Message
by Ann Greaney-Williams and Colin Orians

Tufts University is known for its community activities, both on and off campus. As the fall semester comes to a close, the Environmental Studies Program (ENVS) would like to take a moment to review and thank those students, faculty, and staff who have and continue to participate in environmentally related initiatives.

In the process of improving and reinforcing the environmental studies community dynamic, we would like to thank the Tufts Institute of the Environment (TIE) for the recent renovations to Miller Hall and for serving as our physical host organization on campus. In addition to providing an office that students can visit for assistance, TIE has a renovated conference room, which we have been diligently using for meetings and hope to use for future workshops and community events.

On November 21st, alumnus Adrian Dahlin unveiled GreenLink, a project he has been working on as part of his Compton Fellowship (May 16, 2011). GreenLink, while still under development, is expanding rapidly and is intended to be a resource for environmental career opportunities in the US and abroad. We believe that a database that rates and provides student feedback on internships and study abroad opportunities would be of great benefit to the students at Tufts and beyond. There is a lot of information out there, but it's hard for students to filter through it and know for sure which programs actually provide quality educational and career experience. Adrian's database has the potential to provide this type of information to students, career counselors, and academic advisors and it could also potentially provide helpful feedback to the organizations themselves, which would enable them to adapt and improve their programs over time. The site is also linked to the ENVS Education and Career blog.

We've had a very successful Lunch & Learn program this semester with increased attendance. We would like to thank our alumni, Adrian Dahlin, Anthony Everett, Randi Rotjan, and Libby Mahaffy for giving back to Tufts; our current students Ana Rosner and Jennifer Shen for presenting their research; and our faculty and staff, Tina Woolston, Elizabeth Ammons, Rusty Russell, Richard Vogel, Nancy Gleason, and Michael Reed for contributing their time, energy and inspiration. We are also grateful for those speakers, Peter Crawley and Tracy Stamos, who came on their own accord to share their career insights. Their passion and commitment resonated with all.

The Executive Committee has been working hard to revise and improve the ENVS tracks and have been working closely with
Anthropology, Economics and Philosophy, the three departments chosen to hire faculty as part of the cluster hire initiative. This is the first time in the history of Tufts that multiple hires are energizing an interdisciplinary program. The Environmental Anthropology candidates and two of the Environmental Economics candidates have come and shared their work. More candidate interviews and lectures will come this spring, so keep an eye on the Environmental Calendar for future lectures related to the cluster hire initiative.

Finally the Office of Sustainability has provided many opportunities for our majors. We thank Tina Woolston, Program Director, for being a mentor to our ENVS students. We hope to expand this relationship with a hoped-for and student-requested Environmental House that will serve as a living laboratory of sustainable living and, hopefully, architecture and engineering on campus. We can thank students, Rose Eilenberg and Danielle Jenkins, for taking the initiative to create the proposal. We wait with anticipation to find out whether the proposal will be accepted and implemented.

Below, you will find a faculty profile of Professor of Practice Penn Loh, a constant community organizer and advocate for sustainable development, and an article by one of Tufts' students, Devyn Powell, who visited Washington, DC to protest the Keystone XL pipeline alongside many others attempting to make a difference by participating in political activism as a way to advocate for environmental causes. It is through our students, faculty and staff that actively participate on either the local, national, or international level that we see our role as educators on the environment. These people...our people, are the University's living environmental legacy and they will continue to be so well into the future.

Faculty Profile: Penn Loh
by Nathalie Schils

Penn Loh is a Professor of the Practice at Tufts University's Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP). What is most interesting about Penn is the path that brought him to UEP, where he teaches courses on environmental justice, sustainability, and public policy. He holds a B.S. in electrical engineering from M.I.T., but the focus on military development that drove the engineering field in the late 1980s did not align with Penn's core values and he began to explore other social purposes engineering could hold outside of the arena of military technology. Penn then spent time working on water testing practices, but he viewed environmentalism as something that dealt with endangered
species and land conservation, not a facet of social and racial issues. While attending graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley, where he received an M.S. in environmental science and policy, Penn became involved with the national environmental justice movement through a classmate who was planning a major conference on the intersection of racism and environmental issues.

Through the fledging environmental justice network in California, Penn connected with Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), an environmental justice group in Roxbury, Massachusetts that was founded in 1995. Although Penn did not have a similar legal background to ACE's founders, he eventually served as the Executive Director for ten years. ACE is a remarkable organization that provides legal support, develops youth groups, and builds coalitions to address issues of environmental justice, such as the siting of waste facilities and brownfield redevelopment. By addressing community issues that go beyond the traditional understanding of environmentalism, such as gentrification, land use, transportation and jobs, ACE is a testament to the Green Justice Coalition which is a growing movement bringing together environmental, labor and community concerns to address social inequalities. While Penn is still involved in ACE's work, he was also a key part of the transition to build local capacity and bring more community members into executive positions in the group. The local ownership is a significant aspect of ACE's continuing success.

