Dear Friends of Interdisciplinary Studies:

The spring semester is almost over and graduation ceremonies are upon us. We are very happy to congratulate the 310 students who will graduate with a Bachelor degree in Interdisciplinary Studies this May. Congratulations! Good job! Our top graduates are listed in this newsletter, but I want to extend to all of you our very best wishes for a successful future. We hope you will be able to use your degree to pave the way to further exciting adventures and meaningful studies and work. A special congratulations also to professional advisor Dr. Said Kevin Jardaneh who has completed his Ph.D. and to IDS instructor Devon Bazata who has completed her second M.A. degree.

A few weeks ago we concluded our “IDS Survival Guide” with a special “lunch with your Dean.” It was a well-attended event where we could share a meal and some of our experiences with IDS. When asked how students found their way into pursuing IDS, the stories were as diverse as the group present. What struck me as remarkable, however, was that almost everyone talked about finding their IDS major as a really good thing that seemed to “finally bring all the pieces together”. I again came away with the impression that most if not all IDS students end up really happy when they (finally) find IDS as their degree track and academic home. That is really wonderful, and I am grateful to all our excellent advisors who guide and help students find their path and schedule the details – and to our instructors and the many other professors who shape our students’ diverse educational experiences.

If you are graduating, please stay in touch with our office (please leave us a contact email that you will actually use a year or two from now) – we would love to know where you are going and what you are doing and we would love to keep you updated about new developments at your alma mater.

Speaking of new developments, for the very first time, the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies has been able to hire our first two full time faculty. Pictures and brief bio-sketches of Dr. Woodill and Dr. Plate are included in this issue – they will begin teaching classes in the Fall and we welcome them to UCF.

In this issue you will also find the story of Annabelle Dunbar, who will be among our May IDS-Environmental Studies graduates; you may have read about her previously as the first place winner of the Carnegie Council essay contest, where she wrote about climate change. Hannah Hollinger, who is also pursuing a degree in IDS-Environmental Studies introduces the Office of Sustainability where she serves as a social outreach assistant.

We have some amazing students and great advisors and faculty. Do tell others about our programs and please let us know if we can help you in your educational journey. The office will be open and fully staffed throughout the summer – so maybe we’ll see you when you take a class and/or schedule an advising appointment. The calendar on the last page lists some useful dates to remember.

Have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Dr. Claudia Schippert
Hannah Hollinger, IDS Environmental Studies, Class of 2017, and Social Outreach Assistant for UCF’s Office of Sustainability, said she first learned about Interdisciplinary Studies as a high school student in south Florida. The course that has most inspired her was Professor Gilbrook’s GIS course because it related to so many different aspects of environmental studies. Hannah’s work in the Office of Sustainability utilizes her interdisciplinary perspective on problem-solving and includes responsibility for the social outreach and marketing campaigns in an effort to educate and unite the campus community in sustainable initiatives. There are six different initiatives with the goal of reaching climate neutrality. The Kill-A-Watt competition on campus is one of those initiatives, and at the halfway mark of it, one living community was surpassing the others. The campaign, in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Residence Life, awards scholarships to those students who reduce their personal energy consumption. She said that in the past, the competition has resulted in a savings of close to $50,000 over a two-month period and saved the university a total of 2,216,484 kWh of energy, equivalent to $216,004.00. Scholarships awarded to the residents of the best performing buildings. More information on this campaign is available at http://sustainable.ucf.edu/kill-a-watt.

Jacqueline Meyer was honored with a UCF Founder’s Day Award. Jacqui is a Transition Adviser for IDS and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies with minors in mathematical biology and political science. She is in the Burnett Honors College, serves on the President’s Leadership Council, is a symposium team leader in the Honors Cornerstone Course, a Burnett Honors College Scholar Mentor and a civic intern for the Office of Research and Civic Engagement. Jacqui is an active volunteer at the UCF Arboretum’s organic community garden, a Green HERO, and a member of the Honors Congress, where she has served on the volunteer committee. During spring break 2015, Meyer volunteered at the Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge as part of the Honors Alternative Break Program. Meyer recently participated in a collaborative research effort focused on cypress domes on campus with UCF’s Landscape & National Resources and Arboretum programs, and presented the results of that research at the 2016 Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence. Meyer, a sophomore, is expected to graduate in Spring 2018. Congratulations, Jacqui!

