

## ***Students travel to Europe to observe sustainable energy approaches***

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University Park, Pa. -- Learning about global sustainable energy practices via lectures is one thing. Visiting Europe to see sustainable energy approaches firsthand is another. Students from the colleges of Arts and Architecture, Earth and Mineral Sciences, and Engineering got to do both as a part of a unique interdisciplinary course, "Living with Sustainable Energy in a Global Society," this spring.

The course was a joint venture between the College of Arts and Architecture and the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' Center for Advanced Undergraduate Study and Experience (CAUSE). Its sequence and immersive study abroad program experience brought together architecture, engineering, material science and engineering, human geography, environmental systems, energy business and finance, and geography students, providing them with valuable insight into "carbon-neutral design strategies for a sustainable future and the policies that make governing sustainable communities possible," said Lisa Lulo, assistant professor of architecture and one of the coordinators of the program.

"Students studied energy-conscious approaches to buildings and how these concepts are applied to a diverse range and scale of projects. The students became advocates for responsible energy-efficient design by applying it to their own education and by publicly presenting their findings," Lulo said.

A major component of the course was the environmental comparison between Europe and the United States. Due to strict environmental controls, Europe hosts numerous sites that already implement sustainable building practices. To improve personal awareness in planning and renovation building projects, the students traveled to several cities in Germany and France to see examples of viable sustainable practices. In Freiburg, informally called the "solar capital city," they visited Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems and the Heliotrope, a rotating solar house. In Munich and Berlin, they visited neighborhoods that were redeveloped into low-energy urban landscapes with storm water management and green roofs. They concluded the trip in Paris, where they experienced sustainable living patterns and water-management strategies.

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The students will conclude CAUSE in the fall semester, working collaboratively to develop and deliver a public presentation on sustainable energy and the steps that can be taken locally and personally to minimize energy. The trip and course sequence was made possible through generous support from CAUSE and the John A. Dutton e-Education Institute.

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Links:

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