Welcome to the Spring 2013 SERC Newsletter! This newsletter is intended to update you on SERC’s activities and alert you to upcoming events. For more information, please check out the SERC website.

Thanks to all of you who have attended our events, have provided various kinds of support, subscribe to the Organizations and Social Change blog, participate in our educational programs, or just quietly follow the issues and try to make an impact. Our Boston campus has increased its commitment to the environment and sustainability by creating a new School for the Environment, headed by my esteemed colleague Dr. Robyn Hannigan, which will play a leadership role in all things environmental on campus, from research to academic programs at every level. At the national level, we’re proud to see Gina McCarthy, a UMass-Boston graduate, nominated for Secretary of EPA.

This has been a very busy semester for SERC. We have organized a series of events that have been very well attended, including a panel on Sustainability in the Supply Chain, a Green Careers Forum, and a workshop with AIG on Coastal Risks and Adaptation. We have also cosponsored some events with our colleagues in the Center for Governance and Sustainability, which focuses on issues of global environmental governance and politics.

Personally, I have been teaching our MBA Business and Climate Change course, which provides an intense introduction to the science, policy, economics, and business dimensions of climate change. We discuss contemporary issues such as the near collapse of the European carbon market (ETS), and how the record low price for natural gas might affect the prospects for renewable energy.

In March, the Department of Management and Marketing launched a new blog, Organizations and Social Change, which supersedes Climate Inc., and marks a more collective effort to address a broader range of sustainability issues and other topics at the interface of business and society. The Net Impact chapter has begun to organize activities with a great group of enthusiastic MBAs leading the way. We have built out our new Green Internship program to provide our students with meaningful exposure to work experiences across a range of sectors and functions, and now have listed over 40 positions.

Please feel free to ask questions, make suggestions, and get involved!

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EVENT: PANEL DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

By Vesela Veleva, Associate Director SERC

In partnership with Staples and Ernst & Young, SERC was pleased to host a panel discussion on the topic of sustainability in the supply chain.

“Our Sustainability in the Supply Chain: Risks and Opportunities”

Over 140 students, faculty and local businesses attended the event on March 5, 2013, where Mark Buckley (VP Environmental Affairs at Staples), Cynthia Wilkinson (Director Supply Chain Sustainability at Staples) and Rich Goode (Senior Manager, Climate Change & Sustainability Services at Ernst & Young) discussed how sustainability concerns such as energy costs, natural resource shortages, packaging, and reputational risks such as conflict minerals affect supply chain management, and how leading companies are able to turn such risks into business opportunities through establishing an effective value chain management system with clear metrics. At the end of the discussion, the speakers provided practical guidance for students interested in pursuing sustainability careers. Sustainability should not be seen as a separate area but instead a skill that any professional will need in the future – from finance and accounting, to IT, management and HR. Having such expertise will provide students with better opportunities to compete in the job market. More information is available in the event blog at: http://www.umb.edu/serc/events1.
EVENT: GREEN CAREERS FORUM

By Vesela Veleva, Associate Director, SERC

The Center for Sustainable Enterprise and Regional Competitiveness (SERC) organized a Green Careers Forum on April 17, 2013 to inform students about career opportunities in the burgeoning green economy. In the first part of the event, a panel of UMASS Boston alumni shared their personal journeys in finding a path to a job in the sustainability and clean energy field, and discussed their motivations, their educational preparation, and their daily challenges. The panel was skillfully facilitated by Kevin Doyle of the New England Clean Energy Council, who is an expert on green careers. In the second part of the event, students engaged in more intimate roundtable discussions about career opportunities with participating companies and non-profits.

The main themes that emerged from the panel and the roundtable discussions included:

- There is a wide variety of jobs today that require knowledge and expertise related to sustainability and clean energy, ranging across sectors and functions. Most large firms have sustainability and CSR functions, and a much larger number of jobs, from marketing to accounting to supply chain management, require some familiarity with the topic. The Boston area contains a vibrant clean tech sector, a strong energy and carbon management consulting and software sector, as well as many non-profits.
- Networking is key to finding the right opportunity, and students should be active in going to events and using online media.
- Experience is crucial and internships are one of the best ways to develop relevant skills.
- Passion for what you want to do is key. Don’t be afraid to take a job with less initial pay to get onto the track you want.
- Most employers are looking for a functional skill set first and foremost – accounting, engineering, marketing etc. – and an interest in and knowledge of sustainability/clean energy in addition to that.
- Taking an entry level job can sometimes be the best way to grow and "design" your own sustainability-related position.
- In the sustainability field where things change so fast, ongoing education is very important.

In the second part of the event, fifteen organizations from a wide range of sectors discussed with interested students the opportunities and needs of their companies as well as the sustainability skills and knowledge they seek in future employees. Participating companies included Partners Health, Raytheon, EBI Consulting, Sustainability Roundtable, Trillium Assets Management, EnerNOC, EMC, Conservation Law Foundation, Cone Communications, Fraunhofer Center, New Fields Environmental Forensics, CERES, Free Flow Energy, Munroe Distributing, and the New England Clean Energy Council. More information about the event can be found at: 
http://www.umb.edu/news_events_media/events/the_green_careers_forum.
AIG FUNDED RESEARCH WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION

By David Levy, Director, SERC

Coastal cities face serious long-term threats to their physical infrastructure, environmental integrity, economic activity, emergency management and response capacity, and their human and social health. Periodic disasters such as floods and wind damage are becoming more frequent due to rising sea levels, more intense precipitation events, and potentially more intense storm activity.

