

Food, Faculty, and Friends

PitE and SNRE students share a meal at the B.E.A.R. Mentorship Program Kick-Off event in Dana Commons. *Photo courtesy of Megan Miller*

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Dear Members of the PitE Community,



The past academic year has been eventful and productive for the Program in the Environment. PitE has a new administration. I'm very lucky to be joined by Associate Director Nathan Sheldon of

Earth and Environmental Sciences and new Key Administrator, Kelly Campbell. Thoughtful, frank, and down-to-earth, Nathan and Kelly have proved to be exceptional partners in the on-going project of guiding and developing PitE. We are the grateful beneficiaries of the inspired stewardship of our predecessors, Director Paul Webb, Associate Director Jeremy Semrau, and Key Administrator Chris Nichols.

The Program continues to thrive. This academic year, 191 PitE students graduated—107 majors and 84 minors. Eight PitE students completed honors projects on a wide variety of topics. As of the end of the academic year, PitE had 312 concentrators and 179 minors for a total of 491 students. Sam Facas of PitE was selected to give the undergraduate student commencement address in the "Big House." The faculty in PitE has doubled over the past year, adding new breadth and consistency of course offerings. PitE's staff and faculty continue to do their very best on behalf of our students, and the success of these efforts has been recently recognized by PitE's second *LSA Departmental Excellence Award*.

[crossroads] 2

We are working on a series of minors that will draw students from across the university to PitE as well as offering PitE students avenues for pursuing their interests in depth. This fall will see the inauguration of PitE's Sustainable Food Systems minor. And, in the coming academic year, we expect to complete work on the Water & the Environment minor, Energy & the Environment minor, and an environmental justice minor.

During the past year, PitE hosted presentations by Mark Binelli, author of *Detroit City Is the Place to Be*, noted Chicago Landscape Architect Doug Farr, Thomas Jacobson, a prominent California land use lawyer and planner, and Megan McCulloch, a U-M alumna and environmental lawyer in Michigan. This fall, well known conservationist Dan Janzen of the University of Pennsylvania is coming to give the inaugural lecture of the *Michigan Wildlife Conservation Speaker Series*, which will be in honor of famous Michigan-trained wildlife biologist, Olaus Murie. Documentary filmmakers, Ian Cheney and Curtis Ellis (*King Corn*) are coming for an event in October, National



Visiting speaker, architect, and U-M alumnus Doug Farr talks about trends in sustainable urbanism. January 2014

Food Month, kicking off the new Sustainable Food Systems minor.

Our goals for the coming year include increasing the diversity of the PitE student body, continued stabilization of the curriculum and classes offered, increased visibility of PitE on campus, stronger engagement with PitE alumni, and further development of mutually beneficial relations with other LSA units and other UM schools and colleges.

In closing, I have to say my greatest joy this year has been getting to know the wonderful students, faculty, and staff that make PitE the exceptional program that it is. ■



Gregg Crane

Professor and Director,
Program in the Environment

Professor Gregg Crane of the Department of English Language and Literature stepped into the PitE Director role in August 2013 for a three-year term through June 2016. Professor Crane has been teaching "ENVIRON 377: History and Literature of the Rockies," at Camp Davis since 2007. He is a specialist in American literary and intellectual history, and his current research focuses on the importance of intuition to a collection of literary, philosophical, legal, and environmental writers. In a previous life, Professor Crane practiced law in San Francisco and Seattle. His litigation experience included work on several major environmental cases in California and the State of Washington.



Libby O'Connell, a 2014 PitE graduate and former PitE Peer Advisor, addressed the audience at the 2014 School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) Commencement Ceremony. In her speech, excerpts of which are below, she offered insights to the common questions of "What is PitE?" and "Who are PitE students?"

"PitE students are hands-on and experience-learners... We are conditioned to challenge current systems. We identify soft spots of broken systems and suggest alternative systems that work better.

We have learned to cross boundaries to become systems thinkers, to think outside the box, to challenge authority, and most importantly, to think differently. Above all, we challenge current orthodoxies, bite a piece off and chew on it and until we spit it out and decide that it leaves a sour taste in our mouths. We are never truly satisfied with the status quo...

