



Environmental Studies Program 2009 Newsletter

Message from the Director

This an amazing time to be in Environmental Studies. Never before have we seen environmental issues so pressing and never before have we seen in this country such widespread public recognition of the importance of these issues. It is amazing to hear our president say things like *"this is the moment when we must come together to save this planet. Let us resolve that we will not leave our children a world where the oceans rise and famine spreads and terrible storms devastate our lands."* Clearly, now is our time.

There has been a flurry of sustainability activity on campus. This fall we had our first meeting of the University Sustainability Committee. The committee is chaired by Vice President Leroy Morishita and Provost John Gemello. ENVS senior Drew Foster is one of two student representatives on the committee, and I am one of four faculty reps. Keep a look out on SF State's home page for a link to a new campus sustainability webpage, designed by Will Rutledge (Fall 08 graduate). Also this year saw the

appointment of the campus' first sustainability coordinator, Caitlin Steele. Our students have been very active in a number of other sustainability issues.

Our major continues to grow. We have almost doubled the number of majors in the last three years, from 120 in Fall 05 to over 230 today. Unfortunately, the California budget crisis has not allowed faculty resources to grow as well. We have now reached a point where without additional faculty in ENVS, continued growth in majors will reduce our ability to offer sufficient course sections to allow majors to complete their degrees in a timely fashion. Therefore we are now working on ways to limit the growth of the major.

Many people have helped make this an excellent year for the program. Barbara Holzman has made big contributions, chairing both our Retention, Tenure and Promotion Committee as well as the Awards Committee, on top of being the faculty advisor

for the NRM concentration – thank you Barbara. Thanks to Glenn Fieldman, for organizing our new colloquium series, and helping students with Focus the Nation. As always, the Environmental Studies Program benefits from the help of faculty in many other departments. I would like to thank our concentration advisors: Nancy (Sami) Reist (BECA), Dean Joel Kassiola, Raquel Pinderhughes (USP), Karen Grove (Geosci.), and Pete Palmer (CHEM). And our chair review committee of Karen Grove, Luiz Barbosa (SOC), and John Hafernik (BIOL). And thank you to the associated faculty who helped us work on the curriculum and a hundred other things. This spring we started a new student representative position to give students a voice in our departmental faculty/staff meetings - thank you to this year's rep, Marissa Speer.

Thank you,
Carlos Davidson



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Awards & Honors

Yvette Michaud Student Leadership Award

This is the second year that the ENVS program has awarded the Yvette Michaud Leadership Award in Environmental Studies. This year's recipient is Marissa Speer.



Marissa writes: "I will never stop learning. Yesterday my friend shared some seeds from a calendula flower in her backyard. I was amazed as to the

amount of seeds she collected just from one flower. This proves to me that life is abundant and that by working with nature everyone in the world could have their needs met. The earth is bursting with life, even our concrete sidewalks can't keep it out! I recently completed the Earth Activist Training, a permaculture design course that also focuses on earth based spirituality. Permaculture can also be called Regenerative Design for human systems that build beneficial relationships with nature. I help spread the wealth of nature working within myself, within the human community, and working with the earth."

The Yvette Michaud Student Leadership Award is given each fall to an Environmental Studies major who demonstrates leadership in environmental causes that actively engage the campus and/or the wider community. The Leadership Award was created by an anonymous donor to encourage student environmental activism and leadership and to honor Yvette's leadership. To read more about Yvette, please visit the ENVS website's Scholarship page.

George Feliz Memorial Scholarship

The George Feliz Memorial Scholarship was awarded this year to Karen Medina.

Karen writes: "Throughout high school I was involved with the San Diego Ocean's Foundation, particularly working on the White SeaBass Grow-Out Pens. The time I dedicated to the non-profit organization gave me lots of insight to the problems facing our world and turned me on to Environmental Studies. Outside of my academic work I have been battling with social justice by volunteering my time at Mujeres Unidas y Activas and CAMINOS, as well as working with preschoolers at Mission Annex. As I pursue my BA I will continue to take a holistic approach on the environmental problems I am confronted with."

