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CAIRNS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Happy Monday!

We hope you all had a wonderful weekend, and were able to get outside to enjoy the sunny weather. Keep an eye on your emails this week, as we will be sending out mentor-mentee pairs!

If you are interested in environmental justice, check out the two upcoming environmental justice events (hosted by Duke and Yale) in the events section. If you are interested in the intersection between climate disasters and environmental justice, check out Dr. Brian McAdoo's faculty feature!

SAVE THE DATE: November Meeting!

Our November monthly meeting will be on Thursday, November 4 at 7pm (location TBD). The meeting will focus on addressing and handling conflict that may arise in academic or professional settings (particularly conflict associated with diversity and inclusion). Please let us know if you have a time conflict!

Have feedback or something you would like us to know? You can leave [anonymous feedback here!](#)





Who: Dr. Brian McAdoo

What is your role at the Nicholas School?

I am associate professor of Earth and Climate Science. My work is focused on reducing the risk from disasters by way of the emerging framework of Planetary Health, which looks at how humanity's attempt to develop often leads to global changes that impact our health and well-being.

What drew you to your field/how did you get into your field?

After finishing my undergrad at Duke, I studied earthquake geology in New Zealand as a Fulbright Scholar, then researched seafloor mud for my PhD (which is A LOT more exciting than it sounds, trust me!). Part of this work involved understanding the occurrence of submarine landslides, so when a

unsuspecting people, I started working on tsunamis. Then the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami occurred. As part of the first UN scientific team to enter Indonesia's Aceh province, after seeing the unimaginable human suffering and destruction, I decided to focus my efforts on making sure we never see that scale of loss again.

How is diversity and inclusion important in your work?

There is a school of thought that states, "There is no such thing as a natural disaster". This approach taken by social scientists is based on the fact that if enough resources are dedicated to reducing risk, losses can be eliminated. With the threats facing us from climate change, urbanization and increased disparity between the rich and poor, existing power structures tend to distribute the available resources to their own, and communities marginalized by race, ethnicity, gender/sexuality, religion, etc. get left out, and hence suffer disproportionately. Only by understanding how geophysical hazards impact marginalized communities will we be able to avert disaster.

How have diverse perspectives advance your work? (Can provide examples or stories)

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, my colleague at Vassar put together a campus-wide teach-in on, "Understanding Katrina". She invited scholars from Urban Studies, Sociology, Biology, Religion, English, Music and, of course, Earth Sciences and Geography. I thought my introductory presentation on how because 1) New Orleans is already mostly below sea level, 2) climate change is not only making hurricanes stronger but also increasing sea levels, and 3) the main mitigation strategy (man-made levees) not only failed, but is making matters worse by directing needed sediment supply into the depths of the Gulf of Mexico, the only just recourse is to abandon the Crescent City. Anything short of that would be racist, as we know that Black people suffered disproportionately during this event. *Mic drop.*

Pick that mic up, son.

individuals in New Orleans prior to emancipation, and the Urban Studies prof showed data on Black property ownership in the city, and how that accumulated capital would be erased were New Orleans to be abandoned. Then the English and Music faculty chimed in outlining the unique culture of NOLA, and how after every disaster, more stories (Jesmyn Ward), tunes (Louis Armstrong, the Neville Brothers, and Lil' Wayne) and [art](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/hurricane-katrina-in-new-art-shows-326259) (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/hurricane-katrina-in-new-art-shows-326259>) are born. Not to mention that at the time, New Orleans was second only to Long Beach in terms of port activity (thank you, Economics!). Disaster are complex, and solutions must be carefully considered from radically diverse perspectives.

Do you have any suggestions for undergraduates who may be interested in pursuing the field you are in?

