

“GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY”



PitE Senior Leeya Correll leads the efforts of a large scale clean-up event in Detroit as an intern with the Southwest Detroit Business Association.

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Fall Greetings



November brings Pizza with the Professors in the Dana Building Ford Commons. As always, the PitE staff excelled themselves as current and prospective students munched pizza and chatted with professors excited to talk about the courses they will be teaching in the winter. One of the pleasures at this event each semester is seeing the interactions between instructors and students, relation-

ships of mentoring, and mutual respect that extends beyond the classroom walls. Students do not just come to hear about courses they wish to take; they also come to greet a professor who taught them in a previous class, to the obvious delight of the instructor. Students spend about four years at Michigan, faculty much longer. Our instructors strive for lasting influence on their students, but I am reminded that this is a two-way street, for students have large influences on faculty.

But seeing the happy mob milling around is also sobering and humbling. It is sobering as it brings home to me the task I have taken on as director. I am now the steward who must seek tirelessly to help every one of these students reach their dreams and goals, as well as supporting these exceptional instructors who are my allies in this quest. I am humbled, too, as I realize how much my predecessors – John Knott, Barry Rabe and Bob Owen-- have achieved, and the challenge I face in trying to fill their giant shoes. I know their achievements impress. After nearly a decade, these achievements will become more widely known as we embark on a

self-study, leading to an external review, part of the normal sequence of reviews in LSA for all departments and programs. With the help of our students, faculty, staff and all those associated with the program, I hope we will continue to impress with a vision for the next decade.

Among the things that daily impress me about the program is the way our students take what they learn into the larger world beyond the ivory-tower walls of the university academy. Beyond these walls, our students are willing, able, and wanting to make a difference. This week, I looked at a list of internships that PitE students had completed in recent years. While a third were close to home and a further 40% were done in nineteen states, PitE students worked in fifteen countries on six of seven continents, and I suspect someone will work in Antarctica before long. This newsletter features a small selection of examples where students have given back to their local, national and global communities. PitE students seek to tread more lightly on the planet, and to help others do the same, that all may enjoy more sustainable futures.

Seeing the energy around Pizza with the Professors also reminds me of who was missing, unable to share her energy and joy of life with others in the program. We mourn the loss of Jillian Drow, who fell in the mountains of Wyoming; our sympathies go out to her family. She too was known as someone who reached out, and from the many testaments to her, it is apparent that her spirit will continue to inspire giving by others.

Respectfully,

Paul Webb

| PitE By The Numbers: A Snapshot of the PitE Student Body | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 299 Concentrators | 124 Bachelor of Arts | 282 Female Students |
| + | + | + |
| 150 Minors | 175 Bachelor of Science | 167 Male Students |
| 449 Total PitE Students | 229 Concentrators | 449 Total PitE Students |
| Report created by PitE on November 10, 2010 | | |

PitE Students Giving Back to Communities Abroad

Allison Yee, Senior PitE Concentrator

I worked in a small-scale gold mining village in the Upper East Region of Ghana, near the city of Bolgatanga, studying the human and environmental health effects of mercury exposure. The gold miners here regularly handle and openly burn mercury to extract gold from rock. During my time in the village, we conducted demographic health surveys. We also collected human and environmental samples to test for mercury content, with aims to raise awareness and community understanding of the widespread use of mercury, and its implications on maternal and child health.

The people I worked and interacted with are what made my experiences unforgettable. The Ghanaians, especially those in the poor gold-mining community, are hard-working, motivated, and resilient people who appreciate what they have, find happiness in life, and have their own goals, dreams, and aspirations. I plan to pursue graduate studies in environmental health, and return to Ghana to continue working with the small-scale gold mining villages on developing sustainable solutions to protect human and environmental health.

Dana Anderson, Junior PitE Concentrator

This past summer, along with fifteen other students, I lived and worked in the small town of Tavua, on the northern side of Viti Levu in Fiji, to implement sustainable development projects with the goal of empowering people to fight poverty. I organized and directed a square foot gardening project. I was also responsible for promoting the use of backyard gardens, and organized seminars, trainings, and nutrition lessons to help families, women's groups, schools, and communities become more self-reliant and improve their diet through access to healthy food.

The problems of food security in Tavua range from overeating to under eating: some island people consume too much fatty food, while many struggle to feed growing numbers in their households. It was amazing to work with those who were motivated and wanted to help themselves. I witnessed people learn skills that can profit them, and literally see hope grow as people benefitted from eating vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, cabbage, and long beans. I learned how malnutrition is not simply caused by a lack of food, but by a lack of high-quality foods such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Unfortunately one

summer is not long enough to change a country and food system that is dependent on exports. But it is long enough to make a difference to several families and to feel love for a country and for a people. Having this experience strengthened my desire to work with the environment because I have seen how knowledge in this field can improve lives.

