

# CSULB Environmental Science & Policy

2011 Newsletter

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## Message from the Director: Thriving in Tough Times



By any measure these are tough times at California universities. The current proposed budget includes a \$1.4 billion reduction for all public higher education including a \$500 million reduction for the CSU. This new round come on the heels of several years of deep cuts which resulted in lay-offs of faculty and staff, increases in student fees, fewer courses, and, most critically, 4000 fewer students at CSULB. Students have been confronted with a series of "tuition" hikes (yes, we finally are calling it what it is) with another round coming this fall. On top of this, the university is literally pushing students out of the door by forcefully encouraging them to graduate as quickly as possible and in some cases denying them the opportunity to add a second major or

minor. All of these factors make it very tough to run an interdisciplinary program. Yet, Environmental Science and Policy is thriving at the BEACH. During the same period when the campus *lost* 4000 students, our program *gained* over 40 majors! ES&P now has over 165 majors and we continue to grow.

On top of this, our students are more active than ever in the community and on campus. To site just a few examples, ES&P majors have been at the fore of activities to establish a community garden and increase the amount of native plant vegetation on campus. They are involved in efforts to eliminate plastic water bottles from campus. Our alumni and graduates are involved in countless activities in Long Beach from restoring degraded landscapes such as the Los Cerritos Wetlands to improving the bike routes linking the campus to greater Long Beach while fighting for cyclists' rights. There seems to be renewed enthusiasm in the student community to go out and make change happen everywhere I look! We are not just local, we are going international! Overall I am happy to write that ES&P at the BEACH is thriving even when times are tough!

—P.L

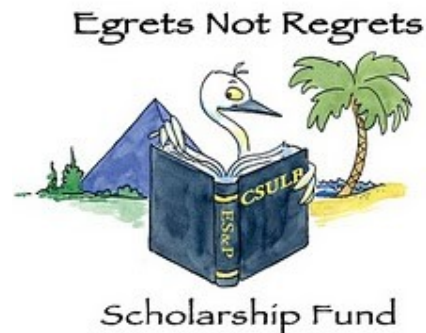
## Mark your Calendar!

- \* **April 13, 2011:** Future Sustainability leaders and Green Gardening at CSULB Japanese Garden, 4:30-6:30pm
- \* **April 19-20, 2011:** CSULB Earth Week Fair
- \* **April 22, 2011:** Official Earth Day!
- \* **May 26-27, 2011:** Commencement
- \* **July 10-13, 2011:** Higher Education Sustainability Conference Hosted by CSULB.

## Egrets Not Regrets Fund

The ENR scholarship Fund is an established award to outstanding ES&P students for their scholarly achievements and community involvement in the environmental field. The fund would also offer a partial tuition scholarship to a senior student with a GPA greater than 3.0 and commitment to volunteering in the community.

Heather Altman is a Senior Environmental Specialist, who works at the Board of Directors of the Friends of Colorado Lagoon (FOCL) and serves on the advisory council for the Environmental Science and Policy Department in CSULB. She decided in late 2010 that the increasing college tuitions and budget cuts should not stop students from earning an education and decided to develop this fund to aid students complete their educational goals “I benefited from an "affordable," quality education and I think others should too”.



## 1<sup>ST</sup> Annual ES&P Mixer at Zephyr Café a Total Success!

Zephyr Café hosted in the evening of Feb 27th the first Annual Environmental Science & Policy Mixer. The purpose of this mixer was to give students the opportunity to network with faculty and professionals in a more relaxed/informal atmosphere. We would like to thank all CSULB ES&P students, faculty and professionals for attending and having a great time. We look forward on continuing this event next year.



## Spotlight: Martin McCarthy Environmental Attorney

Martin McCarthy is a private practice environmental attorney. He has been practicing natural resource & environmental law for the past 13 years. For the past five years he has represented non-profit citizen environmental groups in litigation under the Federal Clean Water Act and other laws relating to protecting water quality in California. Prior to this he served as an Assistant Attorney General for natural resources and environmental protection in the U.S. Territory of American Samoa. Here is what he has to share with us about his career as an Environmental Attorney.



### **What was your motivation for going into environmental law?**

I've had an interest in nature and the outdoors for as long as I can remember. A real moment of awareness for me sparked when I was 12 years old. I went surfing at a beach near my home but did not know that there had been a massive sewage spill the night before. When I got home my wetsuit stunk and my dad had to hose me down with fresh water and make me clean out my ears and nose with anti-bacterial soap. I was lucky I didn't get sick. Also, after witnessing the effects of the 1991 oil spill in Huntington Beach, I developed an interest in studying political science and environmental issues at UC San Diego. Combining those interests, a legal career in environmental law was the right choice for me.

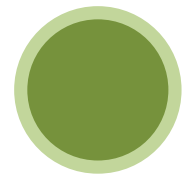
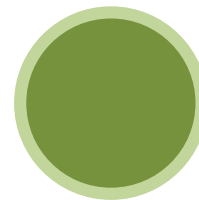
### **Why did you decide to teach?**

As an attorney it's easy to become focused solely on legal research and litigation. I've had the opportunity to mentor law student interns in my practice, and this desire to mentor others transitioned naturally into the desire to teach at the university level.