Science, economics, math and statistics! If you are interested in pursuing work in environmental advocacy, poverty reduction, social (and environmental) justice and the like, organizations need geeks, and geeks bring skills. In addition to these disciplinary approaches, one of the strongest things you will gain from your Duke education is the ability to see connections *between* disciplines- do not take this for granted, as a lot of specialists (which are absolutely critical components to complex problem solving!) simply don't. It isn't their job. And as your mind is being filled with knowledge from the best brains in the business, do not ignore the voices of the people you are working with- they know things you don't.

Are you open to undergraduate students reaching out to you about your academic work/research?

Yes! If my office door in Grainger 3115 is open, you are welcome to come in. I can also be found on email at brian.mcadoo@duke.edu. And keep checking MUSER for collaboration opportunities.



The Nicholas Institute has a [calendar full of events](#) for the upcoming semester! Check out these happening this week:

Policy Perspectives: Collaborating for Climate and Environmental Justice - October 22 (3-4pm)

In this session, [Kay Jowers](#), senior policy associate in the Nicholas Institute's State Policy Program, will explore avenues for working with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and communities to support and resource progress toward environmental justice.

[More details about the event here!](#)

Duke Global Environmental Justice Webinar Series

Global Environmental Justice Series:

Conversation about Environmental Health



Dr. William Pan & Diana McCaulay
In this panel, sponsored by the Duke Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Dr. William Pan and Diana McCaulay will discuss a diversity of **global environmental health** issues.

Diana McCaulay is a Jamaican writer and environmental activist. She is the founder of the Jamaica Environment Trust, one of the island's strongest non profit organizations, now in its 30th year. She will be speaking on the impacts of **bauxite mining in Jamaica**.

William Pan is the Elizabeth Brooks Reid and Whitelaw Reid Associate Professor of Population Studies and Global Environmental Health at Duke University with joint appointments in the Duke Global Health Institute and Nicholas School of Environment. He will share his research on **artisanal gold mining and mercury exposure**.



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Join us on Zoom, Oct. 20th @ 7 pm EST!
Scan the QR Code or Register Here: tinyurl.com/EJLectures

On Wednesday, October 20th at 7:00 PM EST, we will hear from Dr. William Pan and Diana McCaulay in this Global Environmental Justice and Health Panel, sponsored by Duke's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Diana McCaulay is a Jamaican writer and environmental activist. She is the founder of the Jamaica Environment Trust, one of the island's strongest non profit organizations, now in its 30th year. William Pan is the Elizabeth Brooks Reid and Whitelaw Reid Associate Professor of Population Studies and Global Environmental Health at Duke University with joint appointments in the Duke Global Health Institute and Nicholas School of Environment. He leads research

[Register here!](#)

Yale Global Environmental Justice Conference - Friday, October 29

The 2021 Global Environmental Justice Conference at the Yale School of the Environment will focus on a just green recovery. As we emerge from the pandemic into the reality of climate disruption, it is clear that restarting the economy cannot mean a return to the status quo. Instead, leaders in government and policy, NGO's, universities, the private sector, and grassroots coalitions have a pronounced opportunity to rethink how we live. Domestically and internationally, justice will be at the center of investments in the recovery, and this conference will investigate theories of change in energy and food justice. How do we get from the problems we diagnose to the solutions? How do those solutions address the real economic and physical challenges while keeping justice at the center?

[Register here!](#)

[See the conference schedule here!](#)



Need a break from your schoolwork? Check out these sustainability and environment related movies/tv shows/book/podcasts!

- **Threshold - Auricle Productions** (Podcast - find on any platform you listen to podcasts)
- **My Octopus Teacher** (Documentary - on Netflix)
- ***The Ecology of Commerce* by Paul Hawken** (physical book - through Duke Library)
- ***The Economics of Sustainable Food* by Nicoletta Batini** (eBook - through Duke Library)

Cohort Bulletin

What is the cohort up to?

Use this space to share your weekly triumphs, promote your student organization events, or anything that you would like to share with the cohort! Just send Meilin an email (meilin.chan@duke.edu) with what you'd like to share.



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