UMass Boston faculty from the College of Management and the School for Environment organized a one-day workshop with experts from AIG, regional policymakers and other stakeholders to assess the threats, likely impacts and costs, and potential adaptation measures. Held on March 27, 2013, the workshop considered questions such as: What approaches exist for reducing vulnerabilities and improving resilience? What is the role of business in providing resources and incentives for risk reduction and improving resilience? What impact might these risks have on regional economic development, and how much economic benefit will a region receive from mitigation efforts? What resources can business deploy to assess and mitigate risks, and to plan for rapid recovery? The group will develop a research program to address these issues.

MASSACHUSETTS-ISRAEL WATER/CLEAN TECH MISSION

By David Levy, Director SERC

In mid-December 2012, I participated in the Massachusetts Water Innovation Mission to Israel, along with a delegation of nearly 50 people from Massachusetts. The delegation included entrepreneurs, academics, scientists, tech executives, venture capitalists, lawyers, and senior policy makers. The primary goal of the mission was to stimulate the growth of a water technology cluster by generating business connections and partnerships, and to stimulate international trade, investment, and technology development.

The trip provided an opportunity to learn more about some of the unique challenges facing the region in the areas of water supply, quality and management, and to learn about some of the technologies and companies active in this sector. The Massachusetts group toured Caesarea and viewed ancient Roman aqueducts and then the nearby Hadera desalination plant, which provides up to 275,000 m³/day of potable water and is the largest reverse-osmosis plant in the world. Desalination consumes vast amounts of power and is responsible for large greenhouse gas emissions, though the group learnt that considerable progress had been made in reducing power needs down towards 2kw/ m³ of water, and the GHG footprint would fall further as Israel switches from coal to natural gas for power. The group met with foreign counterparts, including Israel’s chief scientist, Avi Hasson, and minister of national infrastructure Uzi Landau, and academics at Haifa University. The goals of the mission were to develop partnerships that will benefit both the Bay State and Israeli businesses; to learn lessons from Israel’s leading water experts; and to encourage Israeli water companies to set up shop in Massachusetts.
BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN CES PROGRAMS THROUGH STUDENT PROJECTS

By Vesela Veleva, Associate Director SERC

One of the best ways for students to develop practical skills in the environmental/sustainability field is by hands-on, real life projects. Companies have an important role to play in sustainability programs today to help better prepare students for future career opportunities by advancing their practical knowledge and skills to tackle complex sustainability challenges. In addition, working with students provides companies with innovative, “out of the box” perspectives on particular challenges that they face as well as insights into the preferences and priorities of future employees and customers. Bringing her prior experience at Boston College and extensive contacts with local companies, Dr. Vesela Veleva re-designed the MGT481 Introduction to Environmental Management and Clean Energy course (required for all undergraduate students pursuing the Clean Energy and Sustainability minor or certificate) to include hands-on sustainability projects with local organizations. Four local companies were interested in participating in the course and came to “pitch” their projects to the students in the beginning of the semester – Partners Health, PerkinElmer, Raytheon, and Energi. Projects ranged from making the business case for fuel cell energy at UMASS Boston, to
reducing waste and chemicals use, and examining customer sustainability preferences as part of a broader sustainability management strategy. Students were assigned into teams based on their project preferences and offered the opportunity to visit the companies and learn more about their sustainability initiatives. On May 13 the teams will present their findings and recommendations to participating companies.

NEW! ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIAL CHANGE BLOG LAUNCHED

By Stephan Manning, Assistant Professor, College of Management, UMASS Boston College

The new Organizations and Social Change (OSC) blog informs about latest insights from the OSC Research Group at the UMass Boston Department of Management and Marketing. The blog focuses on topics at the intersection of business and society, such as sustainability, workforce diversity, economic development, and globalization. Recent blog posts include a debate about the role of large corporations today and in the future with contributions by Gerald Davis and Israel Drori, David Levy, and Stephan Manning. Also, please check out a recent article about the impact of global outsourcing on economic development, e.g. in Africa; a critical reflection of the flexibility debate; and an article about Facebook, the IRS and Inequality. To get automatic updates on new blog posts, please click the ‘Follow’ button on the blog homepage. You are also invited to submit your own blog posts to Stephan Manning (Email: stephan.manning@umb.edu). The editorial team - Ed Carberry, David Levy, Stephan Manning, and Suhaib Riaz - will review submissions and provide editorial guidance to authors.