Meet PitE's Associate Director Dr. Nathan Sheldon

Associate Professor Nathan Sheldon accepted the role of PitE Associate Director in fall 2013. Dr. Sheldon's research interests are in paleoclimatology, global change, and biosphere-climate interactions. His research investigates linkages between climate and weathering/soil formation on a

variety of spatial and temporal scales using whole rock geochemistry, light stable isotopes, and modeling to understand past climatic and environmental change. ■

Dr. Sheldon is an associate professor of earth and environmental sciences.

We apply a multidisciplinary approach to every problem, evaluate every stakeholder's view, and take action...

To all the PitE students sitting in the audience, I want to share some wisdom a faculty member once shared with me not too long ago: Don't let anyone **ever** convince you otherwise that you aren't studying the most complex problems the world is currently facing and has ever faced. I am here to affirm that you **are**. Living in a sustainable fashion with the environment is **THE** most important issue and it could possibly be the most important work the world has taken on together.

I am often told, 'Studying environmental science is a hot area right now,' to which we certainly nod our heads. But what do we say when we are asked, 'What are you going to do with your degree?' Our answer: 'Save the world.' And I mean literally, save the world. And we dare you to watch us do it. **Thank you and congratulations to the PitE and SNRE graduating classes of 2014!**"

Libby graduated with honors this May, earning a bachelor of arts in environmental. She specialized in environmental economics & sustainable business, and completed her PitE Honors Thesis on the commodification of carbon dioxide in economic farm forests in Costa Rica. Libby plans to start a full-time career in sustainability consulting in Boston. Libby is a resident of Glencoe, IL. ■



"Living in a sustainable fashion with the environment is THE most important issue and it could possibly be the most important work the world has taken on together."

— Libby O'Connell,
SNRE Commencement Speech, May 3, 2014

Photo credit: Dave Brenner

PITE FACULTY DOUBLES IN 2014 BY GREGG CRANE

The number of faculty in PitE has nearly doubled over the past year, adding new breadth and consistency of course offerings. This fall, PitE will have nineteen “tenure stream” faculty members, including the director and associate director, and, as a result, PitE will have reached the size necessary for effective self-governance. Starting this fall, PitE’s faculty will meet and vote on key policy issues, including curricular revisions, program development, and hiring plans. I’m thrilled to welcome the following instructors, who are joining the PitE faculty core this fall.

Aline Cotel
Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE), College of Engineering



Dr. Cotel’s research and areas of interest focus on geophysical and biological fluid dynamics. Her current research areas are fish dynamics in natural environments and the impact on stream restoration, and shoreline restoration: the effect of boat wakes on fish habitats. Dr. Cotel will teach “Stream Restoration: Concepts and Practices.”

Rose Cory
Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES), College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Cory’s research and focuses on aquatic geochemistry, photochemistry and organic geochemistry. Her current research topics include arctic photochemistry, bacteria and dissolved organic matter (DOM) and pathways of DOM oxidation. Dr Cory will teach environmental geology.

Phil Deloria
Professor of American Culture and History, College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Deloria’s areas of study are 19th-century cultural history and theory, Native American history, history of the American West, and American environmental history. His research and areas of interest include issues of culture and representation, particularly concerning American Indian people, social and cultural relations in contact situations, and environmental and western American history. Dr. Deloria will teach “Environmental History of North America.”

Rita Loch-Caruso
Professor of Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health



Dr. Loch-Caruso’s area of research interest is female reproductive toxicology and, in particular, mechanisms of toxicity related to adverse pregnancy outcomes (such as premature birth). Her current research topic is toxicants as potential risks for normal and timely childbirth. Dr. Loch-Caruso is teaching “Toxicology: the Study of Environmental Chemicals and Disease.”

