

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



CHAMPLAIN
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Scarlett Clark '18 Alumni Profile



At Champlain College, we are proud of our Alumni! We want to tell their stories and celebrate their successes. Our Alumni stand out for their professional accomplishments, contributions to their communities and beyond. We recently caught up with Filmmaking alumna Scarlett Clark '17 to discuss her upcoming film project.

This July, Clark will follow a class of Champlain students and researchers, led by Core Faculty member Dr. Kristin Wolf, as they head through the Amazon to help the indigenous Chino community develop sustainable bee-keeping techniques. The film will document this journey, and the impacts on community empowerment, entrepreneurship, economic self-sufficiency, and the importance of preserving natural and cultural resources.

What first drew you to Champlain?

Coming from Texas, I get that question a lot. I applied to sixteen colleges all over the country. What drew me to Champlain College was the upside down curriculum, knowing that on the first day I would have a camera in my hands and get to work on film projects my freshman year that other institutions hold off until Junior or Senior year. I came to an admitted student's weekend for Champlain and really fell in love with Burlington, VT. Despite the drastic difference from the flat landscape back home to the Maple St. hill, the city really sold it for me.

Did you always want to go into filmmaking?

Actually, I never had an interest in film growing up, I discovered filmmaking during my college application process. I decided to apply for the program, and many colleges requested that I showcase a film I had made. I started working on that first film with an old flip camera and just took off running with it.

During my summer at Champlain's Montreal Campus, I discovered my interest in documentarybased filmmaking. I love meeting people. I love traveling. I love getting to explore and experience new adventures. My documentaries have been a way of bringing that love into my filmmaking.

What inspired you to tell Dr. Kristin Wolf's story?

About a year ago, I was sitting in a COR class when a guest speaker, Dr. Kristin Wolf from the Champlain Apiary, came to pitch her travel course on environmental ethics. I was graduating in a few months, so was ineligible to take this course as a student, but was interested by the idea. The overall goals of trip, according to Dr. Wolf, are to show how beekeeping in the Chino community promotes both individual and community empowerment, entrepreneurship, and economic self-sufficiency, while also preserving natural and cultural resources. She talked about the trip to Peru embedded in the course and how the goals of the course are driven by the community's development through bee-keeping.

I started immediately thinking about how to spread the word about this amazing work. I connected with Kristin after class and beyond writing up research papers about the work, she had never had someone document it. I was so inspired, I took up this idea, and even pitched it at the Annual Elevator Pitch Competition. I didn't win, but it was a great time where I learned more about Peru and the trip, and fueled my interest.

What do you hope to tell with this story?

With all of my films, I try to focus on showing the individual, the classroom, the community, and the world something they didn't know existed, and how it impacts the larger community. When approaching this film I've had to put on my researcher cap and get into the nitty gritty. Any question someone may ask, answer it. I have learned so much on this project about bees, and how they really are so important. They are a bridge to the landscape and a community's ability to make sustainably productive use of it, and I want to share that through my film.

As you pursue your career do you want your future films to be focused on social conscious issues?

Oh, absolutely! I have a few other projects in mind that I am excited about that actually Champlain has given me the opportunity to explore. Kerry Shackett recently introduced me to a women and children's center in Indonesia where volunteers around the world are welcomed to come and work in the shelter as long as they cover their food costs. I'm excited to look into that, and ask why? What draw's people around the world there?