Message from the Director

Dear ENVS community,

September and October have come in like a lion this year at Tufts. I hope your fall semester is off to a good start and you have seen the progress that ENVS has in these past weeks. We are excited with the growing interest in the program as evidenced by the outstanding attendance at our weekly Lunch & Learn series (Thursday at noon in
the outstanding attendance at our weekly Lunch & Learn series (Thursday at noon in the Rabb Room). We have had regular attendance greater than 30 individuals from the semester’s start. And, the number of students contacting the program to learn more about the new tracks, new internship requirements, and advisor placement has been regular.

I have two exciting announcements to make. Over the summer, Leslie Goldberg, a specialist in internship growth and development for Communications and Media Studies (CMS), was hired to oversee the internship program for both CMS and Environmental Studies. We feel fortunate to have her join the ENVS team and look forward to developing the internship program and research experiences for undergraduates in the coming year.

One of our goals for the internship program is to put notation on your transcript (many internships require it). As a consequence we now require that all students sign up for Env99 (a zero credit pass/fail course) the semester after completion of the internship and participate in an Internship Symposium. Ann Greaney-Williams implemented our first Internship Symposium for ENV 99. 15 students presented their Summer internships and we had a very productive meeting discussing pros and cons of their internships. As always we are collecting feedback on what we at ENVS can do to improve the internship experience. Stay tuned for updates on internship opportunities and the scheduling of the Spring 2014 Symposium, which will be open to all ENVS students.

We would also like to greet our new ENVS Intern, Cooper Katz McKim, to the ENVS Program Office in Miller Hall. Cooper will be working with Ann on administrative tasks, writing for the newsletter and social media, and many other things.

A heartfelt welcome to Alexander Blanchette (Anthropology) and Andrew Kemp (Earth and Ocean Sciences), our two new cluster hire faculty who have already started taking on advisees and teaching new courses. We also have two new members to the Executive Committee in addition to Alex and Andrew, Karen Kosinski from Community Health and Modhumita Roy from the English Department; and two new ENVS advisors, Jeanne Penvenne and Alisha Rankin from the History Department. Welcome to all.

Lastly, we would like to announce our ENVS Annual Lectureship speaker, Gary Nabhan, who will be visiting on November 19th (details below).

Together, we look forward to a very productive and exciting year!

Best,

Colin Orians

Director
On Thursday, October 17th, I had the privilege of tapping into one of Boston’s intellectual goldmines: Harvard Kennedy School of Government. I’ve become familiar with the small campus recently, as I’ve discovered how frequently they hold events related to sustainability, environmental policy, and regulation; all weaknesses of mine. In just the past few weeks, I’ve been exposed to new people and perspectives as related to environmental policy. HKS is a worthy competitor to our very own Fletcher School as related to inciting productive and provocative discourse, yet complement may be a better word. The talk I went to see last week was given through the Regulatory Policy Program seminar series. The speaker was Billy Pizer, Associate Professor of Public Policy at Sanford School at Duke University, who expounded on delinking trading programs within the larger scope of carbon markets internationally.

In the 1990s, carbon markets used to be the light at the end of the tunnel for environmental policy (Pizer 3). It was the panacea that, once passed, would ostensibly open the floodgates to endless pieces of regulatory environmental legislation: the wet dream of most liberals. It’s attraction derived from a free market concept: this mechanism would allow the ideal of equally valued pollution internationally. If the US emits more, it will pay more; if Bolivia emits nothing, for example, it will make money for doing so. Unfortunately, the main vehicle that drove a cap and trade program was the Kyoto Protocol which turned out to be a largely symbolic international treaty. Though an international joint trading program was never adopted, many countries and regions have taken the initiative to institute one anyway. These include: California, Australia, the EU, New Zealand, Quebec, and New England. Each program has different ambitions, valuations, and jurisdictions, an important consideration to linkages. Billy Pizer, for much of his career, believed delinking would be a harmful economic move due to this disparity. Not until New Jersey delinked from RGGI in 2011, did Pizer’s opinion shift.

During this talk, he delineated his preconceptions of delinking in terms of compliance costs in relation to remaining permits. Rationally, linking programs should reduce volatility by creating a larger market, and therefore decrease compliance costs. With remaining permits, they could disappear or be swallowed by the partner program. The difficulty with swallowing permits though is there is no standard price. Perhaps there will be a high-price market that delinks from a low-price one in the future; the small partner will suddenly become a huge net buyer, and be flooded with excess permits. The primary concern is economic inefficiency, and sudden delinkages would plausibly arise. These questions provoke political concerns as well as economic ones. Overall, Pizer concluded that delinking can happen in a multiplicity of ways, but it is not necessarily disastrous, as he originally conceived. Accommodations will be made for the delinked program in the same way they have to for linking them.