Dana received a Graham Field Experience Scholarship to use towards expenses for this internship.

Samuel Cohen, Senior PitE Concentrator

For a month this past summer, I participated in Trusted Messenger Intervention (TMI), a field study program in Zambia. The goal was to run workshops with clergy and other community leaders in order to promote the science-based facts of HIV/AIDS. Through these workshops, we emphasized how easily prevention can be achieved with healthy lifestyle habits and antiretroviral drugs (ARVs). These workshops sought to reframe the community's understanding of HIV/AIDS, and encourage community members to use this new understanding and outlook to benefit their families and community life.

I originally wanted to study the accessibility of clinics that offer ARVs and other HIV/AIDS treatments. Many times, people in rural settings are unable to access these crucial resources. But I learned that the problem of HIV/AIDS can be approached in many ways. Hopefully I will be able to return to Zambia this summer to study these local development projects more closely.

HIV/AIDS is a global issue that affects more than just people's health and well-being. Healthy, informed people generally are more aware of the environment around them and its value. Through sustainable lifestyles, people improve their livelihoods for years to come.

Samuel received an Abrams Scholarship to use towards expenses of this field study.



Allison Yee in Ghana



Dana Anderson in Fiji



Samuel Cohen in Zambia

Giving Back to Detroit

By Leeya Correll

I was a Geographic Targeting and Nuisance Abatement intern at Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA). SDBA is located in the heart of Southwest Detroit, an area of the city that continues to grow in population and economic investment; it's also an environmental justice community. My main project was planning a large-scale neighborhood clean-up event. I worked with SDBA's community policing program, meeting with block clubs and neighborhood associations throughout Southwest Detroit to identify properties that residents felt were of highest concern. The properties identified were usually abandoned homes close to schools or large populations of children. Other properties of concern were abandoned homes that harbored drug dealing and other illegal activities, as well as vacant lots where illegal dumping tended to occur. On the day of the clean-up event, over seventy-five community members and other volunteers came out to work on fifteen lots and homes. We boarded up windows and doors of abandoned homes to prevent illegal entry, painted over graffiti, and cleared out lots full of trash. We also posted "No Dumping" and "No Trespassing" signs where necessary.

My favorite part of this project was seeing how people were empowered to take on blight and abandonment in their communities. One

particular commercial property we worked on was a real wreck – the local neighborhood association president told me that she didn't think anyone had ever even attempted to clean it after multiple ownerships and fires. There was terrible graffiti on the building, trash all around, and illegal dumping in the alley next door. This property is located on a main intersection with thriving small businesses around it. A man who lives next door to the property came out and began talking to us. He told the local neighborhood association president how he'd observed people dumping a truck-full of garbage on the lot, and asked her for advice on how to deal with this issue. They exchanged numbers and will work together to crack down on violators in the future.

From planning this clean-up event, I learned how to work with people and organizations and how to plan for everything, even the unexpected. I also learned that while Southwest Detroit faces an incredible number of environmental concerns, there are many strong neighborhood associations, block clubs, and people readily investing in strengthening their community by taking issues into their own hands.

Want to know more? Check out Leeya's blog: <http://semesterdblog.com/?p=703>

New Kids on the Block: New PitE Lecturers

DR. ANNE AXEL

Course she teaches:

Writing and the Environment; Restoration Ecology; Water Works: Literary and Cinematic Perspectives on Water; Into the Wild: An Exploration of Mainstream Environmental Works; Tropical Conservation Biology

Her research interests:

"The central goal of my field research is to understand the consequences of anthropogenic activities and climate change on tropical forest landscapes. I am investigating and forecasting impacts of natural environmental variability and human disturbance on the abundance and spatial patterns of two lemur species in protected and unprotected dry forests in Madagascar."

Life before PitE:

"I was the Information Manager for the Utah Natural Heritage Program, a counterpart to the Michigan Natural Features Inventory program. I maintained the state's biodiversity databases and provided data summaries in support of environmental reviews."

What she looks forward to in PitE:

"Working more closely with PitE students as they design their field experiences and engage in undergraduate research."

DR. JASON DUVALL

Courses he teaches:

Sustainability and Health; Environments, Health, and Well-being

His research interests:

"My recent work expands on research focused on interest enhancement by exploring a number of techniques designed to help people tune into the external environment, particularly in the context of walking. I'm also interested in alternative ways to frame conservation behavior and emphasize how these actions could benefit both physical health and psychological well-being."

