Faculty Spotlight: Peleg Kremer, PhD, Assistant Professor of Geography and the Environment

In this interview series we bring you inside the world of Villanova’s faculty and explore how their work relates to creating a sustainable future. In this issue we hear from Dr. Peleg Kremer, an assistant professor in the Department of Geography and the Environment.

What is your academic background?
I started my academic career at the Hebrew University where I combined the study of economics and environmental science. My MA is from the geography department at Tel-Aviv University and my PhD in Energy and Environmental Policy from University of Delaware. I did my post-doc at the Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School.

In my dissertation research I analyzed social-spatial structures related to the local food system in Philadelphia and asked how our understanding of the development of the local food system can be understood from the point of view of urban sustainability. I mapped the spatial and organizational structure of the different components of the local food system, and tested the ability of the Philadelphia region to support the food needs of the city.

How long have you been teaching at Villanova?
I started working at Villanova in the fall of 2015 as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and the Environment. I joined the department in the fall of 2016 as a tenure-track member of the faculty.

In your own words, how would you define sustainability and why is it important to you?
I think the word “sustainability” is very broad and has been used in so many ways that we need to ground it in specific contexts of application. From an ecological economics perspective, sustainability is achieved if we sustain the life support systems on earth by utilizing less than what can be regenerated (meaning for example that if a resource cannot be regenerated or substituted for we, cannot consume it).

I like this definition because it provides a straightforward reasoning for what we should and should not be doing in our society and economy. Nonetheless, given the reality of our economic systems, more useful are definitions that rely on understanding sustainability as a process. One example is Stephen Wheeler’s (2000) proposal to understand sustainable development as continuous improvements in the long term health and well being of human and ecological systems. Such conceptualization allows for the formulation of short-and long-term measurable goals that help operationalize sustainability.
Why is sustainability important to you?
In general, I think that creating positive narratives about the options we have to ensure the well being of humans and ecosystems is the biggest challenge of our time. The concept of sustainability, if used in this context, helps frame the vision, goals and benchmarks for progress. I see my work on urban sustainability as a way to provide forward looking, and positive outlook on the relationship between humans and nature in cities.

What is your current research focused on?
I use spatial analysis to study the relationships between urban nature, the built environment and the social context of urban greening initiatives as a framework to support local and regional decision making, and to preserve and enhance ecosystem services and their underlying natural support systems. My current research includes conceptual and empirical investigation of spatial patterns in urban ecosystem services (UES) as they interact with the urban social-ecological system. In particular, I am interested in questions of scale, thresholds, trade-offs and synergies in the supply and demand of UES, access to and the distribution of UES, the relationship between urban structure and the provision of UES as well as the influence of land use change and development policies on UES.

Do you collaborate with others on your research?
My research is always a collaborative effort. I am still new to Villanova, but I already have worked with faculty and students from my department and other departments. I also work with colleagues from across the US and Europe in various disciplines including ecologists, biologists, economists and planners. I strongly believe that such collaborations within academia and with non-academic practitioners is essential to make sustainability science and research relevant for the actual challenges we face.

Have you been able to incorporate sustainability into your course work?
Yes. My course “GIS for Urban Sustainability” is all about sustainability. In this course we look at the processes that created the modern condition of unsustainable urban systems and work our way through spatial aspects of urban sustainability problems and solutions.

If you could create any course, what would it be?
I recently created “GIS for Urban Sustainability” as part of the department’s efforts to further engage students in both GIS and sustainability challenges and plan to continue to improve it for future students. Students found the field work in Philadelphia to be particularly rewarding, and I plan to enhance that portion of the course and add field trips to exemplify urban sustainability solutions.

What are your favorite outside of the office activities?
Almost all of my free time is dedicated to my family. I have 2 kids (8 and 3 year old) and with them we enjoy going to the beach, camping, exploring the playgrounds in our neighborhood and reading books about princesses.
Campus Sustainability Week

TUESDAY, OCT 18
“Tell Me Your Climate Story”- Devi Lockwood
Idea Accelerator (Lower Falvey), 8:00PM

THURSDAY, OCT 20
Clothing Swap
Oreo, 10:30AM-3:00PM
Bring your unwanted clothes and swap them for new ones!

Sustainability Career Panel
Garey 31 (Event Room), 5:00PM
Networking Reception Immediately Following the Panel

SATURDAY, OCT 22
Zero Waste Football Game- HOMECOMING!
Villanova vs. Albany
Villanova Stadium, 3:00PM
Volunteers Needed, Contact liesel.schwarz@villanova.edu
Or Signup Online bit.ly/2ds8kJt
Fourth Annual
SUSTAINABLE CAREER PANEL

Change makers: how four Villanovans are making the world better.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20
5:00PM GAREY 31
Networking and light refreshments immediately after the panel

Michael Waslin '08 COE
Senior Engineer, Environmental Sustainability
Merck & Co.