The study of delinking is new, as the action itself is new; Pizer is a pioneer in this field, and his recent paper, "Breaking Up May Not Be Hard to Do: Terminating Links between Emission Trading Programs" will likely pique the interest of scholars elsewhere. Questions asked during this lecture were compelling: Are countries with functioning
Questions asked during this lecture were compelling. Are countries with functioning carbon markets, such as Australia, take a risk on the stability of a differently structured program such as the EU? Questions such as this help me shape my own intellectual curiosity and seek out original opportunities.

For this reason, I looked towards Tufts to see if we have ever had an affiliation with RGGI or another carbon trading initiative. In fact, we had! We were the first University signatory of the Chicago Climate Exchange in 2004. Soon after, Tufts expressed skepticism as to the sustainable value of carbon credits given the only difference in paying for the credits to pollute is a piece of paper; it doesn’t make the University any more sustainable. For this reason, Tufts delinked from the program after Phase II (2007-2010).

Tufts hesitance exhibits the issue with cap and trade right now. If other universities were held to the same environmental standards, we would likely be more inclined to retain the agreement. Tufts student, Stina Stannik, agrees, believing that, “Tufts has an ethical responsibility to stand by a carbon market, and work towards improving it so as to be a model for other potential participants”. The difficulty with carbon trading though is how disparate the structure can be; most likely, our University will take carbon trading seriously when we feel it outweighs or matches our other sustainable efforts.

Though Professor Pizer may have been a little (a lot) over my head, it still exposed me to a different angle with which to study carbon markets. From his presentation, to the people there, to the questions asked, it showed me how important the right environment is to learn something new.

References


Cooper Katz McKim is a sophomore at Tufts University with an avid interest in Environmental Studies. We are also welcoming Cooper officially as our ENVS Intern.
Osagyefo Ofori Panin Comes to Tufts

by William Dolan

I do not even know where to begin, in relating my experience at last Thursday’s Lunch and Learn. I was anticipating an unrelatable talk about urban planning and “environmental psychology,” so needless to say I was taken aback when I was asked to “please rise for His Majesty” at the beginning of the class. But what followed was a thoroughly enjoyable, thought-provoking lecture about the state of Ghana, Africa, and humanity in general.

Most importantly for me, I believe that His Majesty Osagyefuo Ofori Panin spoke wisely about profound, deep-rooted problems with culture and the devolution of human character, all without being too vague or broad. He began by describing the environmental and socioeconomic strife that has gripped Africa in modern history, what he named “poverty without option” or “poverty without opportunity.” His account of there being absolutely no hope or support for the lowest classes struck a deep chord in me.

His Majesty also launched into discussion about the need for sustainability and conservation of natural resources, which I also agree with and support. I found his remedy about looking to the past and mimicking ancient laws, about restricting natural resource depletion was particularly thoughtful and wise. He was clearly well-versed in the need for and implementation of sustainable complements for economic growth, as his working with Prince Charles’ Rainforest Project can attest to.

But perhaps the most profound problem that Osagyefo Ofori Panin addressed was the corrupting effect of modern culture on human character and values. I related to this part of his lecture the most, because what he spoke about was so universal. I agree, there are prevalent values like greed and mistrust that breed and justify selfishness. The most fundamental flaw that His Majesty brought up was a lack of respect and affection for our fellow humans and for the Earth at large. I find it incredible that a man living so far away can still be perceptive of such pertinent problems in an entirely different culture than his own.

It was, after this diatribe on human character, that he began to introduce his solutions for the problems at hand. His Majesty spoke about changing culture to place higher value on meaningful and benevolent change, to make it where “the greatest men are those who change the world, not who amass the most wealth.” For me, this was nothing less than inspiring. I once spoke to a man of South African descent who partook in the overthrow of Apartheid. He recalled “you must change yourself before you can change your surroundings,” and I get the feeling that Osagyefo Ofori Panin was
alluding to the same idea of the necessity of self-improvement. Especially in the context of establishing a sustainable and environmentally stable lifestyle, it’s true you have to harbor feelings of conservation and respect before you can actually go about conserving and respecting the world. While some may say that such a declaration is too vague and doesn’t inspire direct action, I’d agree with Osagyefuo Ofori Panin in saying that meaningful change must be the organic product of a cultivated, thoughtful set of values.

For additional images from Osagyefo Ofori Panin's visit [here](#).
Nabhan to Visit Tufts and WGBH

by Ann Greaney-Williams

It is with great anticipation that we await the arrival of Dr. Gary Paul Nabhan for our ENVS Annual Lectureship. This year, in collaboration with the Anthropology and Biology Departments, the Agriculture Food and Environment Program at the Friedman School of Nutrition, and the Tufts Institute of the Environment, Dr. Nabhan will present on the topic of sustainable food systems in the wake of climate change and water scarcity. The lecture will take place on the Medford Campus, in Barnum Hall, Room 008, at 5:00pm. The lecture is free and open to the public, but please reserve a seat: https://garynabhantufts.eventbrite.com. In addition, Dr. Nabhan will also be presenting at WGBH Innovation IdeaLab in Boston on November 21st.