Life Before PitE:

"I was the GSI for Ray De Young's courses (Environment & Behavior and The Psychology of Environmental Stewardship) for many years while working on a Ph.D. with Ray De Young and Rachel Kaplan. I finished last April and agreed to put together a few courses for PitE."

What he looks forward to in PitE

"Working with PitE students. Overall they are an extremely bright and enthusiastic group."

This fall, PitE welcomes three lecturers to the rank. While they are new to PitE, they are not new to the university. Here is a snapshot of our new lecturers.

DR. PHIL D'ANIERI

Courses he teaches:

Introduction to Urban and Environmental Planning; Urban Sprawl: Policy and Politics; Urban Systems; The Built Environment; Making Environmental Internships Work for You

His research interests:

"Regional governance and urban sprawl (fixing sprawl by reforming the way metropolitan areas are governed) and the interactions and boundaries between built and natural systems."

Life Before PitE:

"I was Program Director at the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, directing grantmaking to improve the community; I also taught one course per semester for the U. I've also worked as a public radio journalist and legislative staffer, prior to getting my Ph. D. in Urban Planning from U-M."

What he looks forward to in PitE:

"Challenging students to refine their critical thinking around issues of the environment and humans' place within it. Taking a liberal-arts approach to the pressing environmental challenges of the day."

An Interview with PitE's New Associate Director

“PitE students can indeed make a difference, and it's my job to help give them the opportunities they need to fully reach their potential.”



In our Fall 2009 edition of *Crossroads*, PitE welcomed Professor Jeremy Semrau (College of Engineering) into our ranks as a joint faculty member. This September, Jeremy was named the new Associate Director of PitE. Jeremy brings with him a great appreciation for the program, and in his teaching, challenges PitE students to think about sustainability issues from multiple disciplines.

Q1. When did you first learn about PitE?

Semrau: I first became aware of PitE and its significant potential in 2005, while crafting the proposal that ultimately resulted in the creation of Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute. I met with both Barry Rabe and Robert Owen (outgoing and incoming PitE directors at that time), and it was then that I realized that PitE had enormous potential to not only integrate undergraduate environmental educational activities in one location, but also provide unique educational opportunities to students across campus. This I found to be very exciting, and was very happy when I was later asked to serve on the PitE Advisory Committee, then to have a joint faculty appointment, and most recently to become Associate Director.

Q2. What is your vision for PitE?

Semrau: My general goal for working in PitE is to help it continue along the path of excellence that previous directors, associate directors and staff have created for our students. One effort I'd like to pursue is to construct more opportunities for students across campus to learn about environmental issues, particularly those related to sustainability. To that end, one of my near-term goals is to craft an interdisciplinary minor in sustainability science and technology. Ultimately I see PitE as one of the major vehicles that makes U-M one of the top schools in environmental education.

Q3. What excites you about PitE?

Semrau: First and foremost, the students. PitE students are the cream of the crop and I greatly enjoy working with them in the classroom and on special projects. Our students have the potential to become leaders in multiple arenas that are critical to developing more sustainable societies including business, government, and industry and I want to help them as much as I can. We must continue

to develop our curriculum and give our students an interdisciplinary education because the challenges we face are big and complex. PitE is doing that already; I just want to help.

Q4. What courses have you taught and what courses are you teaching this Winter 2011?

Semrau: Currently I teach a variety of courses in engineering and microbiology, but specifically for PitE I teach a capstone course in "Sustainable Cities". In this class, I ask the students to consider how the future operation of cities can become more sustainable in terms of energy and resource use, while also safeguarding the health and well-being of local citizens, and creating urban areas that are environmentally and economically viable.

I am also developing another PitE class at the sophomore level entitled "Project EyE – Engineering your Environment". I want to introduce PitE students to the opportunities technology can provide in developing solutions to knotty sustainability problems. How can we meet these demands in a cleaner fashion, e.g., with fewer greenhouse gas emissions? How can we make these alternative approaches economically viable? Interestingly, if you make something more efficient, say a furnace, overall energy consumption doesn't necessarily decrease; people tend to use the same amount of energy as they did before - they just achieve a higher level of comfort. How then do we engage people to use less energy overall with more efficient systems? We need to tackle problems like these from an interdisciplinary perspective as it's the only way we're going to achieve anything that approaches sustainable consumption. I want PitE students to understand and communicate with engineering students, and have them work in teams on group projects with engineers such that they can learn how to work together to solve big problems.

