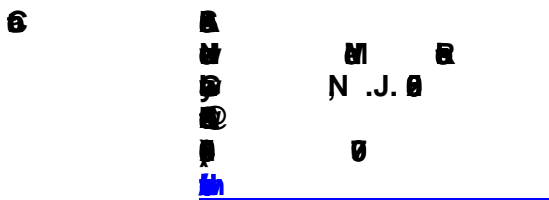





## Stockton's Nationally Recognized Sustainability Program Offers Unconventional Education for an Uncertain Future

     
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 **N .J.** – A field experience to Brazil this January and a volunteer effort providing 40,000 books to students in Zimbabwe will offer global perspectives to students studying Sustainability at Stockton University, helping to expand their cultural awareness and exposure to international environmental issues.

Tait Chirenje, associate professor of Environmental Studies, teaches a course in the Sustainability program called “International Sustainable Development,” which alternates between field experiences to Ecuador and Brazil each January. In 2017, students will travel to Brazil visiting Manaus to study the Amazon River and rainforest issues, Curitiba to study urban planning and sustainability, Iguazu Falls to study energy and Rio de Janeiro to study water quality and natural resource conservation.

During the fall semester, students prepared for the trip by researching the sites they will visit and by hiking through Ricketts Glenn in Pennsylvania for a bonding experience.

“Stockton’s Sustainability faculty agrees that the future will hold challenges related to growing energy demands, increasing need for livable communities and challenges to public health. To help students meet these challenges, Stockton has developed new initiatives in sustainability education that encourage innovation, cultural awareness, a global perspective and creativity,” said Patrick Hossay, associate professor of Sustainability and coordinator of the degree program.



International field experiences enable students to witness real-life issues firsthand, broadening their education and better preparing them for the future. Sustainability is a global issue, and Stockton faculty are connecting classroom concepts across the continents.

While in Brazil, students will hike through natural areas to observe biodiversity, go birding with local rangers, take a boat down the Amazon River, visit urban parks and beaches, tour green infrastructure and landscaping, visit an ecomuseum, eat local cuisine and meet with university and city officials.

Over the past 12 years, Chirenje and Hossay have led field experiences that follow the Colorado River, taking students to more than 20 national parks and monuments in 20 states to learn about water, energy and natural resource issues in the west. These experiences have evolved into international travels studying environmental issues on a global scale.

For many students, these trips are their first time traveling abroad. Emily Dolhansky, a 2016 Environmental Science graduate who is currently studying Forest Science at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, said that the field experience in Ecuador helped her to attain her dream of traveling abroad before turning 25. She visited the Mindo Cloud Forest, which she called “one of the most unique places I have ever visited” and entered the Pacific Ocean for the first time in 2016.



A Philadelphia charter school that closed in 2015 donated about 12,000 books.

Zimbabwe has the highest adult literacy rate in Africa (90 percent), but in rural regions, access to academic resources is very limited. Chirenje, who runs his own non-governmental organization called the Gaia Environmental Trust, visited students in Zimbabwe over the summer, and will return after the spring semester to distribute the donated books to those with the greatest need with help from the trust.

Stockton students and volunteers have worked to collect, transport, organize and store the books. A [fundraising](#) effort is currently underway to raise the funds for shipment.

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