Catherine Kinrade '07 CLAS
Manager, Procurement Sustainability
Johnson & Johnson

Luke Bowen '10 VSB
and Trevor Hayward '10 VSB
Owners
Evil Genius Beer Company

Charlotte Wallace
Community Health Nurse and Sustainability Coordinator
Anne Arundel Medical Center

Sponsors
College of Nursing, Villanova Career Center,
Villanova School of Business, Masters in Sustainable Engineering Program
A 24 hour think-tank style competition giving you the chance to solve real-world problems alongside industry representatives. Hosted by Villanova’s Sustainability Office, Drexel’s Institute for Energy and the Environment and national engineering company OBG.

Applications due Oct 30th

International Center for Development Studies (ICDS): Study Abroad Costa Rica
Unique study abroad opportunities that are centered on important issues such as sustainability, human rights, social justice, and human development in Latin America. This program aims to enhance the understanding of the major challenges that the region faces for sustainable development.

The GREEN Program, Winter & Spring Break Iceland and Peru
An 8-10 day study abroad opportunities in Iceland and Peru allow students to experience hands-on industry exposure and real-time professional development within the fields of sustainable development. The Iceland trip will focus on renewable energy and sustainability. The trip to Peru will focus on water resource management and sustainable practices.

KEEA Communication Internship Philadelphia
The Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance is a non-profit trade association representing 50 businesses and nonprofits working on energy efficiency in Pennsylvania. KEEA is looking for a student that possesses a passion for the energy industry. This unique opportunity allows the student to gain skills and experience in non-profit communications, and achieve a strong start in a growing and critical industry.
Off Campus Events

Thursday, October 20

**Navy Yard Sustainability Day**
The Navy Yard Marine Parade Grounds, 11:00AM-2:00PM  
*Featuring Green technologies and innovations, environmental non-profits and a Lunch Truck Lineup.*

Thursday, October 27

**When the Rain Stops Falling**
“A lyrical mediation on the possibility for humanity in the face of a changing climate.”
Wilma Theatre (Broad & Spruce), 7:30PM

Thursday, November 10

**Franklin Institute: Speaker Series**
**The Waterways of a Changing Climate**
*Part of the International Science Center Day*
The Franklin Institute, 6:30PM
Reserve tickets online

Thursday, November 17

**Sustainable Energy Conference:**
*Connect the Dots Now for a Self-Sufficient Energy Future*
Temple University Student Faculty Center, 8:00AM-5:00PM
Register today.
Job Description

Title: Communications Intern

About: The Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance is a non-profit trade association representing 50 businesses and nonprofits working on energy efficiency in Pennsylvania. KEEA’s sister organization, the KEEA Energy Education Fund (KEEF) is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation, with the mission of increasing the energy efficiency of Pennsylvania’s buildings through education and awareness and training. KEEA works dynamically across numerous fronts to promote energy efficiency; KEEA advocates for policy on the city and state levels, leading public education programs, and organizing awards and conferences. KEEA works to support this growing industry that includes manufacturers, building contractors, energy auditors, attorneys, bankers, and engineers.

We’re looking for someone with a passion for our mission and the energy industry to support our team. This is a unique opportunity to gain skills and experience that have value in non-profit communications, but also to achieve a strong start in a growing and critical industry, at an historic time in our country’s energy policy landscape.

Qualifications: Seeking a current undergraduate or recent graduate. Ideal candidate has demonstrated interest in environmental studies/policy and/or the clean energy field. Excellent writing, editing, and time management skills are a must. Be team-oriented, willing to take ownership of tasks from concept through completion, someone who derives satisfaction from doing things well, professional in interactions with our members, an active listener, as well as enthusiastic about learning new things.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Assist in event coordination and outreach for KEEA’s annual fall conference of over 200 energy professionals from energy law, engineering, utilities, finance, government, construction and policy.
- Research and reporting on new communications projects.
- Data entry to create a new CRM.
- Maintain KEEA website by updating KEEA member listings, adding current news, events, and job postings, and other web projects as needed.
- Utilize social media to increase our public appearance by posting energy efficiency policy, news, events, facts, etc.
- Other communications-related duties as needed.

The intern will be asked to commit to 8-15 hours a week. Days and times are flexible. Open to both work study and non-work study students. This is a paid position.

To apply send resume and cover letter to kseale@keealliance.org. Candidates welcome on a rolling basis.
The Navy Yard would like to invite you to participate in our upcoming Sustainability Day. Please see below for event details and instructions on how to register:

**WHEN:** Thursday, October 20, 11am to 2pm (rain date: Thurs, October 27)

**WHERE:** The Navy Yard Marine Parade Grounds
4747 South Broad Street #120, Philadelphia

**SPONSORS:** Navy Energy Security, PIDC, LUX Products and Clean Air Council

Featuring Green technologies and innovations, environmental non-profits and a Lunch Truck Lineup!

For more information and to reserve your space, contact wfraser@cleanair.org or (215) 567-4004 ext 123.

**THE DETAILS:**
- Reserve your space by September 15th!
- No Exhibitor Fee
- Display on Marine Parade Grounds
- Set-up between 9:30am - 10:30am; break-down after 2pm
- Bring your OWN table, tent and/or generator for power if needed