The George Feliz Memorial Scholarship in Environmental Studies is awarded each fall to an Environmental Studies major. George Feliz was SFSU's first dean of graduate studies, and was instrumental in helping San Francisco State evolve from a teacher's college to a university. Professor Feliz donated an endowment fund to support a scholarship for Environmental Studies majors with financial need.

Note from Marissa Speer, ENVS Student Rep

As the first student representative I am privileged to get a behind the scenes perspective on the inner workings of the ENVS Program at SFSU. Having just been to two faculty meetings it is clear to me our faculty works very hard to better the program with the students in mind. The next step is to create more communication between myself, my fellow students and the faculty.

ENVS Department Honoree

Each year the ENVS Program selects an honoree for the Honors Convocation. The honoree must have earned a high GPA, but the selection also honors broader achievements such as contributions to environmental work. This year's honoree is Ruslan Filipau.

Ruslan writes: "Born and raised in Belarus, I was 20 when I came to the United States in search of a new and better life. With lean savings in my pocket, and very little knowledge of English I arrived in San Francisco to build a new life for myself. Working on low-paying jobs, sometimes two shifts every day, within three months I was able to master English and to get accepted at San Francisco City College. After two years at the

community college I earned an associate degree and was admitted to SF State. The fallout and effects of the Chernobyl catastrophe contributed to my early interests in the fragility of the natural world.

Living in San Francisco's most actively developing neighborhood SoMa, I became acutely interested in public policy and planning. I believe government is the main force that can challenge environmental destruction and promote social change. I look forward to applying my experience and education in a career where I can serve the public good and bring about positive change."



The ENVS Program would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students who applied for our awards and also thank Courtney Rump, ENVS Office Coordinator, and Professors Glenn Fieldman, Carlos Davidson, and Barbara Holzman for serving on the selection committee.

Faculty Spotlight

An Interview with Tendai Chitewere, Assistant Professor of Liberal Studies

by Courtney Rump, ENVS Office Coordinator

First off, for those of us who don't know you, how do you say your last name?

Chitewere: Chi-té wey-ré

Tell me a little about your background - education, life, origins?

I grew up in Zimbabwe, along the eastern highlands, just on the border with Mozambique. Our family had a small farm where we grew most of our own food, had a few cattle, goats, lots of chickens, turkeys and at one point a few ducks. I always reflect fondly on my life in Zimbabwe; my nostalgia is especially strong now that the country is facing serious challenges. I'm very sad about the current situation; Zimbabwe is a beautiful country.

I moved to the US, like most immigrants, to go to school. I went to the State University of New York at Oneonta. My undergraduate degree was in Water Resources and I minored in Anthropology. I have always had a passion for the natural sciences and water is beautiful; but I've been interested and concerned about people so I migrated to Agricultural and Biological Engineering for my master's degree. I left Cornell after only a year; I finished my master's while beginning a Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the State University of New York at Binghamton. I enjoy anthropology because it is interdisciplinary, I get to use my background in water resources, agriculture, and anthropology on a daily basis in my teaching and everyday life. I combine my love for the environment and water, my passion for growing food, and my joy in working with people. I work hard to practice what I teach: I don't own a car, I live in 800 square feet, and grow a lot of my own food in my small front yard. It's sometimes inconvenient, but my garden has motivated my neighbors to put in rain barrels and grow a few vegetables. We borrow each other's equipment share meals I didn't know them 6 months ago, so it's an organic relationship that has grown growing food.

What courses do you teach (or hope to teach)?

I love to teach! My students are wonderful and curious about the world, and they

actively engaged in looking for solutions to our social and environmental problems. I currently teach the interdisciplinary social science course SS300. This spring semester I'm teaching a section of the Liberal Studies GVAR class LS300, in the fall I'll teach a Liberal Studies capstone class that will focus on the sustainable bay area and give student the opportunity to examine one of the many efforts our region makes to be socially and ecologically sustainable. I taught Nature, Culture, Technology ENVS392 in the Spring 2008 and hope to teach it again. There are other courses that I would enjoy teaching like an environmental anthropology class or qualitative research methods.

What current projects are you working on outside of teaching?

I have more projects than I have time to work on at the moment. I am working on a manuscript of my dissertation work on ecovillages, consumption and environmentalism. I have also been collaborating with a colleague around equity, environmental and social justice in land and food. My last major project relates to the work I do in the community around environmental education in schools. I'm excited about sustainable communities and urban gardening, and raising issues of access to parks and green spaces. I'm keeping very busy.

