



PROGRAM IN THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# Crossroads

Volume 15

Fall 2016

# Student Engagement

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PitE student Kerrel Spivey  
at Kagon Falls, Japan

[www.lsa.umich.edu/pite](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/pite)

# Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,



Welcome back to a new school year. This year, the Program in the Environment will initiate a couple of exciting new ventures. We are launching the “Water and the Environment” minor as well as the Sustainable Living Experience (SLE), a new residential theme community that provides students with the opportunity to experience sustainable living within a supportive community in the Oxford-West Seeley Residence Hall. The water minor gives students an opportunity to study in depth a topic of considerable import here in Michigan as well as in the broader world. The SLE offers incoming students a chance to explore questions of sustainable living as well as environmental justice. In promoting both ventures, PitE hopes to enable students from a wide variety of disciplinary homes to extend their education on environmental issues.

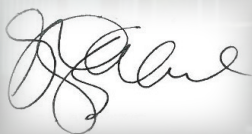
We are fortunate to welcome the first director of SLE, Professor Joe Trumpey, and the first assistant director of SLE, Emily Canosa. Joe is a PitE and Stamps School joint faculty member whose teaching focuses on experiential observation, drawing connections with the natural world. His creative work, with its emphasis on biodiversity, modern agriculture and ecological sustainability, has been exhibited in a wide variety of venues across the country. The depth of his devotion to these issues is evident in the fact that he lives and works on a small farm dedicated to preserving the genetic diversity of rare livestock. Emily served as the first manager of the University of Michigan Sustainable Food Program, which includes 13 student organizations, several campus gardens, and the Campus Farm. Emily is also co-founder of The Hive Sustainable Living Cooperative, and e-board member of The Agrarian Adventure, a local nonprofit that aims to enrich K-12 student connections between food, the environment, communities, and personal health. Joe and Emily took the SLE participants to the Biostation during fall break for an orientation and welcome weekend.

This fall, we welcome new faculty, Professors Ben Passey and Naomi Levin, and lecturer John Benedict. Ben and Naomi are jointly appointed with the department of Earth and Environmental Science. Naomi’s research focuses on using isotopic tracers to understand the water cycle and on reconstructing the environmental context for human evolution in East Africa over the past few million years. Ben is both an analytical chemist and an earth scientist whose research includes using the chemical composition of horse teeth or other vertebrates to understand past and present vegetation and hydrology. John received his PhD in 2012 from Arizona State University, and his area of expertise is botany and paleobotany.

We are also pleased to announce that Professor Paolo Squatriti from the department of History and Romance Languages, has joined PitE as a joint faculty member. Paolo is a historian of medieval Italy, and much of his recent work has an environmental or ecological focus.

On Friday, September 9, Provost Martha Pollack met with PitE faculty and staff to discuss the creation of a new school of environmental and sustainability studies. For details on this plan as they emerge, please consult the university’s Office of Public Affairs at <http://publicaffairs.vpcomm.umich.edu/environmentsustainability-education-structure/>.

PitE continues to welcome increasing numbers of students to its majors and minors. These varied and exceptional students make PitE the great program that it is.



**Gregg Crane**

**Professor and Director,  
Program in the Environment**

# 2016 PitE Graduation Awards

These awards recognize graduating PitE seniors who have demonstrated both high academic achievement and dedicated service to PitE.

## Outstanding PitE Majors

### Nicholas Jansen

Specialization: Freshwater Ecosystems

### Robert Luzynski

Specialization: Human-Environment Interactions



Nicholas



Robert

## Outstanding PitE Minors

### Erin Gregorie

Major: Environment; Minor: Food

### Lindsey Scullen

Majors: Spanish & Comparative Literature; Minors: Complex Systems & Environment



Erin



Lindsey

These awards recognize instructors for their commitment to undergraduate teaching, learning, and demonstrable impact through innovation, creativity, and excellence in the classroom and beyond.

