

DOWNSTREAM

from the Environment & Sustainability Program at W&M



A NEW TRACK, AND A NEW NAME

PROGRAM ADDS A CONCENTRATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

This spring, our program changed its name to the Environment & Sustainability Program. The new name encompasses the sciences, policy, and our new track: Environmental Humanities. The environmental humanities explore cultural and creative dimensions of ecology and environmental justice through art, stories, historical research, and other forms of interdisciplinary study and imaginative expression. A rapidly growing field of inquiry, the environmental humanities emphasize culture and imagination as key elements of ecological understanding. Our new program name also reflects the applied nature of many of our courses, which focus on building a more sustainable future.

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Academic Awards

Dennis Liberson Award for
Academic Excellence,
Environmental Policy Track:
Hayley Scheir

Whitney Mayer Award for
Academic Excellence,
Environmental Science
Track: Katie Lee

Joy Archer Research Award:
Lauren French

Burns-Davis Service Award:
Madeline Bertagnolli

"My fondest memory is probably eating a potluck lunch on Professor Maloney's farm after working hard in the field." - Zach Roberts '22

This year, we were fortunate to be able to celebrate our students' accomplishments in-person, during a memorable graduation ceremony at the Keck Lab on Lake Matoaka. Our students are going on to do incredible things - from starting graduate school, to working for geological surveys, to solving policy problems in DC. Read some of their favorite ENSP memories below.

"My fondest memory of being an ENSP student is knowing that if I took any class with Dr. Doug DeBerry, he would most certainly serenade us with his guitar at least once that semester." - Erin-Darby McClain '22

"I was able to receive academic credit for a once-in-a-lifetime internship opportunity at the Bimini Sharklab in the Bahamas during my gap year." - Ethan Dewald '22

"One of my favorite memories was bonding with classmates during the outdoor labs when we didn't know if we would ever make it back...through beautiful weather, intense heat, wind gusts, sleet, snow, and most notably, an ice storm." - Alexis Archer '22

"My fondest memory of being an ENSP student has been spending time in courses and at events surrounded by people who share a love of the environment with me!" - Veronica Mantha '22



NEW ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: LAURA GROVE

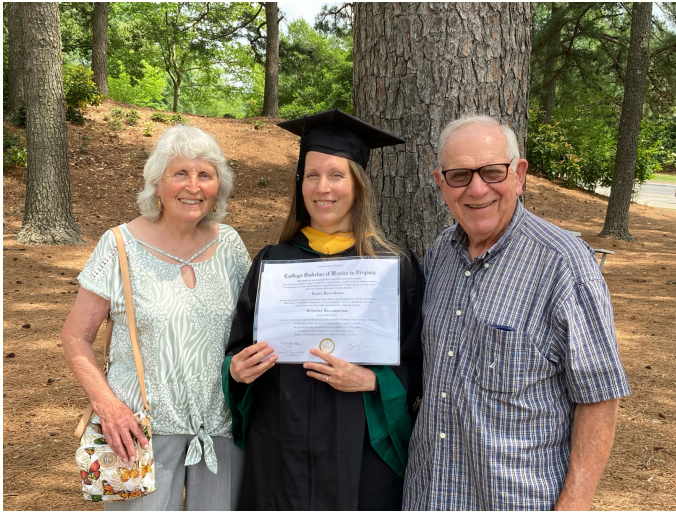


Photo courtesy of Laura Grove

Could you describe your path to W&M?

I was a pastry chef for 23 years in Philadelphia, and I've also been a massage therapist since 2004. I moved to Williamsburg in 2010 to live with my now-husband, who teaches painting at W&M. I walked through campus almost every day and thought that it would be an amazing experience to take classes here. I often visited the website and fantasized about taking listed courses - particularly from Biology and ENSP. I knew that I would never be accepted with my grades from high school, though, as I didn't put much effort into my studies as a teenager. Eventually, I started taking classes at Thomas Nelson in the hope that I could do well enough there to transfer to W&M.

When Laura Grove was accepted to William & Mary, she cried. On track to complete her associate's degree at Thomas Nelson Community College, she had spent years poring over the ENSP course catalog. We spoke to her about her experience as a non-traditional student at W&M, and how the ENSP program exceeded her expectations.

What made you choose W&M?

I love the class sizes and the interaction with professors. I love how invested professors are in their students, how they really care. My very first advising session at W&M was with my pre-major advisor, Rowan Lockwood. It was supposed to be a 30 minute appointment, but she spent more than an hour and a half with me. We discussed which courses I should take, yes, but we also talked about what kind of research I would be interested in and which professors I might want to approach. She introduced me to the chairs of both the Marine Science and ENSP departments. She encouraged me to interact with faculty, to introduce myself to all of my professors and to contact them if I was ever unsure about anything. She was (and is) FANTASTIC.

Were there any ENSP courses that you were particularly excited to take, or that surprised you?

Choosing one ENSP course that I was most excited about is tough. I was so excited about so many. I guess I'll go with Wetland Ecosystems, though. Going in, I knew that wetlands were important and that they're well... wet, but I didn't know much else. I can't believe how much info Dr. Chambers was able to cram into that course, but I learned so much! It was fascinating. Exams were challenging, but that's OK. I learn better when instructors push me a little. And the labs were great. I loved wandering around in various types of wetlands, taking soil cores, and looking for characteristics of wetlands. Even now, I'll be out walking and notice things like crayfish burrows, water lines on trees, and so on.

The course that surprised me the most was Art & Ecology. I'm married to an artist, but I don't know much about art - and even less about art history. I'm more into forests and mountains than museums. Alan Braddock's lectures were FASCINATING, though. He has such a talent for weaving art, history, anthropology, politics, sociology, philosophy, and any number of other things through his lectures. I was spellbound.

How do you feel being a non-traditional student shaped your experience at W&M?

As a Gen Xer, I was frankly terrified of taking classes with super-smart, young, high-achieving, traditional W&M students. From the get-go, though, I found my classmates to be accepting and supportive of me. One of the first classes I took was a COLL 150 called Extinction is Forever. I had to get up and speak in front of the class at one point. I was terrified, but my classmates looked me in the eye, smiled, and nodded encouragingly. That sticks with me to this day.

What are your post-graduation plans?

Over the summer, I plan to keep practicing massage therapy at the local spa where I currently work. I'll also be working as a lab assistant over at VIMS helping a phytoplankton scientist order and pack the equipment that he'll need to work in Antarctica in November. I'd love to get into science communication at some point, and I'm searching for an internship or job in that field.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION COURSE TEACHES PODCASTING



Why did the salamander cross the road?

The answer is more complicated than you might think. Each spring, salamanders across the country brave treacherous asphalt crossings to reach their historic breeding grounds, many of which existed thousands of years before roads segmented their habitats. This semester, students in Professor Dorothy Ibes's Science Communication course created podcasts on salamander conservation, hammerhead shark ecology and bird window collisions. Listen to these podcasts, and those from previous years of the course, by clicking on the pictures to the left.



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