Any community involvement or organizations that you work with?

I'm on the Board of Directors for a wonderful East Bay organization called Earth Team; we are an environmental education resource for local middle and high schools. Our staff provides numerous curriculum guides for teaching kids and youth about environmental health and justice issues like asthma and lead, restoration, recycling and global warming. I've also worked with the Center for Environmental Health in Oakland.

In your profile on the ENVS website it says you study how green lifestyles are a distraction to addressing environmental injustice - can you explain more about this?

There is a lot of energy right now to consume commodities that are

green; I think it is a good change, but we also need to examine our lifestyle of over consumption. One of the problems that has brought us to an environmental crisis is over consumption, especially in wealthy countries. I don't think the solution is simply to stop over consuming one type of commodity and over consume a green one (people buy "organic recycled" grocery bags instead of just using a bag they already have!). We need to think holistically about reducing our need for stuff, examine how our neighborhood are designed, learn to grow our own food, and we need to be inclusive in the decision making process. We have a lot to learn from the environmental justice movement around being inclusive of all voices, especially those from communities that continue to experience social and environmental injustices. The concern I have with green lifestyles is that they may give us a false sense of green security- that as long as we buy a hybrid or install solar panels, we'll be OK. We need to change the mentality that we can shop our way out of the environmental crisis. Green lifestyles need to look towards larger societal changes that benefit all of us and those communities that need our collective concern before the environmental crisis. I'm excited that First Lady Michelle Obama has elevated the value of gardening and that President Obama is pushing high speed rail instead of building more highways. We need to focus on public transportation and equal access parks and gardens, hold polluters accountable to the communities they harm, etc. The greening efforts need to integrate the needs and voices of all peoples. Having said that, we're at an exciting moment to work towards a social and environmentally sustainable world and I'm excited to be working on this effort.



Willie Brown Leadership Center Internships

Senior TUE major Ruslan Filipau is participating this spring in the prestigious Willie Brown Leadership Center Internship Program. Ruslan emigrated from Belarus a few years ago, got his AA from City College of San Francisco, and then transferred to SFSU in Environmental Studies. Ruslan is doing his internship at the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. He is working on the Civic Center Sustainable District aimed at making the area a showcase of sustainable design. Ruslan writes:

"I encourage everyone to look closely at Willie Brown Leadership Center. The Center was created by former San Francisco Mayor and California State Assemblyman Willie Brown Jr., a SFSU graduate, to promote leadership opportunities for University students who have a strong interest in public service on the local level. The main goal of the Center is nothing less than to mentor a new generation of leaders who have a

will to change the world through dedicated public service.

Establishing the Center at our school, the remarkable visionary Brown knew from his own life experience that many S.F. State students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have to overcome barriers in receiving an education, but nevertheless are smart and motivated. The Center is for those of you in similar situations. If you feel that your full potential is being held back by life's obstacles, I encourage you to believe in yourself and apply.

The application process may be challenging as it requires writing two statements, one personal that tells about your background, and a professional statement that describes your interests and motivations. My recommendation is to put your best into these two statements. Look back at your past and reassess your experience. Until I applied, I had never written anything about my past and

my future aspirations. Writing made me realize just how much I can learn about myself. So, take the statements seriously and show your real self because based on the information you provide the selection committee will decide where to place you as an intern.

The internship is paid, and the host organization (one of the City Departments) is sensitive to the intern's school schedule, so you don't have to give up your school to do the internship.

Check out the Brown Center website at www.sfsu.edu/~wbcenter

Graduating Students of 2009: An Look-in to their Outlooks

by Albert Kochaphum, 2009 ENVIS Graduate

Earth System Science

Bear Kaufmann - For now, I will be working at biomass energy and carbon sequestration start up (see biochar, terra preta). The working relationship was cemented by the ENVIS internship, so think about your internship to build connections. Why am I doing this? Because this process could be an effective win-win-win solution, and through a spirit of collaboration, we may be able to solve some of the technical and environmental challenges to making this process truly sustainable and restorative. Thanks to all my professors and peers in environmental studies, geosciences, geography, chemistry, physics, and assorted departments.