ENVS Annual Lectureship Full Description

Tapping Into the Wisdom of Traditional Farmers
Sustainably Growing Food in the Face of Climate Change and Water Scarcity

Over the next half century, climate change will dramatically affect which food crop varieties reach optimum quality nearly every foodscape in North America. Farmers’ selection of crop varieties and how they grow them in each microclimate will be radically reworked by declining chill hours, extreme summer temperatures, the changed frequency of tropical storms, and extended droughts. Fresh water scarcity and increasing salinity will also rework what food plants can be grown in many localities as well, not just in already arid areas, but along all coasts. With 2300 counties declared drought disaster areas in the US within the last two years, it is time that horticulturists, gardeners, and farmers in every part of the country look more critically at the diversity of some heirloom vegetables, fruits and grains, as well as new farmer-selected varieties derived from participatory plant breeding in the U.S. By listening to traditional and innovative farmers on five continents and seeing how they are adapting their diversity of food crops to adaptations, Nabhan offers options to greater reliance on a few so-called climate ready GE crops, each of which costs to 5 million US dollars to develop, market and employ. The farm-based strategies for innovation developed through biomimicry, ecomimicry and etnomimicry will be highlighted.

Gary Paul Nabhan is the W.K. Kellogg Endowed Chair in Sustainable Food Systems at the University of Arizona, as well as the permaculture designer and orchard-keeper of Almuniya de los Zopilotes Experimental Farm in Patagonia, Arizona. Widely acknowledged as a pioneer in the local-food movement and grassroots seed conservation, Nabhan was honored by Utne Reader in 2011 as one of twelve people making the world a better place to live. A recipient of a MacArthur Genius Award, his twenty-four books have been translated into six languages.
Faculty Profile: Justin Hollander

by Savannah Dix

During the summer, I had the pleasure of sitting down to talk with former Tufts student and 7th year Assistant Professor, Justin Hollander of the Tufts Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning Department (UEP). Apart from teaching several courses on regional and urban planning, Dr. Hollander has published countless articles and three books since 2009, and has been asked to share his work with audiences across the country. In October, The New York Times published an Op-Ed written by Hollander where he argued for the preservation of paper as a central form of educational media, comparing the trend of “going digital” to the dismantling of streetcar systems after the invention of automobiles. Dr. Hollander’s multidisciplinary work has focused on the issues of polluted land (specifically, brownfields) and cities with shrinking populations, both issues associated with the economic recession, and specifically with the decline of the American manufacturing industry.

While contaminated land is a relevant issue in almost every region of the U.S., Dr. Hollander has done the majority of his fieldwork in the metro areas of Boston and New York, and in many post-industrial “rustbelt” cities such as Detroit and Flint, MI. His latest book, “Sunburnt cities: The Great Recession, Depopulation and Urban Planning in the American Sunbelt,” (Routledge, 2011) deals with the problem of neglected residential properties due to shrinking populations in states such as California, Florida, and Arizona. One example, of abandoned swimming pools, exemplifies the multidisciplinary nature of Dr. Hollander’s research on land use planning. Empty swimming pools can be dangerous to small children, however, they also provide breeding grounds for mosquitos and consequently create a hazardous disease vector. Dr. Hollander integrates human health, ecology, and economics into his research on land use and planning.

When he isn’t making appearing on NPR to discuss his latest book, Dr. Hollander directs the Open Neighborhood Project, where he works with Tufts students to create immersive virtual representations of urban spaces. The Project aims to increase civic engagement and allow for more collaboration on urban planning projects. Sitting in his office on Talbot Ave., Dr. Hollander used a mouse to direct a woman around Kelley’s Corner in Acton, via a virtual world called “Second Life.” Virtual environments like the model of Kelley’s Corner (which looks a lot like the popular “Sims” video game series) allow community members to create and share their own vision for the future development, through an entertaining and accessible platform. This emphasis on human-environment interaction characterizes the Tufts UEP program, and urban planning as a discipline.

While Dr. Hollander’s courses are all taught through the UEP Graduate program, he frequently welcomes advanced undergraduate students from other departments to enroll. Dr. Hollander hopes to teach a new course next year on human perception and response to the built environment, in connection with the book he is currently
developing on the same topic. The course and forthcoming book will attempt to incorporate cutting edge neuroscience research on human perception into established "rules" on urban development. Dr. Hollander plans to use his virtual environments to execute some of the research for this next project, and to collaborate with members of the Tufts community. Any Tufts student with an interest in human-environmental interaction should consider taking a course with Dr. Hollander, or reading some of his published works.

This spring, Dr. Hollander will be offering two courses through UEP, UEP 0255-01 Field Projects: Planning and Practice, a required core course for UEP majors only, and UEP 0233-01 Regional Planning: Tools and Techniques, which is open to ENVS seniors with permission. The course explores the dynamics of metropolitan growth and change and how a policy and planning address that change. He will also be a welcome addition to the ENVS Lunch and Learn lecture series, speaking about Human Perception and Response to the Built Environment on February 13th.