



PROGRAM IN THE
ENVIRONMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Crossroads

Volume 17

Fall 2017

Student Engagement

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Photo taken by PitE student Alexander Cherry
Cape Town, South Africa

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Letter from the Director

Dear Members of the PitE Community,



It has been another busy year for the Program in the Environment. I would first like to welcome two new faculty members. Starting Fall Term, Sarah Ensor joins PitE and English as an Assistant Professor. Sarah comes to Michigan from Portland State University, where she was also a Faculty Fellow at the Institute for Sustainable Solutions. She received her PhD in English from Cornell in 2012 and was a recipient there of a Mellon Foundation Graduate fellowship at Cornell's Society for the Humanities. Sarah's primary areas of research and teaching include 19th- and 20th-century American literature, environmental literature, ecocriticism, and queer literature and theory. This fall Sarah will be teaching a course on gender, sexuality, and the environment (Environ 377/English 320). In the Winter Term of 2018, Dr. Hernán López-Fernández will join PitE and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB). Hernán comes to UM from the University of Toronto, where he currently holds the positions of Associate Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Curator of Fishes for the Royal Ontario Museum. A superb field biologist with experience organizing many collecting trips to South America, Dr. López-Fernández will curate the world-class collection of fishes in Michigan's Museum of Zoology as well as teaching courses on the biology of fishes and fish biodiversity for EEB and PitE. I am confident that both Sarah and Hernán will bring valuable perspectives and expertise to the Program in the Environment.

In its second year, the Sustainable Living Experience (SLE) has welcomed 25 first-year students to one of the residence halls in the Oxford Houses. A U-M Residential Theme Community, the Sustainable Living Experience provides students with the opportunity to experience sustainable living within a supportive community. SLE is open to all undergraduate students regardless of academic focus and aims to foster a culture of sustainability both in the residence hall and across campus. Towards this end SLE integrates sustainability programming and learning opportunities into the freshman experience and functions as a community of engaged learners and sustainability leaders. SLE Director Joe Trumpey and Assistant Director Emily Canosa have done a tremendous job in helping to enable students from a wide variety of disciplinary homes to extend their education on environmental issues.

In May of 2017, twenty-two students in Professor Joe Trumpey's "Green Building" class (Environ 305/Artdes 300) built an off-the-grid, straw bale house atop a hill overlooking Douglass Lake at the University of Michigan's Biological Station. Now being used as a class room, the 400-square-foot building has a wraparound porch, is heated by a woodstove, and gets its electricity from a photovoltaic solar array. Students in this class not only learned about the history and practice of sustainable or 'green' construction, but they also gained first-hand experience in the economic and practical feasibility of such structures. The word 'empowering' has been aptly used many times to describe various educational opportunities, but it's hard for me to imagine a more empowering experience than that offered by Joe's class.

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. As the Program continues to grow and develop, we expect to find new challenges and new opportunities. I am confident that PitE students will rise to the occasion, as they always do.

Gregg Crane

Professor and Director,
Program in the Environment



2017 PitE Graduation Awards

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

Outstanding PitE Majors

Elizabeth Bedrick, B.A.

Wyatt Klipa, B.S.



L-R: Elizabeth, Wyatt, PitE Director Gregg Crane

Outstanding PitE Minors

Jacob Greenfield, B.A.

Jayson Toweh, B.S.



L-R: Jayson, Jacob, PitE Director Gregg Crane

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

Michaela Zint

Environ 211 and 382



L-R: Michaela, PitE Director Gregg Crane

Outstanding PitE Graduate Student Instructor

Benjamin Morse

Environ 382



Meet Your Academic Advisors!



M.A. in History, M.A. in Social Science; Eastern Michigan University; B.A. in History, minor in International and Global Studies; University of Michigan-Flint

Jaime Langdon

Jaime has worked at the University of Michigan for over twelve years with ten years of experience in advising undergraduate students. This is her eighth year in Program in the Environment. Her academic interests are in the social sciences, including history, politics and policy, environmental studies, and women's studies.



