

# Sustainable Living and Learning

## A Learning Community for First-Year Students

**First-year students** have the opportunity to participate in a special, two-semester long Learning Community that will investigate the intersection of sustainability and consumption with a particular emphasis on the relationship between local actions and global effects. Created and taught

- **56 first-year students**
- **4 faculty**
- **2 semesters**
- **4 sections**
- **1 residence hall**

by four members of the faculty and led by the Chair of the Environmental Studies Department, the Learning Community is designed to build a strong sense of academic community and co-curricular purpose while introducing students to life at HWS.

In the fall semester, 56 students will take one of four sections of the same first-year seminar – Consuming the World – each one taught by a member of the faculty. In the spring, students will remain in their sections, taking a linked course that will extend learning throughout the year to create an integrated, interdisciplinary experience. Students who participate in Consuming the World will satisfy the requirements of ENV 110, a prerequisite for future environmental studies courses.

### *The First-Year Seminar*

**We are all consumers.**

**We buy things.**

**We use things up.**

**We throw things away.**

Often we do all of this without considering the life cycle of these “things.” Think about all the t-shirts you own. Do you know what materials make up your t-shirts? Moreover, do you know what was required to get these t-shirts to you in the first place? While these questions may seem to have simple answers, the reality is that each of the “things” we consume has a complex secret life of its own, one worthy of further consideration. This course will explore the complex relationship between sustainability and consumption, paying specific attention to the myriad ways in which individual consumption practices shape global outcomes.



As members of the Sustainable Living and Learning Community, students will:

- Live together in the same, co-ed residence hall
- Learn together in the fall semester as a member of one of four sections of Consuming the World (each section will include 14 students and each will be taught by a member of the faculty)
- Take a linked class with the Learning Community in the spring semester
- Develop strong relationships with fellow students and faculty, two of whom will have an office in the residence hall
- Participate in a wide range of classroom experiences right in the residence hall, which includes three seminar rooms and a specially designed kitchen
- Participate in field trips to learn more about Geneva and the Finger Lakes
- Attend special lectures delivered by global leaders in the sustainability field
- Take part in a weekly exploration lab to include hands-on tutorials, some happening at Fribolin Farm, a 35-acre farm owned by the Colleges just a mile from campus
- Be mentored by four Eco-Reps, upper class students who have expertise in sustainability and who will serve as teaching assistants for Consuming the World



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH  
COLLEGES

Office of Residential Education  
101 St. Clair Street  
Geneva, NY 14456  
Email: [resed@hws.edu](mailto:resed@hws.edu)  
Phone: (315) 781-3880



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## Faculty



Thomas Drennen



Beth Kinne



Robin Lewis



Tarah Rowse

## Why Choose a Learning Community?

Participants in Learning Communities tend to achieve higher grade point averages, make friends quickly and transition into college life smoothly. Learning Communities have been linked to positive student engagement, overall satisfaction with college, increased interpersonal skills, and a greater understanding of diversity. In short, students who take part in a Learning Community leave their first year with the tools and resources necessary to be highly successful in college and beyond.

## Who Should Choose the Sustainable Living and Learning Community?

The Sustainable Living and Learning Community is open to all incoming first-year students.

There are no prerequisites for enrollment, nor is it necessary to have a history of work in sustainability initiatives. Instead, we're looking for students who have a curiosity about the world around them, who want to learn more about the environment, and who enjoy classroom experiences that are active and varied. No matter what major you are considering, this Learning Community will help you to develop your analytic skills, give you experience in looking at one issue from multiple perspectives, and help you to find your place in the HWS academic community.

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## Sustainability at HWS

Environmental sustainability is a core value at Hobart and William Smith. With a unique program that allows students and faculty to use the physical campus as a laboratory to explore environmental impact mitigation strategies, the HWS Sustainability Program enables and encourages students to link classroom learning to real world application and to play a direct role in the environmental performance of the Colleges. With a campus situated in a unique setting on the edge of a small city, a few blocks from vast agricultural lands, and on the shores of one of the deepest lakes in the United States, the applied sustainability opportunities are endless, acting as micro-examples of issues beyond the Colleges and providing a global element essential to addressing the complex environmental issues of the 21st century.



## The President's Climate Commitment

In 2007, President Mark D. Gearan became a charter signatory the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, cementing the Colleges' dedication to a campus-wide effort of environmental sustainability. The Colleges have since implemented the "Climate Neutral by 2025" plan, an effort to eliminate campus emissions by the year 2025. The plan incorporates the input of students, faculty, and staff in an effort to create an inclusive educational atmosphere that offers practical applications for theories and ideas learned in the classroom, with the result of making a positive difference on the HWS campus, the Geneva community, and the Finger Lakes region.

### Thomas Drennen

*Professor of Economics and Incoming Chair of the Environmental Studies Department  
Co-Chair of the President's Climate Task Force*

- Undergraduate degree in Nuclear Engineering from MIT, M.A. in Public Policy from the University of Minnesota, and Ph.D. in Resource Economics from Cornell
- Began teaching at HWS in 1997
- Serves on the HWS Farm Committee to investigate uses for Fribolin Farm
- Teaches courses in energy, environmental economics, and resource use
- Research interests include: international policies to confront climate change, economics of alternative energy systems, and advancing campus sustainability
- Likes to claim his new car is powered by solar and wind

### Beth Kinne

*Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies*

- B.A., Biology, University of Virginia; M.S., Resource Management and Environmental Studies, University of British Columbia; J.D. and LL.M (Asian and Comparative Law), University of Washington
- Joined faculty in 2008
- Teaches courses in environmental law, natural resource law, business law, and global water issues
- Research interests include development of water law in eastern and western U.S. and China; state and local environmental protection initiatives, particularly as related to oil and gas development; and land use planning for sustainable communities
- Recent publication: *Beyond the Fracking Wars: a guide for lawyers, municipal leaders, planners and citizens*, Powers and Kinne, American Bar Association, 2013
- Favorite volunteer work: serving on the Board of Trustees for the National Youth Science Foundation

### Robin Lewis

*Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies*

- Undergraduate degrees in Botany and Geography from Miami University, M.A. in Geography from Miami University, and Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Arizona
- Fulbright Scholar in Malaysia in 2009-2010
- Began teaching at HWS in 2011
- Teaches courses on biodiversity, food, critical social studies, and sustainable consumption
- Serves on the Service Learning Advisory Committee and regularly includes service learning and community-based research into her classes
- Research interests include consumption studies, sustainable community development, environmental politics in Southeast Asia, and sustainability in higher education

### Tarah Rowse

*Visiting Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies*

- Undergraduate degree in Resource Management from Cornell, M.S. in Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon, and a Ph.D. from Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Vermont
- Prior to joining Hobart and William Smith, was a Fellow in the Office of Sustainability at University of Vermont
- Worked for the Nature Conservancy in Washington on renewable energy development
- Peace Corp volunteer in Belize as an environmental educator
- Research interests include sustainability across the campus and energy policy