From a technical background in engineering to direct work at the community level addressing environmental racism, Penn now finds himself as a Professor of the Practice at UEP. Penn views the university as a key component in addressing social and environmental problems. Universities can provide a space for learning and reflecting on successes and failures. Leadership development and thinking about the broader ideas and goals of a movement are other necessary actions that can take place with the support of a university such as Tufts. Last spring, Penn held a Practical Visionary Workshop in which he brought together eight emerging community leaders and eight graduate students. The 16 workshop attendees worked collaboratively to develop strategies for achieving "justainable communities". Penn also partners his students in Environmental Justice, Security and Sustainability with local organizations which gives students the opportunity to develop their skills in the real world in addition to bringing the resources of the university to bear in the community. In this way, Penn ties together all of the various pieces of the path that brought him to UEP.

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On Sunday, November 6, exactly one year before the 2012 presidential election, about 12,000 Americans traveled from all parts of the country to Washington, DC to stand in a circle around the White House in order to encourage President Obama to deny approval for the Keystone XL pipeline.

The Keystone XL would stretch 1,661 miles across the American Midwest, from Alberta, Canada all the way to Texas, in order to transport about 830,000 barrels per day of crude oil from the Canadian tar sands to Texan refineries. Tar sands are deposits of extremely thick crude oil, called bitumen, mixed with sand, clay, and water. Extracting and refining oil from these deposits is an arduous, expensive, and energy-intensive process, and only in recent years has technology and demand reached a level to make using them an even remotely viable option.

This summer, renowned climatologist James Hansen spoke out against the pipeline, saying that this level of tar sands extraction would be "essentially game over" for any hope of mitigating serious climate disruption. This was when activists and organizers, most notably Bill McKibben, founder of the grassroots group 350.org, started to fight. The November 6 action was a culmination of months of protests that began in August when 1253 people got arrested for sitting in at the White House.

One of the most interesting parts about the anti-tar sands movement is that the people behind it do not all consider themselves environmentalists, and even those that do champion a host of different issues. Some were there to fight for preservation of the Nebraska Sandhills and the Ogalalla Aquifer, fragile and important areas threatened by oil spills from the pipeline. Others were there to fight for economic justice. TransCanada initially claimed the pipeline would create 20,000 jobs in order to lure in supporters, but an independent report released by Cornell University showed that Keystone XL would in reality create no more than 5,000 jobs, all of them in temporary construction work. Still others were there to stand against government corruption. One controversy appeared when environmentalists pursued the investigation of Hillary Clinton's former aide, Paul Elliott, for failing to disclose his status as a foreign agent and for lobbying the State Department on behalf of TransCanada.[1],[2] Then, it was discovered that the company selected by the State Department to do the environmental impact statement had previous ties with TransCanada and was listed as one of TransCanada's top clients on their website.[3] Finally, there were people like me at the protest who were there first and foremost because we are terrified of what this pipeline would mean for climate change.
The environmental movement, traditionally so fractured across different causes, has never been so unified around one single campaign. I had certainly never seen a protest 12,000 people strong against dirty energy, let alone a protest that was discussed so heavily in the New York Times. At the end of the day, after he gave a final speech, I shook Bill McKibben's hand and thanked him. He looked drawn and exhausted, but was smiling in spite of it all. Regardless of what was to happen afterwards, we had done something amazing that day...and we all knew it.

The next part of the story, though, came as a surprise to even the most optimistic among us. On Thursday, only days after the protest, the State Department announced that they are now going to consider alternate routes for the pipeline, coupled with a new environmental impact statement. Obama's final decision on Keystone XL, originally slated for the end of this year, is officially pushed back to 2013.[4]

Now, this decision is not a full victory, although some think that it is. The administration could be hoping merely to let the passion around the issue disseminate so that they can approve it in a year or so with less opposition. Regardless of the government's intent, our protests did have an impact on them and that, at least, is a victory. Until this fall, the administration had indicated they had every intention of approving the pipeline, but now Obama is worried enough about the backlash that he has put off his decision until after the election.

Making political change in this country is an exercise in extraordinary frustration and frustration with the government in the United States is at a historical high. The power of the Keystone XL protests show that change is not impossible. With persistence, numbers, and a unified movement, people can accomplish anything. My hope is that, for the environmental movement, this campaign was only the beginning.


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Internships, Fellowships, and Scholarships

Here is a selection of internships, fellowships and scholarships. Visit the Education and Careers blog for updates.

Spend your summer in Washington, D.C
The 2012 Active Citizenship Summer (ACS): Washington, D.C. Fellowships are now available online! Tufts undergraduates apply for enriching and substantive summer fellowships in the nation's capital. Fellows collaborate with alumni to organize events for the CASE Network (Connecting Alumni & Student Experiences). The CASE Network engages other Tufts students and alumni in the DC area. Fellows work 35 hours per week for 10 weeks from June till August. Although funding is not guaranteed, some fellows receive stipends up to $3000. Students can also apply to be leaders in the program and receive an additional $1000 stipend.

Come to a GIM meeting, only 2 left! Located at the Tisch College, Lincoln Filene Hall, Rabb Room
December 7th 5-6pm
December 16th 12-1pm
Applications are due December 19th.
Visit http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/ACS for more information, and a description of available fellowships