Interdisciplinary Studies welcomes Kyle Jaimes as a new Transition Adviser! Kyle is a History major and will graduate in May 2017. He has served on President Hitt's Leadership Council, on UCF's O-Team, and as a Resident Assistant in the UCF residence halls. We look forward to working with Kyle in the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies.
GRADUATING WITH HONORS:

Top Four Honors in IDS
*Jenna White (BS)
*Amy Compare (BS-Env.Studies)
*Rebecca Williams (BS)
*Gabrielle Casey (BA)

Bachelor of Arts, IDS
Shelley Birch, Cum Laude
Gabrielle Casey Summa Cum Laude
Donna DeFazio, Magna Cum Laude
Noelle Dunham, Summa Cum Laude
Emily Etchison, Cum Laude
Kaitlyn Lees, Cum Laude
Jared Mitchell, Cum Laude
Bianca Picou, Magna Cum Laude
Brandon Shelton, Magna Cum Laude
Ariel Tesenair, Cum Laude

B.S. IDS - Environmental Studies Track
Amy Compare, Summa Cum Laude
Morgan Cooney, Magna Cum Laude
Scott McConachie, Cum Laude

Bachelor of Science, IDS
Cory Avery, Magna Cum Laude
Christa Bergquist, Magna Cum Laude
Zachary Cooney, Magna Cum Laude
Onni Franco, Magna Cum Laude
Angela Gonzales, Summa Cum Laude
Becky Johnson, Summa Cum Laude
Nirvani Khan, Summa Cum Laude
Christopher Kirk, Magna Cum Laude
Victor Ortiz, Magna Cum Laude
Martina Otavova, Summa Cum Laude
Lindsey Pye, Magna Cum Laude
Emily Qu, Summa Cum Laude
Jenna White, Summa Cum Laude
Rebecca Williams, Summa Cum Laude
Aamna Zaidi, Cum Laude

Congratulations to Said Kevin Jardaneh, one of our Interdisciplinary Studies professional advisors (and also former instructors)! Dr. Jardaneh successfully completed his PhD Dissertation entitled “Building a Foundation for Goal Attainment and Problem-Solving in Interdisciplinary Studies: Reimagining Web-Based Core Curriculum through a Classical Lens.”

Dr. Jardaneh will be awarded the PhD in Text & Technologies in the May 2016 Commencement Ceremonies.

Dr. Said Kevin Jardenah

Paige Jaffee, B.S. IDS, Environmental Studies Class of 2016

Ellis Sinclair, B.S. Business Administration, Class of 2016

Transition Advisors, Paige Jaffe & Ellis Sinclair are graduating! Paige will graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Interdisciplinary Studies Environmental Studies track, and will continue her education this fall as she begins a Master of Arts degree in Global Sustainability at the University of South Florida. Ellis will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree with a major in Marketing. He’ll explore graduate school options and hopes to continue to work in the field of higher education. Best of luck and congratulations!

Dr. Sharon Woodill will join us as visiting lecturer in Interdisciplinary Studies in Fall 2016. Dr. Woodill is an interdisciplinary scholar with an eclectic academic background. She holds a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Philosophy and Religious Studies from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. She holds an MA in Gender and Women’s Studies and a BA (honors) in Music (jazz piano). Her research interests include religion, gender and sexuality, science and religion, feminist theory, atheism and secularism, and interdisciplinary methodologies.

