



Mark Long (right) with his family and friends during a six-month sabbatical in India.

Dr. Mark C. Long, Professor of English and American Studies, recipient of the 2008 Keene State College Award for Faculty Distinction in Research and Scholarship

Next semester I will be offering the first humanities course in the Environmental Studies Program at Keene State College. The course, “Writing in an Endangered World,” will engage students with the social movement of environmentalism and new forms of environmental writing.

This course would not have been possible without years of scholarly work. Since arriving at Keene State College in the fall of 1998, I have been active in the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE). My contributions to building this scholarly community into an international organization—with over a thousand active members, and sister organizations from Canada to Korea—includes co-editing a collection of essays, *Teaching North American Environmental Literature*, organizing a special issue of the journal *Reader* dedicated to the practice of ecocriticism, and publishing essays on writers concerned with the natural world such as John McPhee and Mary Oliver.

My work in this interdisciplinary field continued during a six-month sabbatical in India—where I was invited to universities to discuss with my Indian colleagues, and their graduate students, our shared concern with environmental writing. When not lecturing or talking with students, I sought out perspectives on the environmental movement in the United States by environmental historians, and studied the writings of ecologists whose work is focused in developing countries. Soon after returning from sabbatical, my essay on bioregionalism was published in the inaugural issue of the *Indian Journal of Ecocriticism* and an interview with me, “Ecocriticism: A Model for the Interdisciplinary Humanities,”

appeared in the *Newsletter of the Organization for the Study of Literature and the Environment (OSLE) India*.

Receiving the College's award for research and scholarship affirmed the importance of this ongoing intellectual work outside the classroom. The award also inspired me to translate my collaborations with colleagues around the world into my day-to-day work with students—in this case, by designing and teaching an interdisciplinary course in the College's new Integrative Studies program.