Environmental Sustainability & Social Justice

Eric Bonilla - After I graduate, I plan to continue working at Macy's Union Square as the recycling auditor because it curtails to my concentration of sustainability and social jus-

tice, and job hunting in these times are tough. In the mean time, I'll apply to SF Environment, the EPA, or any workplace in the environmental field. I prefer to have a career with the recycling department within SFE since I've interned there.

Craig Markey Jr. - When I graduate, I'm going to let my girlfriend call the shots for awhile, because she's been waiting patiently the last couple years. We will probably end up on some island somewhere.

Christine Osorio - I'm planning on working within the Central American region to act as a liaison between developing communities and big businesses.

Humanities & the Environment

Mei Jarstrom - I'll continue to travel to other countries to broaden my perspectives and learn more about how other people live and think outside of the San Francisco bubble.

Erica Pulley - I'm going to get a job, hippie.

Graduating Students of 2009, con't.

Natural Resource Management & Conservation

Matthew Cooper - Though I'm really not sure what I'm going to be doing when I graduate, I do know that I will be moving out of the bay area though I have two positions that were offered to me, one for a microbrewery, and another for a local non-profit organization doing restoration work. The surprising thing is that I never applied for either position, they came to me! I'm not sure I want to take any position right away as the main focal point in any of my plans is being with my girlfriend, so it really depends on where she gets into grad school

Drew Foster - Upon graduating, I am going to immerse myself in the glory and awesomeness of the eastern slope of the Sierra, restoring habitat and teaching people about the local flora, fauna, and dynamic ecosystems, while advocating for public wilderness. I then plan to return to San Francisco, and work toward creating a more sustainable urban space, or whatever the heck else comes my way!

Diana Hairrell - I want to travel as much as I can and find a job worth working; both will enable me to continue to learn, share my knowledge with others, and enjoy life.

Sam Hartman - After graduating I plan to continue working with the Ecology Center of San Francisco, a non-profit organization I helped to start. Our work is to build community for a more cooperative, local, human based way of life that is based on ecologically balanced social decision making. Because learning and studying are like storing energy and making connections, now that I am charged up and my worldview is sufficiently branched, I can add my

piece to the picture and begin working towards a more equitable and regenerative future.

Jacklyn Vargo - When I graduate, I am hoping to do some hands on conservation work working with wildlife management or studies on wildlife through this volunteer internship program called Student Conservation Association (SCA). I am hoping that that these internship experiences will be helpful for obtaining future jobs and contacts that I will need to further get involved in the environment and make a difference in all that I'm passionate about. :)

The Urban Environment

Ryan Bateman - I'm going to stress out over finding a job until it makes me puke with worry....and then I'm going to get a job and everything will be just fine. I hope.

Noriko Kakue - Get a big house in suburbia with 5 refrigerators and a hot tub driving SUV....or, get a job/internship related to urban design either in San Francisco or somewhere else (wherever I can get a residency). I am hoping to go back to school for Architecture...but not for a while. For now, I am DONE with school!

Albert Kochaphum - I am planning on volunteering abroad in India and Thailand when I graduate because I want to learn how to apply what I learned in this program to other parts of the world to help communities in need. Then I want to do long service abroad, and do Grad School for Urban Design to get into the United Nations.

David Mueller-As soon as school is finished I'll be scrambling to find a full time job. I need to start working on the debt I've built up during my time at SFSU.

Alumni News

Candace Louie (TUE, 2008)

Candace is working as a Data Technician and Analyst at the Marine Science Institute in Redwood City. She plans to pursue graduate work in urban and regional planning at San Jose State. She got her start at the Marine Science Institute as an intern for the ENVS 680 Internship class in 2007. She says of her work: "Lightning fast computer skills helped Candace erase MSI's many years of backlogged fish data. Current projects include support of development, scheduling, and membership - all to a snappy 80's rock & roll beat!"



Greg Williams (HUM, 2008) writes: "My life seemed to get even fuller after graduation! I've been super busy. I'm working for the City of Tracy, Public Works Department at the moment, doing water treatment. I started a graduate program last fall at Cal State East Bay for a Master's in Public Administration. ALL the reading and writing in Glenn's classes has really prepared me for graduate school. I am doing well and so far it's been easy. I also recently started an internship with Congressman George Miller and I am excited! He's like one of Obama's right hand men. In Vallejo there will be three open seats for City council this November, I am considering putting my bid in for one..."