Dr. Sharon Woodill

Dr. Richard Plate will join us in August 2016 as visiting lecturer in Environmental Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies. A central Florida native, Dr. Plate holds a PhD in interdisciplinary ecology from the University of Florida and degrees in English and chemical engineering from Clemson University. He has taught courses in environmental science, environmental ethics and politics, marine resource management, and writing. He has authored numerous articles on the human dimensions of natural resource management and co-authored a textbook on sustainability. Dr. Plate’s research focuses on how people learn and make decisions about complex social-ecological systems.

Dr. Richard Plate
Meet Annabelle Dunbar

Interdisciplinary Studies: Environmental Studies Values, Planning, & Policy Track

I have always been passionate about protecting wildlife and the natural world, which is why I became a vegan and volunteered at the Seacrest Wolf Preserve, Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance, and the E. O. Wilson Biophilia Center. After high school, I volunteered with Americorps NCCC to help Hurricane Sandy survivors in New York. After that, I discovered UCF’s Interdisciplinary Studies Environmental Track and knew immediately it was perfect for me. It had a great core structure with many options to make the degree an ideal track for my passion.

In February, I was delighted to learn that I won first place in the Carnegie Council essay contest. Climate change is a global crisis of the first order, and I used this paper to show what we face if we continue on the disastrous route we are taking because of our lack of concern for changing our unhealthy lifestyles. I stated that “to tackle the climate problem, we must each be informed and address what the top contributing factors to the changing climate are and how they can most efficiently be combated.” We as a nation and as individuals must “begin a transition towards more ecologically and economically sustainable ways of living by turning to alternative sources of energy, implementing more viable innovations, and altering certain lifestyles.” This includes adding a carbon tax and using the money generated to give subsidies to alternative energies, building more public transportation, reducing our consumption of meat, and reducing our rate of deforestation.

My interdisciplinary way of thinking absolutely contributed to my solution. Every interdisciplinary studies student I have met and have had courses with have all had open minds, cared deeply about creating positive change in the world, and have bright minds to help think of economic and ecological solutions!

I am set to graduate in May, and am currently the vendor coordinator for the Central Florida Earth Day Festival (that takes place on Earth Day April 23rd!) and am an assistant for the Seminole County Commissioner Lee Constantine. I plan on continuing to learn about the political arena from the Commissioner, and then most likely continue my studies by going to law school. Annabelle Dunbar’s award-winning article can be read online at the Carnegie Council’s website located at https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/773.

Annabelle Dunbar, B.S. IDS ‘16

GRADUATION INFORMATION: IDS Graduates, will you let the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies know about your post-graduation? Drop us an e-mail to share your plans, whether they are employment, graduate school, or professional school plans---we’d love to hear about what’s next for you and to stay in touch to cheer you on in your future endeavors. Students graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in IDS will graduate on Saturday, May 7 at 2:30 pm in UCF’s CFE Arena.
Get Involved with the Office of Undergraduate Research:
Summer A Peer Mentor Advising: Drop-In: M: 9-11 am, 1-3 pm; Tu/Thu: 1-3 pm; By Appointment: Tu/Thu
IDS Walk-In Week Advising: May 16-20 for current IDS students. Walk-in or call-in, students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Prospective students need to make an appointment.
Other Summer opportunities at UCF: Volunteer UCF [http://osi.ucf.edu/vucf/calendar/]
Office of Student Involvement: [http://osi.ucf.edu/]
Other community service: [http://osi.ucf.edu/vucf/opportunities/]

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Office of Interdisciplinary Studies
Classroom Building 1, Suite 302
12601 Aquarius Agora Drive
Orlando, FL 32816-1998
Phone: (407) 823-0144
[www.is.ucf.edu]

Join the Interdisciplinary Studies Student Association (ISSA) at its next upcoming meeting. Check the website for more information.

“Like” us on Facebook Interdisciplinary Studies @UCF to keep up with the current news and events.

DATES TO REMEMBER: Summer 2016

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