UPDATE: GREEN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

By Vesela Veleva, Associate Director, SERC

Green internships are an ideal way for students to obtain hands-on experience and knowledge, develop their professional skills, and improve their ability to find an appropriate job after graduation. Environmental skills and knowledge are increasingly valued in the employment market. In a recent survey, 65% of businesses said they value environmental and sustainability knowledge in job candidates and 78% said that this knowledge would grow in importance in the next five years.

In November 2012 as part of its commitment to lead the region in preparing students and returning professionals for careers related to a sustainable economy, SERC launched the “Green Internship Program”. It is open to all UMASS Boston students, but is particularly appropriate for students enrolled in the Clean Energy and Sustainability Programs, including the certificate and the MBA Environmental Management specialization. Since its launch over 40 green internships and job opportunities have been posted on the SERC website, ranging from marketing, to communications, and research at a wide range of companies, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions. SERC
is inviting companies and other organizations to send their available green internships and jobs for posting online (please email to Vesela.Veleva@umb.edu). More information about the program and currently available internships and jobs is available at: www.umb.edu/serc/internships.

REFLECTIONS FROM A RECENT GRADUATE

Laurie Coyle, EnerNOC

When I was looking at and applying to grad schools, I chose UMass Boston because it was the only school in the Boston area at the time that offered a part-time MBA with a specialization in Environmental Management. I had been working in the hotel industry for several years and wanted to leverage graduate school to launch my career in a different direction. I chose to focus on the intersection between business and the environment, and I started learning about this new field called sustainability. I took a new job with a hotel management company as a coordinator of environmental programs, and I began taking classes at UMass Boston 2-3 evenings per week. The simultaneous education I received from the academic and professional sides of my life provided a great foundation for this new path.

In the course of my studies, I began to notice certain tasks that I enjoyed more than others. For example, I genuinely enjoy working on quantitative projects in Excel. That came as quite a surprise, since I have an undergraduate degree in art history and a professional background in customer service. I wasn’t sure how I would fit into my new career, but I quickly realized that being able to quantify things would become crucially important. About halfway through my MBA, I decided to add another specialization – this time in Finance. I felt overwhelmed at first, since these classes were a completely different language from what I was used to. Unlike many of my classmates, I had no experience working in financial services. I’d never felt like I was good at math before, but here I took it step by step, and asked questions to make sure I was understanding correctly. It was a definitive moment when I earned an A in a financial modeling class. I felt validated about my choice, because I had proven to myself and others that I possess this important skill.

My time at UMass Boston allowed me the freedom to find my strengths in a setting with no professional repercussions. Not only did I learn about finance, but I also learned about managing teams, organizing meetings, thinking critically, and asking the right questions. My educational experience prepared me for a strong launch into the next phase. About 5 months after my last class at UMass Boston, I found myself in an interview at EnerNOC, a fast-growing energy management company, founded in Boston. After landing the job, I got to work climbing a steep learning-curve, which has somewhat leveled out, but will continue into the indefinite future. Never does a day go by when I am not challenged. This is the hardest job I’ve ever had, but it’s also the most rewarding. Perhaps it’s the journey that brought me here that feeds my satisfaction with the result.
UMASS BOSTON NET IMPACT CHAPTER UPDATE

Launched in Spring 2012, the Umass Boston Net Impact Graduate Chapter is now in its growth and recruiting phase. The mission of the organization is to inspire, educate, and equip individuals to use the power of business to create a more socially and environmentally sustainable world. The Chapter had its first meet and greet in April 2013 where several students and faculty got together at a coffee break that the chapter hosted. In addition to these grass roots efforts, the Chapter continues to promote its networking group through social media, promotion campaigns on campus and partnership with SERC in holding sustainability events including the recent Green Career Fair. It plans to have a speaker series and inter-chapter networking events with other Net Impact groups this summer and fall. For more information about how to join the group contact Jon Millburg at Jonathan.Millburg001@umb.edu.

In addition to the Graduate Net Impact Chapter, several students at UMASS Boston have been working to launch the Net Impact Undergraduate Chapter. The group is in the process of planning the Fall 2013 semester events and activities which will be submitted to Net Impact in the form of an Annual Plan. It expects to be a fully recognized chapter by the end of this semester. Contact Nicole Hamilton at nhamilton80@gmail.com for more information on how to join the Chapter and participate in the forthcoming events.

SERC RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES

SERC faculty engages in research projects with the aim of exploring the business-sustainability interface and providing businesses and policy makers with a solid foundation for long-term strategic decisions. Our faculty undertakes research that encompasses everything from accounting and finance issues associated with climate risk to sustainability standards to organizational challenges of combining economic and social values and goals. We have recently initiated new research projects on planning and adaptation for coastal flooding risks, and on the development of regional clean-tech clusters within global value chains. A (partial) list of recent publications is below. For more information, please check out the SERC website.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY SERC FACULTY


Complexity Science Insights into the Electrical Transmission Planning Process: Options for


Levy, David L. and Andre Spicer (Forthcoming, 2013). Contested Imaginaries and the
Cultural Political Economy of Climate Change. *Organization.*

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nantod.2012.10.002


Zhang, W. “Laboratory profile of the Green Organic and Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Massachusetts Boston” Green Processing and Synth. 2012, 1, 291-293.