Want to keep up with fellow alums? Check out our official ENVS Alumni Facebook page! On Facebook, search SFSU Environmental Studies Alumni.



Faculty News

Carlos Davidson, ENVS

I recently had a book published that I had been working on for a number of years: *The Frogs and Toads of North America*. This spring I will be finishing up a paper on the concentration of amphibian population declines in mountains world-wide, and another on pesticide residues in frogs in the Cascades. This summer I will present the mountains work at a symposium on amphibian declines at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Pacific Division meetings that will be held on campus. I have been working with a citizens group in Pacifica, where I live, called the Pacifica Climate Committee. Currently I am working on a greenhouse gas inventory for the city that will be a first step in developing a climate action plan.

Glenn Fieldman, ENVS

I just finished a paper on climate adaptation that was presented to the International Scientific Congress in Copenhagen on March 10. An article Paul Baer and I wrote on global climate equity for the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* was published in their special climate issue last December. This semester, I've enjoyed teaching a new elective-- Climate Policy and Politics. A great group of students has made it a lively and challenging class. Outside the classroom, the city of Brisbane's Open Space and Ecology Committee, of which I'm a member, is considering the ecological impacts of proposals for the development of the Baylands--one of the biggest chunks of undeveloped real estate in the Bay Area. We are pushing hard for on-site renewable energy generation and other green measures—it's exciting to help shape a sustainable future, even in a small way. I also meet regularly with the Bay Area "Road to Copenhagen" group to build a campaign for a fair and globally equitable international climate treaty.

Barbara Holzman, ENVS

My book on Tropical Forest Biomes came out in October and has been well received. Since then I have been working on a paper I presented along with Dr. Qian Guo of the Geography Department on "Grassroots Environment Management in the Western U.S. and its applicability to Western China". The paper was presented during spring break in Beijing at the Conference on U.S. and China's Environmental Policy organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology and the SFSU College of Behavioral and Social Sciences. The discussion from my paper as well as those of my SFSU colleagues that also attended was very interesting and informative.

Sherry Keith, History and Social Science

I have been working, researching and teaching about education, social justice and globalization for many years. It was while working as a docent in the East Bay Regional Park system, and researching the positive impact of nature on children that I have discovered my place in the environmental movement and in environmental studies at SFSU. Sure, I recycle, ride my bicycle, commute on public transportation and shop at farmers' markets. However, last year I realized that I should teach about children and nature. Thus, the idea for a new course was born, *Childhood, Nature and Society*, to be taught in the Fall as SS/Envs 360. My Community Service Learning in the Schools course, SS681, also includes an environmental/place-based learning orientation. Environmental Studies majors interested in working with children and youth will find that both courses provide grounding in social theory and social research as well as the application of the best educational practices to promote the connection between children and nature.

Andrew Oliphant, Geography

I will be taking a sabbatical year abroad 09/10 to work in Europe and New Zealand on a global terrestrial carbon flux dataset to try and untangle the effect of light scattering on terrestrial ecosystem carbon sequestration, how it varies across biomes and to determine the approximate magnitude and sign of global carbon feedbacks under changing cloud and aerosol scenarios.

Peter Palmer, Chemistry

Along with several SFSU students I recently coauthored a perspectives article on the use of X-ray fluorescence to identify toxic elements in tableware, supplements, and other consumer products that will be published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. Our work has resulted in the development of new FDA testing protocols that can provide fast, low cost, and reliable monitoring of potentially contaminated food products.

Sheldon Gen, Public Admin

I am creating a new graduate course on US environmental policy, to be offered for the first time in Fall 2009. PA/GEOG 776 Environmental Policy, will focus on how public and private institutions in the US are affected by environmental policies, and how they affect environmental policies. Also, my recent work on San Francisco's wastewater master plan has resulted in an academic paper being revised for the journal *Sustainable Development*. The paper examines the misperceptions of environmental justice issues in the city's wastewater system. A second paper from this project is in the works, looking at the demographics of public participation in environmental decision making.