Q5. What are your research/academic interests?

Semrau: I was trained as a microbiologist and engineer, and much of my current research is in the broad area of environmental microbiology, i.e., what microbes are in different environments? What are they doing? How are they interacting with each other? More specifically, I look at how we can utilize microbial systems for pollutant degradation and control of greenhouse gas emissions. I am also focusing a good bit of my time on how to describe and model the interconnectivity of city infrastructure systems and how these systems can be made more sustainable, resilient and durable.

Q6. What are your personal interests (if you care to share)?

Semrau: Well, there is a lot, but I spend as much time as I can with my lovely wife, Caroline, and our son, Gabriel. That, and run as much as I can to try and stay in shape.



Anne Axel



Jason Duvall



Phil D'Anieri

In Memory: Jillian Drow



Jillian Drow

This past summer, Jillian Drow died in a hiking accident in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. Jillian would have been a senior concentrator in PitE. Jillian was easy going and seized every opportunity that came her way. She was accepting of others, enjoyed even the smallest pleasures of life, and above all, was a dear friend. "Jillian was one of the nicest people I knew," says Chris Morrison, who was Jillian's housemate and fellow team member on the university's diving club.

When she first came to U-M, she wrote, "I've recently read 'The Daydreamer.' Although this is somewhat of a childhood book rather than adult, I love that it stresses the importance of imagination. To me, the world of daydreaming is the only place we are in control of everything, meaning we can change, rearrange, virtually anything."

This love of life and the excitement of searching out new experiences to fuel her imagination was a hallmark of Jillian's time at Michigan. The natural world became her crucible. She volunteered at the Nichol's Arboretum removing non-native species, seeking to help change back from unwanted change. She shared her love of this natural world at Matthaei Botanical Gardens helping educate students on ecotourism in rural areas. Always putting her beliefs into practice, Jillian was not just a bike rider, but had learned to be a bike mechanic. She saw people as part of this world, and so was naturally vivacious, helpful, kind, respectful and articulate, with an internal beauty that radiated outward in what seemed a permanent smile.

Jillian was excited to be going to Camp Davis this past summer. She was awarded a field experience scholarship not only because of her high academic achievements and focus, but also in recognition of the warmth of her personality and the passion she exhibited for a program that encouraged her to go after what she wanted and to reach her goals. Jillian was simply, beautiful.

More information about Jillian can be found at <http://www.annarbor.com/news/university-of-michigan-student-dies-after-falling-on-a-hike-near-jackson-hole-wyoming/>

3 PitE Alumni Named as Fulbright Scholars

This past April, thirty-nine University of Michigan students were awarded a U.S. Department of State Fulbright Grant, the largest number of Fulbright Grants awarded to students from a single American university this year (Michigan Today, Nov. 2010). Among this group are three PitE alumni. Shawn Kinkema and Hannah Bent received research grants to conduct research in Japan and Nepal, respectively. Dara Yaskil earned an English Teaching Assistantship Grant (ETA) to teach English in Turkey. Shawn, Hannah, and Dara did not plan to apply for the Fulbright Grant Program when they came to U-M, or even when they declared their PitE concentrations. They did, however, have questions about high speed public transportation, urban and cultural development that led them to pursue research and study abroad opportunities well beyond their time at Michigan.

Shawn Kinkema (A.B. 2010)

"The seeds of my Fulbright Grant were planted while I was studying abroad in rural Japan as an undergraduate. I commuted to school in packed trains alongside workers bound for the larger cities of Osaka and Kyoto. The system worked so smoothly and efficiently that I often wondered why similar systems do not exist in the United States. What began as mild bemusement transformed into a full-fledged research proposal, eventually resulting in a yearlong Fulbright Grant to compare the Japanese and American passenger rail systems.

Having just arrived in Japan this September, I am still building my language skills and coming to grips with how fortunate I am to be able to combine two of my strongest interests – Japanese culture and Urban Planning. With rising oil prices and the current administration's promotion of high speed rail development, it is an exciting time to be involved in transportation research. Over the next year, I hope to continue to strengthen relations between Japan and the U.S. as well as contribute to the future of transportation in the U.S."

Hannah Bent (A.B. 2010)

"My Fulbright proposal focused on exploring how indigenous knowledge (how communities and ethnic groups have traditionally done things) affects both the local environment and the society. How does the community make and preserve food? Collect firewood and fodder? Are these practices inherently more sustainable than modern ones? Because Nepal is rapidly developing, many younger generations are moving from the villages to urban areas, and this indigenous knowledge is being lost. I want to learn how this type of information is transmitted across generations.

