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CAIRNS WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Happy Monday!

We you all had a safe and fun Halloween!

You all should have heard from your graduate mentors and alumni mentor group leaders by now. If you still have not, don't hesitate to reach out to them - please let me or Nicki (nicolette.cagle@duke.edu) know if you are having trouble contacting your graduate and/or alumni mentor.

Interested in the intersection of environmental justice and global health? Check out Dr. William Pan's faculty feature!

REMINDER: November Meeting!

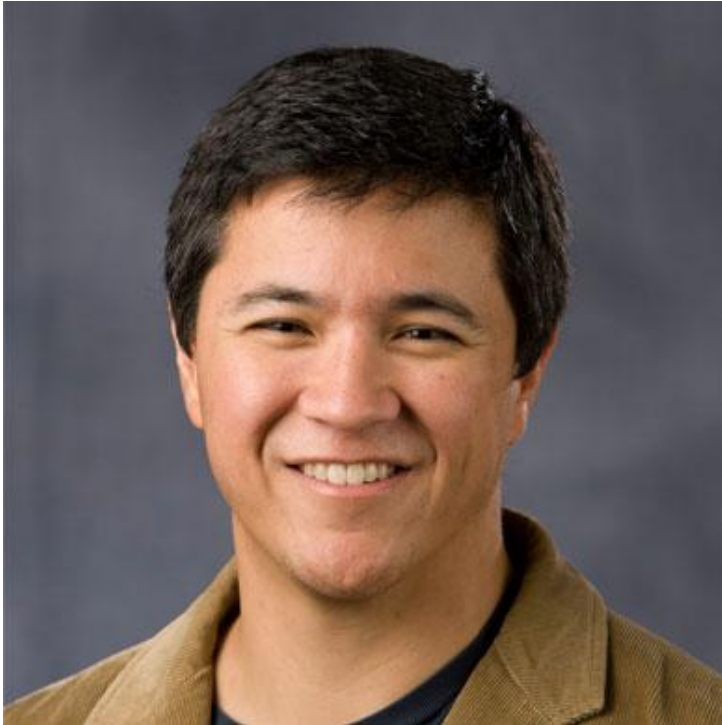
Our November meeting is this upcoming Thursday, November 4 at 7pm (Grainger Hall Gallery). The easiest way to reach the Gallery is to enter Grainger Hall from the Circuit Drive entrance (via the entrance bridge), then take an immediate left and the Gallery will be right in front of you. If entering from the Orchard (entrance facing the LSRC), walk up the stairs to the 2nd floor and take a right - the Gallery will be straight ahead. Please RSVP to the Outlook Calendar event shared last week. Nicki and I are looking forward to seeing you all again!

The meeting will focus on addressing and handling conflict that may arise in academic or professional settings (particularly conflict associated with diversity and inclusion). Qui'Anne Holmes from DuWell will be leading the meeting with a focus on mindfulness and wellness.

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



FACULTY FEATURE



Who: Dr. William Pan

What is your role at the Nicholas School?

I am an Associate Professor at NSOE with a joint appointment in the Duke Global Health Institute. I have been here for a little over 10 years, having come from Johns Hopkins in Baltimore and, before that, our blue cousin in Chapel Hill. I mostly do research and teach about the interactions between human decision-making and the environment to better understand vulnerabilities to human health and well-being. Although this year I also began my new position as Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for the ENV Program. As a new DUS, I am hoping to get to know the undergraduate student body a bit more, try to get them more integrated into the school, and create more opportunities for learning about environment and ecosystems outside of the US.

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

I am trained as a biostatistician. Many people in NSOE don't know what that is because it is a field of study in public health. Biostatisticians typically are involved in either the development of new statistical methods to answer complex data questions or they are directly involved in the design of experiments and data collection as well as data analysis and interpretation. Therefore, I am a biostatistician who does essentially studies livelihood decision-making, environment and health. I got involved in this area because in graduate

primary advisor was an economist and my research ended up being very interdisciplinary. The questions being asked were fascinating from a sustainable development perspective but also had unique statistical challenges. I was very lucky to get those opportunities and really enjoy being involved in work that tests systems-based solutions to problems.

How is diversity and inclusion important in your work?

I think this question needs to start with how people define diversity and inclusion (let me just refer to it as DEI). Definitions and perspectives vary. i.e., we might have the same definition for diversity, but my perspective of what is diverse will be different from someone else's. For me, I grew up in Minnesota, my high school had 2000+ people, no African Americans, maybe a dozen Asian families (mine being one), and even fewer LatinX. At that time, diverse for me was having at least one other non-Caucasian in the room. Then I traveled, visited other states, other countries. My definition of diverse began to change. Today, I view diversity as mixtures of culture, language, race, sex/gender, and sexual orientation. As I continue to gain more experiences, my definition will likely continue to evolve. Now, to your question – how important is DEI? Obviously it is important, but I would caveat my response with a bit of opportunity cost – i.e., how much diversity do I need to maximize my research program? I don't always need to maximize diversity to achieve the best result (i.e., the effort to maximize diversity may come at a cost to maximize research outputs given the relative short time periods of some research grants). Although, research is not the only type of work I have – for example, in teaching I have actually found that maximizing diversity has led to the best courses – i.e., courses that I have taught in teams tend to be much richer and (I think) more rewarding for everyone. I think teaching is something that has a longer time horizon, so investing in diversity in this area really strengthens our ability to teach and the content we offer.

