

Message from the EES Chair



EES Chair guards new building

Winter 2005

What's happening in EES?

New faces, new programs, same friendly home



Let me add my welcome to you all. I hope lots of alums get to see this newsletter – we really do want our graduates to keep that sense of family so many of you said was a distinctive part of your experience here in EES and at Lehigh.

Of course, things do change, and it sure has felt like we've been enjoying our good share of it. That's not a complaint, given our professional interest in the dynamic natural world. But if you've been away for a while or out of touch with Lehigh, you might be

surprised and interested in what's happened here in the natural sciences.

First, people who took biology and geology degrees before 1992 might not be aware that in 1991, the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) emerged from an expansion of Geological Sciences that brought some of Lehigh's biology faculty to the department and added ecology and environmental science to our portfolio.

Next, there have been departures and arrivals. If you visit Williams Hall, you'll find lots of new faculty, and some that are no longer with us. I'm sorry to have to report that Charlie Sclar, Don Ryan and Jim Parks have passed away (see the memorial to Jim in this issue). I can happily report that Dale Simpson, PB Myers, and Bobb Carson, having retired from Lehigh, are all thriving (Bobb had a productive and effective five years as Dean of our college). Sheri Fritz and recently Lisa Windham have left for other positions, and Craig Williamson will be leaving at the end of the current academic year to take up a chair at Miami University. Carl Moses is on long-term assignment in the Dean's Office as an Associate

Dean. Finally, Anne Meltzer signed on for a term as College Dean starting in August (which explains why I'm here writing to you as chair once again).

But we haven't lost people! Over the past few years alone, Zicheng Yu (paleoclimatology and paleoecology), Frank Pazzaglia (geomorphology), Steve Peters (geochemistry and hydrogeology) Joan Ramage (remote sensing) and Dork Sahagian (Director of Environmental Initiative and EES member) have all joined our faculty, and we are currently searching for new faculty in the area of soil science and in ecosystems ecology.

We've got some 30 graduate students to keep the faculty honest, and faculty and students are still glued together and kept functional by our staff: Laura Cambiotti and Nancy Roman in the office, Joe Seem to support our operations, and Bruce Idleman as a research scientist to support several of our specialized labs. George Yasko and Margie Barry are still here too, although they're now working for Lehigh's new Environmental Initiative....

The Environmental Initiative at Lehigh

As you may know, after several years spent shoring up infrastructure, Lehigh has decided to direct renewed attention towards academics. Feeding into the current Shine Forever capital campaign, the 2020 Initiative was designed to jump-start new programs and faculty renewal in areas that are likely to achieve natural prominence and importance over the next several decades.

One of these areas is the environment, and I'm pleased to report that Lehigh now has an Environmental Initiative of which EES is one of two core departments. This will involve hiring of faculty in the social sciences as well as science and engineering, the development of new grad and undergraduates degree and certificate programs (a BA in Environmental Studies is already under way), and a general strengthening of education and research in the general area of the environment, broadly conceived.

Our role is to provide scientific expertise in the broad area of the Earth system, and conduct basic research under this umbrella. It's an exciting time of growth and new opportunities, and best of all, another component of the EI will be the relocation of EES and all EI-related faculty, staff, and students into a new building, slated to occur in about four years.

We need you!

In this time of change, we will be looking for input as we update existing programs, develop new ones, and seek to weave the EI into the fabric of the University. As a start, we'd just want to make contact with you, learn your thoughts, and solicit your suggestions. Ed Evenson will be working to track you down and develop more ways in which we can interact and stay in touch. So drop us line, give us a call, pay us a visit!

Peter

Peter Zeitler
Chair, EES

