



PROGRAM IN THE
ENVIRONMENT
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Crossroads

Volume 19

Summer 2019

Student Engagement



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Letter from the Director

Dear Members of the PitE Community,



Spring is the time to start fresh and think about all the possibilities ahead. It's the time of year to shake off the weariness of the semester and the gray of winter and embrace new opportunities and make great plans. Looking onto the Diag awash with spring colors and graduation gowns, it's impossible not to feel hopeful for the months and years ahead.

It's been a great year for the Program in the Environment. In addition to moving into newly renovated offices in the first floor of the Dana Building, we have found ways to engage more closely with the vibrant environmental community at the School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) and continue to build our curricular and co-curricular programs. PitE continues to be a joint program between SEAS and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA), bringing together faculty from six different schools and colleges throughout the university to offer an unparalleled interdisciplinary environmental curriculum. I

have learned so much about the program in my first year as director and have come to appreciate the unique and special nature of our program and community. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for making the program what it is today. I look forward to continuing to work with you to make a great program even better.

The heart of PitE is our students. As the semester winds down, environment majors and minors are looking ahead toward curricular and co-curricular activities on campus and across the globe. It's truly inspiring to watch our students set out to build their skillset and demonstrate their commitment to making the world a better place. Whether it is taking courses at the BioStation or Camp Davis, participating in rhino conservation in Tanzania, helping organize carbon neutrality events on campus and beyond, working on energy justice and urban agriculture in Detroit, studying renewable energy in Costa Rica, or interning at institutions everywhere from Ann Arbor to Australia, our students embody the spirit of adventure and dedication needed to solve the world's most pressing environment and sustainability challenges.

Whether you are a current student about to embark on a field experience, a graduating senior looking forward to the next adventure, or a program alumnus out there trying to make a difference, I encourage you to take a moment to appreciate the fresh start that spring provides us. Think big thoughts, say "yes" to new opportunities, and let's figure out how we can each contribute to making the world a better place. Get active. Get involved. Get muddy.

Go Blue!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Shelia Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shelia Miller
Jonathan W. Bulkley Collegiate Professor in Sustainable Systems
Director, Program in the Environment

Student Feature: Practical Experience

Emily Jameson- PitE Major, Class of 2019

"I spent approximately 4 months in Costa Rica with the Institute for Central American Development Studies (ICADS). The experience challenged me in many ways, but overall was immensely rewarding. My favorite part of the program was when we traveled to Nicaragua to compare the economies and cultures of the two countries. Part of the program required that I design and execute my own research project in a local community. I chose to spend the month in Hone Creek, a small town in Limón province. I studied the aquatic macroinvertebrates (aquatic bug larvae, snails, shrimps, etc.) in the Río Hone to determine its health. My results suggest that the chemical health of the river is good, while the river lacks sufficient diversity and abundance of natural habitats to be categorized as a truly healthy ecosystem. Overall I had an incredible and transformative experience that I would repeat in a heartbeat."



"PitE is a unique Liberal Arts major in that we require students go into the field and gain practical experience. This type of learning is hands-on, helping students develop skills in critical thinking, and allowing each of them to apply the knowledge they've gained in the classroom into a real world setting. This in turn will bring them full circle by giving them a much deeper understanding of the environmental problems and solutions they're learning about on campus. Students often complete their practical experience requirement by studying abroad, doing research, completing an internship, or attending a field station."

- Jaime Langdon, PitE Academic Advisor

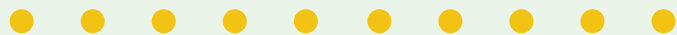
Taylor Lass- PitE Major, Class of 2019



"I studied abroad in Belize this past summer to fulfill my practical experience, ecology, and natural systems requirements for my PitE major. I spent my time out in the field experiencing and learning about all of the different ecosystems of Belize—the savanna, mountain pine ridge forest, wetlands, tropical forests, and the second largest barrier reef. An overarching theme was learning about how communal groups manage ecosystem and wildlife conservation. We also had the opportunity to immerse ourselves in Creole and Maya cultures by staying in their communities and conducting informal interviews. In my six weeks in Belize, I was able to fully experience the environment I want to protect, accomplish things I never thought I'd do, and make some amazing friends."