I decided to apply for a Fulbright Grant because I had been working for Professor William Axinn from the Department of Sociology for the past two years. He does his research in Nepal, and I was lucky enough to go to his study site for a month last summer and loved the experience (I actually heard about this position through the PitE listserv!)"

Dara Yaskil (A.B. 2009)

"I teach English to university students at Kirklareli University, which is located in the Thrace region of Turkey, which borders Bulgaria and the Black Sea. Part of the Fulbright ETA Grant requirements, in addition to teaching English, is to work on a side project. I like to photograph and I plan on getting my graduate degree in urban planning, focusing on sustainable community development. For my side research project, I am photographing the different and unique types of cornerstones within communities that are catalysts in bringing people together. I want to discover the seemingly unlikely places and people that breed community life. Growing up in the suburbs of New Jersey, I never knew a single one of my neighbors. I have always been interested in exploring how other cities and towns form communities, and how these urban areas are designed to promote building the community."

PitE Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Ahmina Maxey (B.S. 2007, PitE Concentrator)
Detroit, Michigan

Ahmina is the Associate Director of the East Michigan Environmental Action Council in Detroit, MI. She directs the Michigan Diesel Clean-up Campaign, a diesel emission reduction program. Since graduation, Ahmina Maxey has advocated with Detroit City Council members on measures to improve Detroit's air quality, leading to the passage of the New Business Model for Detroit Solid Waste. She played an integral role in organizing the United States Social Forum, and served as a co-chair on both the national and local outreach committees, working to bring 20,000 people to the forum. Prior to joining EMEAC, Ahmina worked as a Research Assistant for the Minority Environmental Leadership Development Initiative (MELDI) in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Caroline Cochran (A.B. 2008, PitE Minor)
San Francisco, California

Caroline is starting her third year working as a Research Assistant in the Climate Change and Sustainability practice at ICF International. She works on Federal projects related to sustainability, greenhouse gas mitigation, inventory development, as well as some work related to stratospheric ozone protection and ozone depleting substances. One of Caroline's projects is the Green the Capitol Initiative (GTC) a program launched by the Speaker of the House in 2007 to reduce the carbon footprint of the U.S. House of Representatives. ICF plays a support role in tracking and reporting the environmental benefits observed as a result of the GTC Initiative, on everything from green procurement, to fuel switching at the Capitol Power Plant, to energy efficiency measures in Member Offices. Caroline corresponds with a House staff member to gather and analyze data to quantify the environmental benefits and cost-effectiveness of the greening efforts.



Left: Hannah Bent
 Top Right: Dara Yaskil
 Bottom Right: Shawn Kinkema

PitE Seeking Alumni Feedback!

PitE is embarking on a review, starting with our own self-study and visioning for the future. This is part of the regular routine of periodic reviews for all LSA Departments and Programs. As PitE alumni, your experiences since leaving PitE are essential ingredients of our self-study as we seek to implement our mission "to develop environmentally informed citizens and leaders through an undergraduate program that balances rigorous environmental studies in many disciplines, hones practical problem-solving skills, and fosters intellectual risk taking."

Starting in January, we will be in touch with you via email, Facebook, and even Linked In to get your feedback of the program.

Get in touch with PitE!
 Facebook: [UM Program in the Environment](#)
 LinkedIn: [University of Michigan Program in the Environment Alumni](#)

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PITE WINTER 2011 EVENTS

Please visit our website for more information:
www.lsa.umich.edu/pite

December

14th PitE Fall Graduation Lunch

January

12th PitE Speaker Series: "Great Lakes Water Issues"
 Cameron Davis, Environmental Protection Agency, Senior Advisor
 5:00-6:00pm
 Michigan League (Hussey Room)
 Reception to follow

26th Goldring Family Distinguished Visiting Lecturer:
 Dr. Sylvia Earle, Oceanographer; National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence
 7:30-8:30 pm
 Rackham Auditorium

February

9th Panel Discussion: Environmental Alumni Career
 Time TBD
 1040 Dana Building

March

10th PitE Speaker Series
 Betsy Damon, Founder of Keepers of the Water
 5:00pm
 Michigan Theater

15th PitE Speaker Series: Dr. Donald Boesch,
 President, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.
 Recently appointed to the National Commission on the BP Deepwater
 Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling.
 5:00-6:00 pm
 Location TBD
 Reception to Follow

April

20th Midnight Breakfast

29th PitE Graduation Reception

30th University of Michigan Spring Commencement Ceremony

PitE Alumna Hanna Bent (right) admires the view from her hillside perch in Nepal.

