Lana Richards

We’re always looking for interesting environmental news to post to our page. Email us to share your news: goodwin-nieringecenter@conncoll.edu
Emily MacGibeny  
Environmental Studies major  
Living Roots Ecovillage, French Lick, IN

Anna Marshall  
Environmental Studies & Anthropology majors  
Stroud Water Research Center, Avondale, PA

Caitlin Persa  
Environmental Studies & Botany majors  
Star Winds Turbine, LLC. East Dorset, VT

Olivia Rabbit  
Environmental Studies major, Economics minor  
Asia-Pacific Center for Regenerative Design, Honolulu, HI

Emma Rotner  
Environmental Studies & International Relations majors  
Backus SABMiller, Lima, Peru

Marina Stuart  
Environmental Studies major, English minor  
Environmental Defense Fund, Washington, DC

program in the future. The one major constant of the program is our commitment to interclass mentoring and sharing, promoted through the continuation of a weekly seminar bringing all classes together. This element tends keep the certificate program fairly small (no more than a dozen students per class) and has been debated frequently over the years as we’ve contemplated expansion. In the end, however, this feature is one that we’ve all held tightly to as a defining element of the program.

Finally, while internships, the biennial conference, and senior integrative projects all remain core components of the certificate program, the focus of all three has expanded beyond the local and U.S. context, with students often traveling far and wide to pursue their interests in issues beyond our borders. The conference topics also tend to draw in both the local and international, and senior projects span countries, disciplines, and are moving into new formats, including performance art. We can only guess where student interests and opportunities will take them next! Throughout all of this, however, there has been one constant in the certificate program.

Glenn Dreyer, Director of the Arboretum, was there at the founding of the center in 1993, appointed the center’s Executive Director in 1997, participated in the creation of the certificate program in 1999, and has been a steady presence in our leadership for almost two decades. This past year, Glenn decided to step down as the longtime executive director as of June 30, 2015. Glenn has provided guidance, deep commitment to environmental and conservation values, support of both center and students, and an element of continuity that has greatly benefitted the center and everyone who has been lucky enough to work with him.

As we move forward - for the first time without a founding member in the directorship cohort - we will miss his wise judgment, equanimity in the face of occasionally what-seem-to-be overwhelming challenges, his sense of humor and his warmth. We know, however, that he’ll be right down the hall, still expertly directing the Arboretum and ready with generous consul and we hope that fifteen years down the line, the future directors and staff of the Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment can look back on the second fifteen as fondly as we do on the first! Thank you, Glenn.
On March 27 & 28, 2015, The Goodwin-Niering Center for the Environment’s biennial Elizabeth Babbott Conant Interdisciplinary Conference on the Environment brought together a mix of voices to inspire people to think creatively about the food system of the future.

An all-star line-up of chefs, sustainable and urban farmers, food activists, scholars, and social entrepreneurs, explored, in three unique sessions, the problems of the present food system, probed the lessons of the past, and gained inspiration from cutting edge food technologies. We took an honest look at ourselves and our choices, with the hope of melding these lessons to envision a truly sustainable future of food.
There were abundant opportunities for attendees to network over theme-based coffee breaks and a schmooze lunch. Sustainable farmers, activists, and practitioners joined us in conversation, sharing their real life experiences in an informal setting. The conference was designed not only to educate, but also to inspire—participants enjoyed good food and conversation along the way.

**344 Attendees**

- **31 Food & Schmooze Table Hosts**
- **2 Themed Coffee Breaks**
  - 450 pieces of bacon
  - 300 Bison Bars
- **1 Paleo Breaks**
  - 450 pieces of bacon
  - 300 Bison Bars
- **2 Local Bands**
- **1 Special Add on Reception**
  - A Taste of Long Island Sound: Aquaculture, Alcohol & Beyond
  - Special tasting and talk on the future of sustainable local food by Chef Bun Lai of Miya’s Sushi in New Haven, Conn.

Centerpieces were given as door prizes & also donated to the College’s SPROUT garden

Farmer Joe LoPresti & Country Friends Band

Who each received:

- **100 guests**
- 10 courses of sustainable sushi
- 3 courses of sake, made by chef Bun Lai from ingredients he foraged for himself
MARY BUCHANAN ’14
CC Major: Biological Sciences
CC Minor: Environmental Science
Mary works at Highstead, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing forest conservation across New England. She provides GIS and mapping support to regional conservation initiatives in Fairfield County, Connecticut and the surrounding landscapes. Mary also researches trends in public conservation funding in the New England states as part of a collaboration with Harvard Forest. These experiences at Highstead have given her a chance to build on the GIS skills she learned at Connecticut College. Mary is also pursuing graduate programs, particularly in geography.

JESSICA LECLAIR ’08
CC Majors: Environmental Studies and International Relations
Jessica recently took a position as Program Manager at the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA). CIRCA is a partnership between the University of Connecticut and the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (where Jessica previously served as an Environmental Analyst in the Office of Climate Change). Jessica is enjoying the challenge helping to create a new institute that will advance climate change resilience efforts across the state.

KATY SERAFIN ’08
CC Major: Environmental Studies
Katy was married to Rob Hatfield at Connecticut College’s Harkness Chapel in May. Katy has a few more years of her PhD at Oregon State University (OSU) where she is researching extreme high water level events on the U.S. West Coast. Rob is currently a post-doctoral researcher at OSU. They get back to the East Coast a couple times a year to see family and visit Julia Serafin ’17 and also a GNCE student at Conn!

GNCE ALUMNI
We’re always eager to hear what you’re up to! Drop us a line & we may share your news in the next newsletter.
Email Jen Pagach: jpagach@conncoll.edu

Julia & Katy at the Harkness Chapel steps on Katy’s wedding day

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