Scotti Parrish
Associate Professor of English Language and Literature, College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Parrish’s field of interest is the inter-related issues of race, the environment, and epistemology in the Atlantic world from 1492 up through the twentieth century, with a particular emphasis on the plantation zones. She is currently working on a cultural history of a signal 20th-century Environmental disaster titled: “Noah’s Kin: 1927 and the Culture of Modern Catastrophe.” Dr. Parrish will teach a 300-level environmental literature course.

Perrin Selcer
Assistant Professor of History, College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Selcer’s areas of study include global environmental history, international organizations and international development, U.S. and World history, and history and sociology of science. His current research focuses on how experts affiliated with UN agencies made the global human environment a central concern of the international community. Dr. Selcer will teach “Global Environmental History.”

Adam Simon
Associate Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES), College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Simon’s fields of study are economic geology, igneous petrology, and geochemistry. His current research interests include physical and chemical evolution of magmatic systems and how aqueous fluids moderate trace element mobility. Dr. Simon will teach “Mineral Resources, Economics, and the Environment.”

Selena Smith
Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES) and PitE, College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Smith’s field of study includes plant systematics and anatomy, paleobotany, taphonomy, and role of plants in ancient environments. Her current research focuses on paleobiology of plants, and their evolution and their link to climate and environment on broad timescales. Dr. Smith will teach “Terrestrial Biomes Past, Present and Future.”

SUSTAINABLE CITIES

To inspire students to generate innovative yet practical solutions for how cities can become more sustainable in terms of energy and resource use, Professor Jeremy D. Semrau has developed the capstone design course, “Sustainable Cities.” Professor Semrau is a PitE faculty member with appointments in Civil & Environmental Engineering, as well as the School of Natural Resources & Environment.

In this course, students are given the challenge to work in interdisciplinary teams to consider how to make urban areas both environmentally and economically viable. As part of the course, students are given the task to determine how best to integrate a variety of disciplines, including law, public health, engineering, finance, communication, land planning, and construction to re-envision the former U.S. Steel Site in South Chicago into the largest “green neighborhood” in the country. The site is over 500 acres in size, and despite being closed in the early 1990’s, has yet to be put

back into productive use. The student teams must deal with legacy issues that constrain future re-development (e.g., issues with the site formerly being a heavy industrial site) as well as create a vision as how the area can best be re-developed to provide

an economic base for South Chicago, while also promoting the use of sustainable practices during construction and use. The course culminates in team presentations that are reviewed by a panel of experts in multiple disciplines. ■



Professor Jeremy Semrau describes his class to a PitE major during Pizza with Professors.

John Vandermeer
Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB), College of Literature, Science and the Arts



Dr. Vandermeer’s fields of study are theoretical ecology, tropical ecology, and agroecology. His research topics include dynamics of rain forest succession following catastrophic damage; ecology of multidimensional agroecological systems -- role of biodiversity in the functioning of agroecosystems; dynamics of rain forest destruction and conservation -- socioeconomic and political analysis of neotropical conversion. Dr. Vandermeer will teach “Energy, Food and the Environment” as part of the Sustainable Food Systems minor. ■

PitE Joint Faculty Roster

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Aline Cotel | College of Engineering |
| Rose Cory | EES (LSA) |
| Gregg Crane | English (LSA) |
| Phil Deloria | History (LSA) |
| Sol Hart | Communications (LSA) |
| Rita Loch-Caruso | Public Health (SPH) |
| Dick Norton | Urban Planning (TCAUP) |
| Scotti Parrish | English (LSA) |
| Barry Rabe | Public Policy (Ford School) |
| Perrin Selcer | History (LSA) |
| Jeremy Semrau | College of Engineering |
| Adam Simon | EES (LSA) |
| Selena Smith | EES (LSA) |
| Sara Soderstorm | Organizational Studies |
| Dorceta Taylor | Natural Resources (SNRE) |
| Ben van der Pluijm | EES (LSA) |
| John Vandermeer | EEB (LSA) |
| Michaela Zint | Natural Resources (SNRE) |

PitE Emeriti

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Robert Owen | EES (LSA) |
| Paul Webb | EEB (LSA) & SNRE |



PitE Club board members Libby O'Connell, Becca Liebschutz, and Bekah Kreckman at Pizza with Professors



Left to right: SNRE graduate student and PitE Club Treasurer Lizzy; PitE student Kristen chatting with SNRE grad student Sarah; PitE Club members Derek and Ashley.