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

Let me focus on research, since I absolutely love the two research areas I work in—malaria and gold mining/mercury exposure. My malaria team includes people from 8 countries and 9 institutions while my gold mining/mercury team includes people from almost every discipline on campus. Our meetings are a fascinating example of diversity of experience and opinion. Just last week, my malaria team was finalizing the selection of border regions in which to work between Peru and Ecuador. We not only had Peruvians and Ecuadorians providing opinions, but Brazilians, Italians and, of course, those of us from the US. Although we could have been even more diverse, we definitely had diverse cultural opinions, experiences and disciplines providing feedback. We ultimately decided to work in the Pastaza River watershed given the higher number of indigenous communities and the higher malaria burden regardless of the higher cost of the study. We'll see how this pans out (no pun intended), but I think it was the correct decision.

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

Be flexible, learn at least one skill that you can do well and build upon it, and try to pursue tasks/projects that you find interesting. You won't always find tasks fun (I spent 6 months entering and cleaning data for my dissertation, which was NOT fun), but there are payoffs in the end.

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

admit, a lot of my engagement with undergrads would not be possible without support from these folks.



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

Acting on Internal Climate Migration - Tuesday, November 2

This virtual event will present the World Bank's most recent study of the effects of climate change on human migration. Piotr Plewa (Duke University) will host the conversation with Kanta Kumari and Viviane Clement, World Bank experts on climate change.

[Register Here!](#)

Eco-Fascism and Eco-Imperialism (Global Environmental Justice Series) - Wednesday, November 3 at 7pm EST

Global Environmental Justice Series:

Eco-Fascism + Eco- Imperialism



Join us on
Zoom, Nov. 3rd
@ 7 pm EST!



Meet Dr. Jaskiran Dhillon

Jaskiran Dhillon is an anti-colonial scholar and organizer who grew up on Treaty Six Cree Territory in Saskatchewan, Canada. Her work spans the fields of settler colonialism, anthropology of the state, environmental justice, anti-racist feminism, colonial violence, political ecology, and youth studies. Her writing has been published in The Guardian, The Nation, Cultural Anthropology, among other venues. She is the author of *Prairie Rising: Indigenous Youth, Decolonization, and the Politics of Intervention* (2017) and co-editor of *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement* (2019). Jaskiran is an associate professor of global studies and anthropology at The New School and served as the founding president of The New School's AAUP Chapter. She is also building a radical, community bookstore in West Philadelphia.

Dr. Jaskiran Dhillon will be speaking on eco-fascism, colonialism, and their role in Indigenous communities

state, environmental justice, anti-racist feminism, colonial violence, political ecology, and youth studies. Her writing has been published in The Guardian, The Nation, Cultural Anthropology, among other venues. She is the author of *Prairie Rising: Indigenous Youth, Decolonization, and the Politics of Intervention* (2017) and co-editor of *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement* (2019). Jaskiran is an associate professor of global studies and anthropology at The New School and served as the founding president of The New School's AAUP Chapter. She is also building a radical, community bookstore in West Philadelphia.

[Register Here!](#)

Climate Ethics in the Field - Tuesday, November 9 at 4:30pm EST

The Climate Futures Initiative in Science, Values and Policy (CFI) at Princeton will host the panel discussion, “**Climate Ethics ‘in the Field’ — Integrating Philosophy, Science, Law and Policy**,” online via Zoom at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9. [Register here in advance to receive a meeting link.](#)

This event aims to support collaborative engagement between experts from environmentally related fields and, more specifically, explore how environmental ethics and climate justice can complement other forms of knowledge to inform climate and environmental policy. Panelists are listed below with full bios [posted on the High Meadow Environmental Institute \(HMEI\) website.](#)

- **Robert Hockett**, the Edward Cornell Professor of Law at Cornell University and author of “Financing the Green New Deal: A Plan of Action and Renewal”
- **Deborah McGregor**, Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justice at York University
- **Nancy Tuana**, the DuPont/Class of 1949 Professor of Philosophy and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Penn State



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

- **Youth to Power: Your Voice and How to Use It** by Jamie Margolin (eBook through Duke Library)

- [Nature Guys](#) (Podcast)
- [Rewilding Earth](#) (Podcast)



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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