

# IGNITE CHANGE. GO GREEN.

## **Alumni Spotlight:**

### **Laura Draucker '03, Chemical Engineering Director of Sustainability at Amherst College**

In this interview series we bring you inside the world of Villanova alumni and explore how their work relates to creating a sustainable future. In this issue we hear from Laura Draucker, the Director of Sustainability at Amherst College.

#### **What did you study while attending Villanova?**

I studied and graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering in 2003. I then went on to get my PhD in Chemical Engineering with a focus on green chemical processing at Georgia Institute of Technology.

#### **In your own words, how would you define sustainability?**

I don't think it's possible to define sustainability in a singular way. Throughout my career I have worked on "sustainability" in and with government, industry, non-profit, and higher education. In these different roles, the definition of sustainability has shifted from the economic-driven triple bottom line to the science-driven planetary boundary approach and everywhere in-between. Currently working in higher education, I see my role as a sustainability director to instill motivation and hope in our young people that they can tackle the complex problems that creating a healthy, just, and safe society within the boundaries of our environment require.



#### **Why is sustainability important to you?**

A degree in engineering was perfect for me because I really love problem solving, and in my mind figuring out how to achieve sustainability and tackle climate change are really the ultimate problems. It's messy, complex, and requires considering the holistic life cycle impacts of the decisions you make. It can seem overwhelming at times, but when you get a win it is so rewarding to know you have contributed something positive to our world.

#### **How have you supported or been involved in sustainability efforts through your career or personal life?**

My career has been almost completely focused in sustainability. I am currently the Director of Sustainability at Amherst College, where I approach sustainability from an operational standpoint (i.e., reducing energy use, setting climate goals) as well as through student engagement and education. Prior to Amherst College, I worked at the World Resources Institute in Washington DC developing life cycle greenhouse gas accounting standards for industry. Out of graduate school, I did a post doc at the EPA and a contract with the Department of Energy which focused on energy systems. But my work in sustainability really started with my undergraduate thesis under Dr. Punzi at Villanova measuring the absorptive properties of materials for applications in waste water treatment.

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## **What is your favorite weekend/evening leisure or hobby?**

Living in Western Massachusetts I love getting outside and enjoying local food and beer. We have two young children – Colin, 5 and Annabelle, 8 months - so they take up quite a bit of my “leisure” time!

## **What is your favorite memory as a Villanova student?**

My chemical engineering graduating class was around 20 – 25 students, and we took almost all our courses together. It was really nice have a tight knit group of people to go through the trenches with, so I have a lot of great memories with them including our annual junior-senior flag football game. My senior year we had a few big snow storms, and I will never forget shoveling snow with my roommates at our off-campus house and then ending up at the pub with most the rest of our senior class for snow day beers.

## **What do you feel is the most exciting development in the sustainability field over the last year?**

Well it hasn't been a great year for sustainability generally and climate action specifically in light of the priorities of our new administration, but I am trying to look for silver linings. One of those has been the Paris agreement – a few years before the Paris conference the United States dropping out would have severely hampered efforts to reach a global deal. I was very happy to see other countries, as well as U.S. cities and states (and colleges and universities like Amherst and Villanova!) stand by the Paris agreement even with our federal government's decision to pull out. Additionally, I think renewable energy has reached a tipping point and will continue to replace dirtier forms of electricity generation, which is not only beneficial in our fight against climate change but creates a healthier environment for us all.



If you would like to connect with Laura you may do so via email at [ldraucker@amherst.edu](mailto:ldraucker@amherst.edu)



**CAMPUS.ECOCHALLENGE.ORG**

**Villanova teams compete by completing simple daily activities to win gnarly prizes!**

Mom's Gift Card, Swell Bottle, and Plant-Based Phone Case

**Monday, February 5 - Sunday, February 11**

Join an existing team or lead a new team

Access Code: campus1718



Sustainability

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"In order to change the world, we need to change the stories we tell about it" -



Garrett Blad

Wednesday,  
February 21 from  
4:30-5:30 pm  
Driscoll 134

# re-framing CLIMATE CHANGE

how we change  
the story to build  
power and win

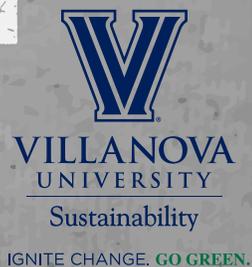


Want to make a difference in the world, but not sure how to communicate science effectively and accurately? Attend a working lunch workshop where you will learn how to more effectively communicate your research to the public.

Thursday Feb. 22 in  
Idea Accelerator  
12:00-1:00

Register online

# EFFECTIVE RESEARCH COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP



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## OPPORTUNITIES



### **President's Environmental Sustainability Committee (PESC): Student Applications**

*The President's Environmental Sustainability Committee (PESC) is tasked with moving campus sustainability efforts forward, including meeting our goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. Members of PESC have the opportunity to lead projects, create new initiatives, and partner with faculty and staff across the University. The Student Working Group addresses campus sustainability concerns as it relates to students. Past projects have included Nova Bike Share, the campus garden, Earth Day of Service, and more.*

**Apply Online**

Applications due by February 18

### **Villanova Undergraduate Research Fellows (VURF):**

#### **Villanova Garden Dedicated Opportunity for Research**

*The Villanova Garden has partnered with the Villanova Center for Research and Fellowships (CRF) to provide at least one fully funded Villanova Undergraduate Research Fellowships (VURF) for their 2018 Summer Research Program. The garden's goal is to serve as an educational, cross-curriculum resource by modeling sustainable urban agriculture and enriching the greater Villanova community.*