PitE Club: Learning from Each Other and Having Fun

By Kimberly Smith

PitE Club is a U-M student organization that supports and develops the environmental community on campus by creating opportunities for PitE students to interact and learn from each other outside of class. The club grew out of the PitE Student Advisory Committee, which was formed in 2008 by PitE students and advisors.

In 2012, PitE Club created the B.E.A.R. Mentorship Program, which brings PitE and graduate students together to talk about careers, and what to expect when starting the job search and applying for graduate school; B.E.A.R. stands for Building Environmental Awareness and Relationships.

"The B.E.A.R. Mentorship Program helps students bridge the 'academia to real world' gap," says Annalise

Povolo, PitE Club's outgoing president. "PitE students learn about grad school and careers from their [graduate] peers. For some, especially those new to PitE, this is the jumping off point to consider post-graduate options."

PitE Club kicked off both fall and winter terms with a mixer event, complete with ice breakers, "speed networking" sessions, and food from Jerusalem Gardens. "This event was a good introduction for students, and was the first stepping stone to bridge the gap that often exists between undergraduates and graduate students," says Annalise.

Aside from organizing B.E.A.R. events, the club hosted potlucks, t-shirt sales, mentorship coffee chats, and a new event called **Class Chat**. In this forum, students shared class experiences and asked questions to help choose classes: "Is this a class I can manage as a freshman? How did you juggle class A, B, C, and D while working during the term?"

"Class Chat helped students recog-

nize their limit when registering for classes," says PitE junior Rebekah Kreckman, recalling how easy it is for students to ambitiously register for too many interesting, yet challenging classes.

The club serves as a gateway into the PitE Community. This year, to expand its reach, PitE Club welcomed all undergraduates to join the club, regardless of his or her major. Opening up club membership allowed non-PitE students greater access to PitE classes, students, advisors, and the major and minors themselves. Maddy Frank, for example, was a junior neuroscience major when she joined PitE Club this past January. She had a strong interest in the environment, but couldn't graduate on time if she switched majors. Today, she is a PitE sustainability minor and leads the club's events committee.

PitE staff and faculty supported these efforts and events, and also hosted career, academic, and social events for students to learn and interact beyond the classroom. Author Mark Binelli and award winning architect/urban planner Doug Farr participated in the PitE Speaker Series. In addition to giving public talks, they met with students in classes, and over lunch and dinner to talk about careers and how environment students can make changes that directly affect the natural and built environments. PitE hosted several career events, where urban planners, environmen-



U-M alumni Doug Farr, Kristen Schleich, and PitE alumna Katie Knapp ('12) share their career experiences during an urban planning career event.

tal lawyers, scientists, journalists, educators, and energy company leaders met with students and spoke about the rewards, challenges, and education required to work (and make a difference) in the various industries. PitE also hosted hands-



PitE major Jackie Latham ('14) shows off her work during the PitE Art Workshop in February.

on workshops where media professionals led students to create stories, artwork, and a short film to understand how communication and media are used effectively to inform, evoke emotion, teach, or encourage action. These workshops are relatively new to PitE, and were made possible by gifts made to the PitE Strategic Fund. Thanks to these gifts, we will be able to continue hosting these events.

