Dean’s Message

Twenty years ago, in fall 1996, nineteen young pioneers became the first master’s students at a brand-new UCSB graduate school. It was called the School of Environmental Science & Management. It didn’t have a building. It had a tiny staff and a handful of faculty. Students took classes in several locations on campus. The curriculum was small and, to start, science-centric; it took time to develop the policy, economics, business, legal, entrepreneurial, and communication components. The Master’s Group Project, which became a defining factor of the school’s approach, was an untried experiment. In 1998, the first PhD students arrived. The Donald Bren gift then provided funding critical to realize the vision for the school.

Two decades later, the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management is recognized around the world for producing innovative research and outstanding graduates who are in great demand as environmental professionals. Through team problem-solving, faculty and students have important impacts across disciplines and types of environmental problems.

In 1996, the idea of a school to apply collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches to solve environmental problems was entirely new. From day one, the Bren School was the first to take a collaborative approach with an interdisciplinary faculty within the school. There were no models to copy and no proven pathways to success. Our founding faculty — leaders in their disciplines — had the vision, imagination, and willingness to try this grand interdisciplinary experiment.

Those visionary founders — professors John Melack, Jeff Dozier (also founding dean), Tom Dunne, Frank Davis, and Charles Kolstad — planted the first ideas to grow a complex, dynamic, multifaceted school. The Bren School continues to innovate as professional opportunities expand in environmental science and management. The Bren School is a pioneer in Eco-Entrepreneurship. Increasingly Bren graduates launch businesses to address customer needs and environmental problems. In 2013, the Bren School added training in Strategic Environmental Communication and Media. Bren students learn and practice leadership, teamwork, strategic thinking, technical, and communication skills.

The Bren School has inspired creation of other schools seeking to replicate our approach and impact. Sharing our approach with other programs provides opportunities for more faculty and young people to invest energy into solving complex environmental problems. These programs also motivate us to keep evolving, continually applying the energy and innovation that got us here.

Looking across the twenty years since the Bren School opened its doors, I am amazed at the school’s tremendous success, reflected in its impact and growing network of professional alumni around the world.

Steve Gaines

When You Support

the Bren School, you support our mission of solving environmental problems.

To make a gift online, please go to bren.ucsb.edu/supporting/ or you may mail a check to:

Bren School of Environmental Science & Management
Attn: Development Office
University of California, Santa Barbara
2400 Bren Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-5131

For questions or to speak to someone about making a donation, please call our development staff at 805-893-4589.
NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

New faculty expand Bren’s focus on managed systems, new staff build support.

Lotus Vermeer, assistant dean for development, joined the Bren School in July 2016. She oversees the Bren School development team and donor-related operations. Having spent more than 25 years on the front lines of conservation-related scientific endeavors, Vermeer is uniquely qualified to articulate the Bren School mission to a diverse group of current and prospective donors and partners. Previously a director of The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC’s) Channel Islands Program, she played a key role in the successful restoration of the formerly endangered island fox, which is endemic to Santa Cruz Island. Vermeer has a PhD in marine ecology from Dalhousie University, an MS in marine resource and environmental management from the University of the West Indies, and an MS in behavioral ecology and primatology from McGill University.

Ashley Larsen joined the Bren School faculty in July 2016, having completed her PhD in the UCSB Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology in 2015 and then spending a year as a UC President’s Postdoctoral Fellow at UC Berkeley. She received a BS in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Michigan and an MA in economics from UCSB. In her decidedly interdisciplinary research, Larsen focuses on the ecology of managed systems, such as farms. She incorporates theory from ecology, economics, and public health to better understand how to feed a growing population while maintaining healthy ecological and human communities. Econometrics and Geographic Information System tools are important to her work, which currently includes projects to understand landscape drivers of agricultural pests and the impacts of pesticides on human health. She likes to spend her free time outdoors, hiking, skiing, tide-pooling, and gardening.

Kelly Caylor joined the Bren School faculty in July 2016, when he also became director of the UCSB Environmental Research Institute. A self-described optimist who gets “excited about human capacity,” Caylor seeks to develop improved insight into how land use and climate change are interacting to affect the dynamics and resilience of global drylands. He works at scales ranging from small experiments during individual rainfall events to continental-scale analyses of climate trends. A major focus of his research is the development of new methods to improve the measurement and prediction of ecosystem water-use efficiency and novel observation networks for characterizing the dynamics of coupled natural-human systems. He was a recipient of an Early Career Award from the NSF and was the inaugural recipient of the Early Career Award in Hydrological Sciences given by the American Geophysical Union.

Beth Pitton-August is the point person for coordinating, managing, and supporting the school’s Dean’s Council, the Council of Legal Advisors, and the Eco-E Advisory Council. She also leads the Corporate Partners Program. Pitton-August was previously corporate and foundation relations director at Direct Relief, development director at the Environmental Defense Center, and the owner of her own consulting practice. Pitton-August is passionate about voting rights and public-policy issues and is a longtime member of the League of Women Voters. In her free time she enjoys reading, hiking, and riding two-up on a motorcycle with her husband. Pitton-August received her MA in liberal studies from DePaul University and her BA in international studies from Moody Bible Institute.