Straw Bale House 2.0



Twenty-five students from the University of Michigan's Green Building class spent the month of May in 2018, building the second sustainable structure by hand at the University of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens. The first structure was built in May 2017 at the U-M Biological Station in Pellston, Michigan.

The "Green Building" class, taught by Professor Joe Trumpey, spent the semester learning about designing and building environmentally friendly and sustainable structures. The structure is made of 18-inch-thick straw bales, sitting atop a concrete foundation and sheathed in layers of adobe. Solar panels sit atop the building's metal roof, making it the first off-the-grid building on the Ann Arbor campus. It's also the University of Michigan's first student-built structure on the main campus. The building is located next to the hoop houses and vegetable fields within the student-run Campus Farm.

The building received funding from the Office of the Provost, The Planet Blue Student Initiative Fund, and MDining, who plans to host farm-to-table events in this structure. The project, from foundation to roof, was completed in one month.



Sustainable Living Experience

The Sustainable Living Experience (SLE) at Oxford Houses welcomed a cohort of 21 students from LSA, Engineering, and Theater this academic year. With support from faculty Director Professor Joe Trumpey (Stamps School of Art and Design, PitE, and SEAS), students examined sustainability through the lenses of waste, water, food and energy. Academic and co-curricular activities included trips to campus composting facilities at South Quad, the Campus Farm, Food Gatherers, Keep Growing Detroit and Eastern Market. As a part of the fall seminar, students developed skills in sustainability research and communication by making podcasts focused on a sustainability issue of their choice which were released on the SLE website throughout the winter term.

The SLE faculty fellow this year was Professor Sara Soderstrom (Organizational Studies, PitE), who met with students each semester to provide guidance and discuss their interests. Students also took on related projects and activities, including an assessment of post-consumer waste at Twigs Dining Hall, designing bicycle-related infrastructure, explorations of solar power at their residence hall, and a workshop on insects as a sustainable food source.



To learn more about the Sustainable Living Experience, visit our website at lsa.umich.edu/sustainable-living

Welcome to PitE, Terri Slaughter!



Terri is PitE's new Managing Director. Throughout her more than twenty-year career in higher education and national nonprofits, she has focused on educational access for marginalized communities. Other aspects of her work include assisting organizations to create needle-moving, data-informed diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies. Her long-standing interest in environmental justice has led her to work with a range of community-based organizations in the greater Detroit area. She serves on the board of Voices for Earth Justice. Before joining our staff, Terri was the Chief Diversity Officer at Madonna University. She was also employed at the Forum for Youth Investment and the United Negro College Fund. Slaughter has a master's degree in Student Affairs Administration and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Michigan State University.

Welcome to the team, Terri!

2019 PitE Graduation Awards

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

Outstanding PitE Major

Timothy Arvan

Outstanding PitE Minor

Michelle Liu

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

Rolf Bouma

Environ 139
Environ 376
Environ 387
Environ 412

Outstanding PitE Graduate Student Instructor

Zoe Goodrow

Environ 372

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 welcoming student input and feedback. In addition, PitE Club focuses on developing and maintaining the mentorship program between undergraduate PitE students and SEAS 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.



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Alumni Feature: Annalise Povolo, Class of 2017

My life has always revolved around the water. As a native Michigander from the beautiful Leelanau Peninsula, I was fortunate to grow up on the shores of Lake Michigan, always surrounded by the water. Hence, upon admission to the University of Michigan, electing PiE as my major was the obvious choice. I loved the combination of academic with a bit of adventure. My first job after college was working for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Charlevoix Fisheries Research Station.

After working there for a season, I decided to follow my other passion during the winter – travel. I spent that winter meandering through Central America, exploring other cultures, eating delicious foods, meeting incredibly interesting people, and most importantly, was able to do my first saltwater dive in Caye Caulker, Belize. I worked another season with the MDNR Fisheries Research Station, but returned to Central America, completed my Rescue course in Utila, Honduras, and then went on to teach English in Vietnam. Eventually I made my way to the island of Koh Phangan in the Gulf of Thailand to do a marine biology internship with COREsea. After completing my internship with COREsea, I completed the PADI Instructor Development Course and passed my examinations to become a PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor. I have now been working teaching others how to dive for the past six months and get to share my passion with others. As always, the adventure continues!



Let's Get Social!



**UM Program in
the Environment**



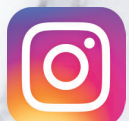
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