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"The relaxed atmosphere that students and faculty create is optimal for learning. It has really helped me build a community within PitE that helps me counterbalance the stresses of college." —PitE Senior



PitE Club board member Bekah Kreckman talks with Professor Soderstrom at Pizza with Professors

PitE continues to host its bi-annual Pizza with Professors event, which dates back to 2005. This career-fair style event brings environment faculty and students together for an evening of class discussion and free pizza. "I love PWP! It's my favorite event," says Chloe White, PitE Club's secretary. "It lets you connect with professors teaching classes. The course guide only gives a two-dimensional perspective of a class. But here, you can have a short discussion with the professors, and get a feel if you'll jive with the professor or not. You can also ask other PitE students there about classes. It's a fun opportunity to socialize and learn about classes at the same time." ■

Learn more about PitE Club: umpiteclub.wordpress.com

Dr. Jason Duvall, 2014 PitE Outstanding Lecturer



"As a teacher my goal is always to help students see the world in a new way. However, building a new perspective that sticks is tricky. We know that just presenting students with lots of facts isn't very effective in the long-term. Instead, students need to be engaged, they need opportunities to question their assumptions, to compare new information with old, and to think about the application of knowledge. In my view, teaching is about facilitating this process and getting students to take a more active role

in their learning. In the classroom, this means giving some control over to students by letting them set the agenda and direct the discussion. It also means asking difficult questions and thinking collectively about the potential answers.

Challenges

In some ways teaching is a lot like a semesterlong experiment – it involves trying different things out and getting feedback from students about what works. This isn't always easy since most students haven't had much experience as active learners, but once that switch goes on you can see the difference – they come to class with questions and want to talk about them. This is what makes teaching so rewarding.

Other Work and Research

Teaching is just one part of what I do. Over the past several years, I've been involved in a variety of research projects, one investigating how group outdoor recreation experiences impact the well-being of military veterans, and another focused on exploring community perceptions of beach muck in Saginaw Bay.

What He Teaches

I teach several courses that explore how the environment impacts human health and well-being and how we might go about crafting lifestyles that are more sustainable for people and the planet. For the past several years, I've also been very fortunate to teach a seminar designed to help PitE honors students develop their senior thesis projects. ■



PitE alumni lead a discussion at the annual PitE Alumni Career Panel. Pictured left to right: Lauren Hildesheim (Career Center advisor), Julia Petty ('12), Gianna Fazioli ('11), Luke Middleton ('11), and Carolyn Hwang ('05).

Doug Farr talks about sustainable urbanism during the PitE Speaker Series.

www.lsa.umich.edu/pite



“Yes, we’re graduating into a world with injustice, a world with division, a world facing grave environmental challenges... but Michigan has pushed us to look past those realities and to demand better answers.”



—Sam Facas made history this year as the first PitE student to give the U-M Spring Commencement Student Speech at Michigan Stadium

Abrams Environmental Action Challenge

This year, PitE hosted the Abrams Environmental Action Challenge, a competition that funds the best sustainability projects presented by students and student groups.

PitE major Libby O’Connell is one of two winners of this year’s challenge. In partnership with Outdoor Adventures, Libby is launching a campus-wide bike trailer pilot program, so students can haul items (like groceries) without needing a car. Bike trailers will enable students to shop for produce off-campus, and safely transport them back home.

The Greek Life Sustainability Team (GLIST) was also chosen for funding. Their project, “Big House, Small Footprint,” is a two-part energy audit program in the U-M Greek community that encourages and rewards house members to make behavioral changes (e.g. reduce waste) and structural changes (e.g. energy retrofits) around

their house to reduce their eco-footprint. Together both Libby and GLIST are sharing the \$1,700 prize money to put their projects into motion this fall term. This challenge is named after Wendy Abrams, the environmental advocate

behind the “Cool Globes” Initiative and public art display promoting climate change awareness. ■

Read more about the Challenge: lsa.umich.edu



2014 PitE Achievement Awards Meet PitE’s Outstanding Instructors and Students



Annalise Povolito, Libby O’Connell, and Madeline Dunn at PitE’s Graduation Reception.

PitE’s Outstanding Student Awards are awarded to four graduating PitE seniors who have demonstrated both high academic achievement and dedicated service to PitE. This year’s recipients include *Libby O’Connell, PitE Major (B.A.)*, *Annalise Povolito, PitE Major (B.A.)*, *Michael Nevitt, PitE Minor (B.S.)*, and *Madeline Dunn, PitE Minor (B.A.)*

PitE’s Outstanding Lecturer Award recognizes lecturers for their commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning, and their innovation, creativity, and excellence in the classroom and beyond. This year’s recipient is *Dr. Jason Duvall*.