**Apply Online Through the VURF Website**

Applications due by March 1

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## EVENTS

Tuesday, February 6

### **2018 Inclusive Hiring Meetup**

*Employers in attendance will be there to speak with you about the ways they hire for and support inclusion at their organizations. This will be a great opportunity to enhance your networking skills, learn about diversity initiatives and programs, and discuss internship and job opportunities.*

**More Information Online**

5:00-7:00pm | Bartley Hall, Curley Exchange

Tuesday, February 6

### **The GREEN Program: Online Information Session**

*The GREEN Program curates short-term, experiential education programs for our world's most pressing issues in sustainable development.*

**Register Online**

6:00-9:00pm | Livestream

Friday, February 9

### **2018 Environmental Law Journal Blank Rome LLP Symposium**

**Standing at the Intersection of Robinson Township and Trump:  
Current Issues in Real Estate Development and Environmental Law**  
*Discussing the intersection of real estate development and environmental law, panelists will offer invaluable insight into the cutting-edge projects that strive to create renewable energy sources and other redevelopment projects on environmentally contaminated properties.*

**Register Online**

9:00am-12:30pm | Villanova Law School, Blank Rome LLP classroom (room 102)

Saturday, February 10

### **GreenAllies Conference 2018**

*Join the fourth annual student networking conference! Hear from amazing students environmentalists and sustainability professionals, share ideas, and meet environmental clubs from around the region.*

**Register Online**

10:00am-3:00pm | Swarthmore College



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## EVENTS

Saturday, February 17

### **LEED Green Associate (GA) Training**

*To date, Leading Green's course and materials have proven to be instrumental in helping over 8000 students pass their respective exam at a 100% pass rate. This course meets the exam's eligibility requirements of the LEED Green Associate exam.*

[Register Online](#)

1:00-5:00pm | University of Pennsylvania, Lavine room 307

Monday, February 19

### **DIY Lotion and Lip Balm Workshop**

*Learn how to make your own lotion and lip balm with Kat Blehl, a Villanova senior and author of "A Newer Kat In Town" blog. The first 15 students will get the opportunity to make their own lotion and lip balm to take home.*

6:00-7:00pm | The Idea Accelerator (ground floor of Falvey)

Friday, February 23

### **RIPE FOR THE PICKING: Repurposing wasted resources in our food system**

*Panel discussions will explore: the dire consequences of wasted food; the vital importance of quality on the plate; efforts to extend shelf life of produce; the compost at the end of the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy; the way forward for a cheese maker and his spring piglets; practicing restoration agriculture with a young apple orchard and mushroom spores; and repurposing and honoring human capital throughout in an effort to transform the linear system to circular.*

[Register Online](#)

9:00am-7:00pm | Princeton University, Robertson Hall

Monday, February 26

### **Love the Skin You're In: Faces and Fashions of Villanova**

*See fellow Villanova students use their fashion to express themselves with confidence. This year will feature one student sourcing 100% pre-loved outfits. Check out how amazing they look and feel with their repurposed clothing!*

7:00-9:00pm | Villanova Room



## Monthly Sustainability Jobs Highlights

Citizens Campaign for the Environment

### **Environmental Advocacy Internship**

*Citizens Campaign for the Environment is currently hiring college students and recent graduates to organize local grassroots campaigns to protect public health and build environmentally and economically resilient communities in Central New York. Qualified candidates will possess excellent communication skills and a genuine interest in environmental and public health issues.*

Paid, Full-Time Internship

NorthWoods Stewardship Center

### **Biological Intern**

*The primary duties of this position are leading the piping plover recovery program and helping to coordinate a community-based pepperweed eradication project at the refuge. Work will be located at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Newburyport, MA.*

Paid, Seasonal, Full-Time Internship

TerraCycle

### **Public Relations Internship**

*The TerraCycle PR Internship focuses on the foundations of public relations and marketing techniques and skills. Interns perform duties relevant to a junior associate in any PR firm or department, working with department members to learn how to write press releases and effectively pitch stories. They also work directly with the media, pitching the TerraCycle story and TerraCycle promotions or events.*

Unpaid, Seasonal, Part-Time Internship

The Environmental Health Strategy Center

### **Environmental Health Internship**

*The internship focuses on developing local and national campaigns to protect communities from chemicals linked with cancer, asthma, and other health problems.*

Unpaid, Seasonal, Full-Time Internship



## Monthly Sustainability Jobs Highlights

The Nature Conservancy

### **Conservation/ Education Assistant**

*We seek a Conservation/Education Assistant to participate in education, stewardship and operations programs. The assistant will interact frequently with visitors and help maintain preserve areas frequented by the public at Mashomack Preserve, Shelter Island, NY.*

Paid, Full-Time Job

LA Solar Group

### **Project Manager**

*The Solar Project Manager is responsible for managing the residential solar projects -from sales to activation- they will also liaison between the engineering and field department while focusing on providing clients with the best experience.*

Paid, Full-Time Job

Community Energy Inc.

### **Solar Analyst**

*Community Energy is currently seeking a new team member to support early stage solar power project development. This individual will be part of a team that reviews GIS data to evaluate potential land targets for solar power projects.*

Paid, Full-Time Job

Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

### **TreePhilly Yard Tree Giveaway Program Assistant**

*The Tree Giveaway Program Assistant supports the Yard Tree Giveaway Program and develops new ideas to improve and expand the TreePhilly program. The position requires an energetic, self-motivated and organized person who can work independently as well as collaboratively with the rest of the TreePhilly team.*

Paid, Seasonal, Full-Time Job