## Outstanding PitE Instructor

### James Breck

Environ 309 and 463: GIS Explorations and GIS for Conservation Management



## Outstanding PitE Graduate Student Instructor

### Kate Keeley

Environ 309: GIS Explorations



## Society of Environmental Journalists - 2016 Emerging Environmental Journalist Award

### Cole Zingas

Environmental Journalism student Cole Zingas is a future physician who also is deeply engaged with environmental justice and journalism. He brought this unusual combination of interests and talents to the university's environmental journalism course as a first-year student. In a news feature story on algal blooms written for class, Cole took a very complex scientific topic and made it understandable for the general public. Cole has great potential to craft a career that combines environmental health, medicine and journalism.



# Featured Course: CHEM 125 General Chemistry Laboratory – Authentic Research Experience in Snow Chemistry



**Kerri Pratt,**  
Assistant Professor of  
Chemistry

The new course developed by Professor Kerri Pratt in Fall 2015 has a goal to increase STEM retention through opportunities for a diverse set of first and second-year undergraduate students to obtain hands-on experience, conducting real scientific research. This is in contrast to the typical “cookbook” experience in the general chemistry laboratory.

The class research project was the prediction of snowpack molecular halogen production through examination of Arctic snow chemical composition, based on the results of Pratt et al. (2013, Nature Geoscience). Overall, the students were excited about the novelty of analyzing Arctic snow samples, which in addition to contributing to our scientific understanding of Arctic halogen chemistry, provided an opportunity to teach the students about Arctic climate change. Two undergraduate students from CHEM 125/126, Alicia Kevelin and Claire Mattson, traveled with Prof. Pratt to conduct snow sampling near Barrow, AK in March 2016.

## Claire’s Thoughts:

*“This trip provided me with the amazing opportunity to see exactly how snow sampling occurs, and witness the places where the data I analyzed just a few months prior came from. As an undergraduate instructor in Chem 125/126-Snow in Fall 2016 semester, I will have much more insight that I can provide to the students about the sampling procedure and undergraduate research opportunities. On a more personal note, this trip was an incredible learning experience and introduction to research and field studies that I will remember for the rest of my life.”*

- Claire Mattson



## Alicia’s Thoughts:

*“As the locals and regular visitors continued to tell us, we couldn’t have had a more positive and productive week in Barrow! Not only did we collect just under 100 samples for next year’s Chem 125- Authentic Research in Snow Chemistry class, but I had one of the most unique and impactful experiences of my life. I am honored to have been able to receive this scholarship, and so happy that something like this exists so others can get a chance to grow in unprecedented ways as I did. All in all, this trip’s impact on me was extraordinary, and I plan to make this same extraordinary impact on next year’s class of Chem 125- Snow Chemistry students to share the excitement and passion involved in cutting-edge research.”*

- Alicia Kevelin

# Featured Course: ENV 211

## Social Sciences and Environmental Problems

This course introduces students to a broad range of social sciences — anthropology, economics, education and communication, political science, psychology and sociology — to illustrate the benefits of a holistic approach to understanding and addressing environmental challenges. Students work with clients like the campus farm, dining halls, residence halls, U-M's Recycle program, Planet Blue and others to address issues and challenges through a social science lens. The campus organizations served by the students have been very impressed with their work, which includes creating a website that details the problems, relevant social science research and recommended solutions.



**Michaela Zint**  
Professor of Environmental  
Education and Communication

### Student Thoughts:

*"I loved the interdisciplinary approach Env 211 offered. It really helped me to consider all of the very different, but very necessary ways to combat climate change. It showed me that no matter a person's interests, talents, and passions, there is a way to connect with them and empower them to help mitigate climate change. I'd recommend that students take Env 211 if they're interested in environmental sciences, social sciences, or both and want to get a sampling of the different types of classes they might take in the future."* - **Ellen Loubert**

*"I really liked that the class went through how the various social science disciplines work at solving environmental problems. I really also liked that students were able to have great discussions and bring up new ideas they had thought of. The readings really supplemented the lecture material and allowed students to come in each day with knowledge that made the discussions good. Having the ability to work on a group project allowed me work with students on an interesting topic, which I enjoyed."* - **Jayson Toweh**



The Peony Garden, Nichols Arboretum



Campus Farm, Matthaei Botanical Gardens

# Student Feature: Practical Experience

Read about the different places PitE students completed their practical experience this year.