### **What are the environmental issues of today that you see as most pressing and that you'd like to convey to your students?**

Hmmm, it's hard to pick just one, so I would say that despite passage of the first major environmental laws nearly 40 years ago, there's still a lot of work to do to protect public health and the nation's air and waters from pollution. The continuing problem of reducing and hopefully eliminating pollution while simultaneously combating the potentially devastating effects of climate change will be among the great environmental challenges for public health in this century.

"The continuing problem of reducing and hopefully eliminating pollution while simultaneously combating the potentially devastating effects of climate change will be among the great environmental challenges for public health in this century"



## Then and Now: Environmental Volunteers in Peace Corps Mali, Africa

You might remember Geoff Leech, a former president of the ES&P Club, who graduated from CSULB last spring. Geoff joined the Peace Corps on September 3rd 2010. He is now a volunteer in the environmental sector based in a small rural village in the region of Segou where he develops sustainable projects for the community. Paul Laris, the current Director of Environmental Science and Policy, was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mali 20 years ago. Paul met up with Geoff in January while he was conducting field work on savanna fires as part of a research project funded by the National Geographic Society. Here are a few excerpts from their conversation together.

**Paul:** Geoff, so you are a volunteer in the environmental sector in Mali, what do you do? What is your mission?

**Geoff:** One goal is to promote the use of non-timber forest products so the forest is utilized without having to cut down trees to prevent erosion and so they will be there for future generations.

**Paul:** What is an example of some things you might do?

**Geoff:** One idea is to improve the local fish farm. This is a sustainable project that is both food security related and an income generating activity.

**Paul:** What would the fish farm look like?

**Geoff:** The most popular design is made of cement bricks. It is above ground, high enough to keep the frogs out. One reason this is a sustainable project is because you can build it near a garden and then drain it periodically into your garden where the waste-water becomes fertilizer.

**Paul:** How has the interaction with the community been so far?

**Geoff:** The people are incredibly friendly and their sense of humor is always on display. It is a hard job adjusting and moods vary on a day to day basis, but for the most part, the good times outweigh the difficult ones. The language is frustrating, fun, adventurous, silly, and exciting.

**Paul:** That sounds nice! One last question, how did your ES&P degree prepare you for what you do here?

**Geoff:** Environmental awareness and economics were key. Economics really does play a role in everything. Some international studies courses were good too, the overall program helped make me environmentally conscious and now I get to apply it.




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**“Lifestyle wise, it is an adjustment here, but you really learn to make do with what you have. Everything you really need, you have here.”**

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## Then and Now: Environmental Volunteers in Peace Corps Mali, Africa

**Geoff:** So Paul, it seems like what you did with your group 20 years ago set a precedent for what our group is doing today. Can you say a little about how you envisioned what you were starting then would carry on?

**Paul:** At first we didn't think about future volunteers, we thought about the Peace Corps philosophy, we are here to teach, inspire, bring new ideas and exchange culture. The month we came National Geographic ran a cover story on the terrible drought in Mali. Things were bad. We were part of an initiative to improve food security. It was all about teams. We worked together in teams of water, agriculture, forestry and appropriate technology (my sector) to solve problems. It is great to learn from you that the team concept is back with your group. Coming back to Mali all of this time later I ask myself, "How much of the Peace Corps stuff really made a difference?" In my view, we have made many little changes.

**Message from Geoff:** Hey everybody. Lifestyle wise, it is an adjustment here, but you really learn to make do with what you have. Everything you *really* need, you have here.

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**"The language is frustrating, fun, adventurous, silly, and exciting"**

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Geoff and Fakuru in Mali, West Africa



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We're on the Web!

<http://www.csulb.edu/programs/es-p/>

### \* 2009 -2010 List of Donors\*

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\*Egrets Not Regrets,  
Ms. Heather Altman

\*DBA GK International Services,  
Ms. Gordana Kajer

\*Tidal Influence,  
Mr. Eric Zahn &  
Mr. Taylor Parker

## ES&P Congratulates Upcoming Class of 2011

The Environmental Science & Policy Department would like to extend a warm congratulations to the graduating class of 2011. Graduation Festivities will be held on May 26/27th at IPM

### \*Outstanding Nominees for the B.A. in Environmental Science and Policy

Allison Goldman  
Patricia Moran

### \*Outstanding Nominees for the B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy

Alys Arenas  
Ryan Liebert

Bullum, Nicole I.  
Burtz, Lauren M.  
Chan, Christine  
Chen, Tiffany  
Gutierrez, Cynthia  
Klasky, Maxwell Palomino  
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Quach, Loc Thanh  
Sanchez, Michell Arline  
Schmillen, Cory Lyle  
Su, Evan Vay  
Tapia, Carla  
Thompson, Kim Dale  
Van Berkum, Taylor S.



### THANKS TO ALL OUR BENEFACTORS!

A Special Thank You to Heather Altman of "Egrets Not Regrets" for re-energizing the Scholarship Fund for ES&P students and for holding fundraisers in the fall. Thanks also to Mr. and Mrs. Darwin Hall for being instrumental in getting the original scholarship off the ground.

To find out more about contributing to the ES&P Department:  
<https://cf.papubs.csulb.edu/giving/index.cfm?fund=ESE>