M.A. Higher Education, M.P.P. Public Policy; University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; B.A. History; Michigan State University

Jeremiah Thompson

Jeremiah is a recent Rackham dual-degree graduate in Higher Education and Public Policy. His academic interests have centered on the intersection of policy and education, particularly access, equity, and retention for underserved populations. In his free time, he likes to play basketball, volleyball, and softball.

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Welcome to the Straw Bale House



Twenty-three students from the University of Michigan's Green Building class spent the month of May building a new, sustainable structure by hand at the University of Michigan Biological Station.

The "Green Building" class, taught by Professor Joe Trumpey, spent the semester learning about designing and building environmentally friendly and sustainable structures. Then in May, the class went to the Biostation to construct a 400-square-foot 'Straw Bale House.' The building was made from locally-sourced straw and adobe and is located on a hill that overlooks Douglas Lake. The students also wrote a grant proposal to obtain funding for solar panels installed at the site which will provide the building's electricity. The project, from foundation to roof, was completed in one month.

The Green Building class was supported by the Transforming Learning in the Third Century initiative at the University of Michigan, the Program in the Environment, and Planet Blue.



Featured Course: ENV 324

Introduction to Water Law and Policy



How is it possible, living next to the largest surface freshwater system in the world, that we find ourselves distributing bottled water on the eastern side of the state while allowing Nestle to pump over 200 gallons of water per minute in three different locations on the other side of the state? What are the real threats to our nation's water? This course searches for the answers to these and related questions by examining the cultural, historical and political roots of U.S. water law and policy. In particular, the course looks at water law and policy governing riparian states, prior appropriation states, tribal lands and groundwater. We also look at the nexus between energy and water and the impact of climate change on water law and policy.

Students who take this course have the option to register for the 2-credit, 2-week Water Law and Policy extension course at the UMBS. Here, we get a first-hand look at the role of science, law, and public values in identifying and reducing point-source and non-point source pollution, redeveloping brownfields in riparian zones, restoring wetlands, preserving endangered riparian species, developing energy, and managing federally navigable waters. Our explorations of these issues features field trips to the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline at the Mackinac Straits, Petoskey's Bay Harbor development, Cheboygan Marsh, the Maple River Dam, the Cloverland Hydroelectric Dam and the Soo Locks.



Alumni Feature:

Catherine Tao, Class of 2015



The rope is neatly draped over my climbing partner's lap as I habitually check over the knots and mechanisms that tether us to each other and the rock. My stomach is full of nerves and my brain is saturated with endorphins. We are currently 600 feet off the ground, hanging off the side of a cliff, with another 500 feet to ascend. At 12,000 feet of elevation, the air is nearly biting and the afternoon sun singes my skin. We've been awake since 3 am. This has become my weekly ritual during the summer months. As soon as my chalky hands touch the granite, the world goes quiet. I begin climbing. This is what I want above all else. This is home. How on Earth did I get here?

In early May of 2015, I stepped out of the Big House, electrified by the freedom that lay ahead and simultaneously clueless about what I was supposed to do

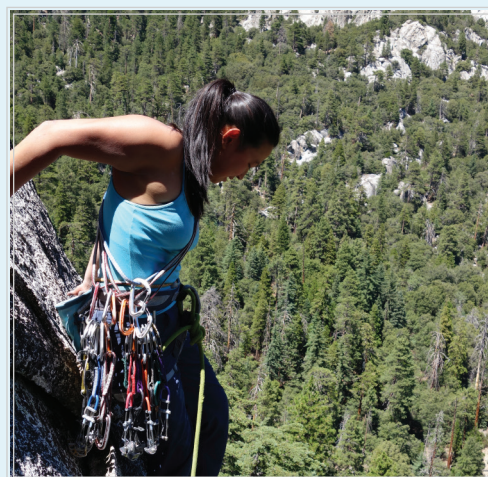
with my diploma. Naturally, I put off making any decisions about jobs or careers by hiking the John Muir Trail with a fellow PitE alum. After the grueling 220 miles, there was no doubt in my mind as to what I would do. I wanted a lifestyle where mountains were a consistent hum in my life rather than a weekend getaway. It led me to move to a small, dusty, 4,000 person town, 170 miles away from the nearest Trader Joe's.