## Rachel Beglin - PitE Major, Class of 2017

"I feel like I have come back from my time at Wildlands Studies in Costa Rica as a whole new person. There's just no way to fully grasp that cattle ranches are bringing down the rain forest until you see them right next to each other. It's also hard to understand the struggle of indigenous people trying to retain their culture until you live with them on a remote island for a week. Being there, on the ground, meeting activists and researchers, indigenous elders and nature guides, farmers and ex-pats living in a permaculture society, seeing for yourself a flock of scarlet macaws or doing field research on spider monkeys with the experts...there's simply nothing like it. I learned a great deal about myself that challenged me physically, academically, emotionally, and mentally. Most importantly, I know that I found the right program for me; PitE is everything I could ever want in a major, and my passion for the outdoor is endless."

## Melanie Kinnan - PitE Major, Class of 2017

"EcoQuest truly was a life-changing experience. It's amazing how much you can learn and grow in just a few short weeks when you step outside of your normal routine and surroundings. The students and staff in the program exposed me to new ideas about environmental issues outside my own expertise, challenging me to broaden my thinking and re-evaluate my perspectives. New Zealand ultimately sparked in me a love for the environment and the inspiration to live more sustainably."



Morgan, pictured far right

## Morgan Mullins - PitE Major, Class of 2018

"Without hesitation, I can say that my time at Camp Davis in Wyoming was the best choice I have made so far in my college career. I went into the class (Renewable and Fossil Fuels) with interest in the topic, but planned on taking classes more about food sustainability. Food sustainability is something I really enjoy learning about, but this class really got me excited about something new. This fall, I am excited to take classes about renewable and fossil energy to add on to what I learned during my time at Camp Davis."

# Student Feature: Practical Experience



## Kerrel Spivey - PitE Major, Class of 2016

“My trip to Japan was an amazing, eye-opening, and life changing experience. For about four weeks, we were directly exposed to Japanese culture, traditions, city life, food, activities, and much more. I decided to sign up for the course because it was an ideal opportunity for me. During my time at U of M, I majored in Environment and minored in Urban Studies. This course focused on environmental history in Japan and how urbanization and industrialization impacted and changed Japanese interactions with nature. The course analyzed how the Japanese people incorporate sustainability and nature throughout their lifestyle. I am very thankful for my supporters especially Program in the Environment for making this rare opportunity a reality.”



## Tasneem Bhindarwala - PitE Major and International Studies Major, Class of 2016

“During this past winter semester, I was in Madagascar with the School for International Training (SIT). Our program was called Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management. Through my homestay and village stay, I was able to have a true cultural exchange and learn so much about a culture that is frankly not well known by the rest of the world. Being in Madagascar made me realize that its easy to prioritize environmentalism coming from a lifestyle where I do not need to worry about my electricity being cut for days on end or no running water. I am tremendously grateful for Program in International and Comparative Studies, PitE, and the University of Michigan for allowing me the opportunity to learn and live in Madagascar, and truly understand the trials of life over there, but also learn about how happy, caring, and loving the Malagasy people are.”



Tasneem pictured bottom row, far left



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## Events Calendar - Join Us!

### FALL 2016

Monday,  
Nov. 14

**Pizza with the Professors**  
5:00 - 6:00 pm // Dana Commons // FREE to attend



### WINTER 2017

Wednesday,  
Mar. 22

**Pizza with the Professors**  
5:00 - 6:00 pm // Dana Commons // FREE to attend

Thursday,  
Apr. 13

**Goldring Speaker: Naomi Oreskes**  
6:00 - 7:30 pm // Rackham Amphitheatre (4th Floor) // FREE to attend



Wednesday,  
Apr. 19

**Midnight Breakfast**  
11:00 pm - 1:00 am // Dana Building 1026 & 1028 // FREE to attend

Friday,  
Apr. 28

**PitE Graduation**  
5:30- 7:30 pm // Biomedical Science Research Building (Atrium)



## Let's Get Social!



UM Program in  
the Environment



[environcomm.wordpress.com](http://environcomm.wordpress.com)



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University of Michigan  
Program in the  
Environment Alumni



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