Each year since 2011, PitE formally recognizes the contributions of PitE instructors and students who go above and beyond. Director Gregg Crane recognized these instructors and students at PitE’s Graduation Reception, which was held in the Alumni Center on May 2, 2014.

PitE’s Outstanding GSI Award recognizes the role our graduate student instructors play in providing undergraduates with exceptional learning experiences. This year’s recipients are *Meaghan Guckian* and *Sarah Mills*.

2014 PITE HONORS GRADUATES

These students completed and presented an honors thesis at the April 23rd PitE Honors Symposium, and graduated with honors.

Emily Ceran
Juston Jaco
Sonja Karnovsky
Kristen Kiluk

Kaitlin Ma
Libby O’Connell
Michael Perles
Adriana Saroki

Pictured below, left to right: Michael Perles, Libby O’Connell, Kristen Kiluk, Adriana Saroki, Kaitlin Ma, Juston Jaco, with honors instructor Dr. Jason Duvall. Not Pictured: Emily Ceran, Sonja Karnovsky



Student and Alumni Excellence

Jillian Smith (PitE ‘14) was named a 2013-14 *Big Ten Medal of Honor* recipient for the University of Michigan Athletic Department. This award is



the Big Ten Conference’s most exclusive award and was the first of its kind in intercollegiate athletics to recognize academic and athletic excellence. This prestigious award is awarded annually to only

two students in the graduating class at each institution. Jillian is a member of the women’s cross country and track and field teams. Visit mgoblue.com for more about Jillian’s award. ■

ALUMNI

Emily Phillips (PitE ‘11) and Sarah Adcock (PitE ‘09) are members Class of 2014 W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Woodrow Wilson Michigan Teaching Fellows. This fellowship recruits accomplished career changers and outstanding recent college graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (the STEM fields). The 2014 fellows are the fourth class of new teacher candidates to be prepared through the program since the Fellowship was launched in Michigan in 2010.

Each fellow will receive a \$30,000 stipend while completing an intensive master’s-level teacher education program at a participating Michigan university. After their preparation, fellows commit to teach for at least three years in a high-need Michigan school, with ongoing support and mentoring. ■

Year-End and Coming Events



Left: PitE Senior Annalise Povolo with classmates at Pizza with Professors. Right: Members of the SNRE/PitE a cappella group, "Noise Pollution," perform in their pajamas at the PitE Midnight Breakfast.



"My favorite event is Pizza with the Professors because everyone in the PitE community comes out, including the professors, and it is as informative as it is fun!"

—Claire Roos, Junior PitE major and PitE Club committee member

Dressed for Success



Cool Caps: (left) PitE graduate Patrick Lau is fired up for Michigan. Center: fellow PitE graduate Jill Abrell admires a classmate's colorful cap. Right: members of the PitE Class of 2014 at the SNRE Commencement Ceremony.

Save the Date: PitE Fall Speaker Series

These events are free and open to the public

Michigan Wildlife Conservation Series

Featuring Dr. Dan Janzen and Dr. Winnie Hallwachs

Friday, October 3: 4pm, 1040 Dana Building (440 Church Street)

Dr. Janzen is a leader in conservation ecology, a world-level authority on the biology of tropical caterpillars, and is the president of the Guanacaste Dry Forest Conservation Fund. He and Dr. Hallwachs are co-creators of the National Biodiversity Institute of Costa Rica. The inaugural lecture of this series honors famous Michigan-trained wildlife biologist, Olaus Murie, and is in partnership with the *School of Natural Resources and Environment*.



"There's Corn in Our Hair?"

Strange Tales and Optimistic Ideas from Our Adventures with Food

Thursday, October 16: 5pm, Michigan Theater (603 E. Liberty Street)

By showing clips of their film, "King Corn," Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis will share their experiences with the food industry. In partnership with the *Penny Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series*. A free screening of "King Corn" will be held the week of October 13.



visit lsa.umich.edu/pite/events for details