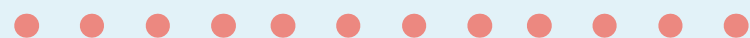
Alumni Feature: Catherine Tao, Class of 2015 (cont.)

I often reflect upon the path that led me to this lifestyle. I did not grow up in a family that camped, fished, or hiked much. I had never slept in a tent until I was 18, much less even fathomed of the possibility of spending weeks in the backcountry at a time. PitE continuously presented me with opportunities to explore this portion of myself that I had not growing up. My experience at Camp Davis and time spent at the School of Field Studies in Tanzania were pivotal catalysts in broadening my horizon to include pieces of the world that I never thought I could be a part of. Each hike at Camp Davis and each night I camped in the Serengeti solidified a bit of where I am today. I am grateful for these invaluable experiences that PitE has provided me. I currently work as a Fisheries Interpreter at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. I fall asleep in the bed I built for myself to the smell of sagebrush and pines. I am happier than I have ever been.

I have been fortunate enough to have found my passion and am able to immerse myself in it. This lifestyle gives me invaluable clarity and harvests bounds of ineffable elation. Climbing forces me to stretch the limits of what I am capable of and allows me the space and tools to continue to grow. I am working towards the goal of organizing an all-female expedition to the remote valleys and peaks at the border of Tibet and China in the fall of 2018 to explore and establish new climbing routes.



Student Feature: Field Research



Graham Bevier- PitE Major, Class of 2018

Throughout the summer months of May, June, and July, I collected field data for my Honors Thesis around the Cycladic island system in the Mediterranean Sea. I studied the Aegean Wall Lizard, searching for both morphological and behavioral differences in populations on various islands. The majority of my research was based on the island of Naxos and the surrounding landbridge islands. I learned a great deal about the scientific process, reworking research questions, and how to connect with other scientists in other fields of study. Since returning, I am even more enthusiastic about field ecology and am excited for a future in the field I love.



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PitE Events Calendar

FALL 2017

September 7

PitE's Annual Ice Cream Social
4:30 - 5:30 PM | Dana Commons*

October 7

**Bill McKibben, 16th Peter M. Wege
Foundation Lecture on Sustainability**
5:00 PM | Hill Auditorium*

October 11

**Goldring Family Foundation Guest Speaker:
James Salzman, UCLA**
5:00 PM | Pendleton Room (Michigan Union)*

November 13

Pizza with the Professors
5:00 - 6:00 PM | Dana Commons*

WINTER 2018

January 30

U-M Green Career Fair
1:00 - 4:00 PM | Michigan League Ballroom*

March 20

Pizza with the Professors
5:00 - 6:00 PM | Dana Commons*

April 18

Midnight Breakfast
11:00 PM | Dana 1024 + 1028*

April 27

PitE Graduation Reception
5:30 PM | Biomedical Science Building (Atrium)

* Free to attend

Let's Get Social!



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pinterest.com/pitenvironment



UM Program in
the Environment



University of Michigan
Program in the
Environment Alumni

PitE Club: Join Today!



PitE Club works to foster a greater sense of community within the PitE program, incorporating student involvement. The group also serves as a sounding board for a PitE administration by providing student input and feedback. In addition, PitE Club developed and maintains the mentorship program between undergraduate PitE students and SNRE graduate students. The club also coordinates multiple volunteer opportunities in Ann Arbor for the PitE student body as a whole. PitE Club members attend and represent PitE at student events, such as the LSA Concentration Fair, Pizza with the Professors, Midnight Breakfast, and speaker series events.