Aleah van Woert was hired as the Bren School’s new senior events manager. Van Woert attended Southern Oregon University, where she graduated summa cum laude with a BA in theatre arts and an emphasis in stage management. She spent nearly a decade as a stage manager for two different regional theater production companies, including the Ensemble Theatre Company in Santa Barbara. The problem-solving and management skills required to supervise a forty-member cast and crew translate well to her new position, as does her ability to transform a theater to tell a story, a quality that helps her create memorable Bren events. Sustainability-minded and passionate about the environment, Van Woert bicycle-commutes daily and takes much longer rides on weekends.

Last fall, Aleah van Woert was hired as the Bren School’s new senior events manager. Van Woert attended Southern Oregon University, where she graduated summa cum laude with a BA in theatre arts and an emphasis in stage management. She spent nearly a decade as a stage manager for two different regional theater production companies, including the Ensemble Theatre Company in Santa Barbara. The problem-solving and management skills required to supervise a forty-member cast and crew translate well to her new position, as does her ability to transform a theater to tell a story, a quality that helps her create memorable Bren events. Sustainability-minded and passionate about the environment, Van Woert bicycle-commutes daily and takes much longer rides on weekends.
GETTING STARTED
Perspectives on the Bren School’s humble beginnings.

The work of creating the Bren School, which started out as the School of Environmental Science & Management, began in 1989. That was when UCSB’s then-chancellor Barbara Uehling asked John Melack to lead a multidisciplinary committee charged with developing a plan for an environmentally focused graduate school at UCSB. Once the committee wrapped up, Melack spent about a year synthesizing the group’s work into a proposal and, as he says, “conjuring up the basic master’s program — a balance of natural and social science with quantitative strength and a project.”

The interdisciplinary model was approved by the UC Office of the President, albeit without funding. The planning continued, and in 1994, Chancellor Henry Yang made his first appointment, naming Jeff Dozier as dean. Dozier’s first hire was Mo Lovegreen, current director of UCSB campus sustainability, who hired the staff. She saw the school as “a great opportunity in life,” but also recalls, “There were hurdles no matter where we looked, because we were always the first to be doing something.”

Tom Dunne was the first faculty member hired. He arrived from the University of Washington with a reputation as a top hydrologist and geomorphologist. He and Dozier knew each other well, and one evening at a professional conference, Dunne recalls, “Jeff put the ad for the position in my hand and said, ‘Apply.’ I had always been a northern person, aesthetically, and had no plans to come to Santa Barbara. But the vision of the school motivated me,” Dunne explains. “Building an interdisciplinary program was a novel challenge that sounded like fun.”

The first search committee for an environmental economist included UCSB economics professor Charles Kolstad. “When none of the applicants panned out,” Dozier recalls, “I told Charlie we should hire him rather than someone we don’t know.” And they did.

Arturo Keller arrived as an assistant professor in July 1996, carrying a new PhD from Stanford and having just turned down an offer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, leading his PhD advisor to “question my sanity,” he recalls. “I saw the traditional environmental engineering job opportunities,” Keller recalls, “but then I saw this new school of environmental science and management. I thought it was so cool that someone was thinking about the management side.”

The facilities, maybe not so much. “Someone took me to a room and said, ‘This will be your office.’ It was an empty space. No desk, no chair, nothing,” Keller laughs. And as the arrival of the first students approached, he remembers thinking about the vision of the school and wondering, “How are we going to make this happen?” “We had few courses and almost none that addressed the management side.”

As the original team planned and developed the school, Dunne recalls, “We had a profound sense that the vision could not be met with the resources we had around us. We hustled to recruit faculty and also benefitted from the talent at other UCSB departments, both for teaching and for ideas about how we should develop.”

Frank Davis, a member of the UCSB Geography faculty since 1983, was a natural fit for the new school. Geography is inherently interdisciplinary, and Davis was accustomed to combining natural science and social science perspectives. But Davis saw a promising expansion of that concept at the new school. “Bren brought a more modern perspective on longstanding management issues in terms of resource management, conservation, and sustainability,” he says.

A couple of years after the school opened, the gift from Donald Bren enabled the school to expand and integrate the management and legal components of the curriculum. The gift came as plans for a new building were under way. James Frew, who arrived in 1997, describes the Bren gift as “a huge deal that totally transformed this place, in ways we didn’t expect,” adding, “Donald Bren and the school’s advisory board pushed for a green building as blueprints were being created. That led to a LEED Platinum building, which put us on the map. The gift gave us resources to hire support staff, which was critical and has enabled us to set up a professional program with placement rates pushing 100 percent.”

The school was distributed across campus in the first couple of years. The dean and small staff had offices in Physical Sciences, while the faculty and students worked and studied in converted World War II barracks. Classes were held in Buchanan Hall and other available space. Most faculty had offices in their home departments.

“It was fun,” recalls purchasing coordinator Briny Litchfield. “We were like the nomad school;
THOUGHTS FROM FOUR OF BREN’S FIRST GRADUATES

Mark Kram, PhD 2002
Founder and Chief Scientist, Groundswell Technologies, Inc.

Working for the Navy in the mid-1990s, Mark Kram was looking for someone who could help him develop his idea for directly detecting chlorinated solvents in the environment via fluorescence. His search led him to Bren School professor Arturo Keller, who became Kram’s advisor in 1998. Serving as a TA for Professor Jim Frew’s GIS course would lead Kram to found Groundswell Technologies. The company developed the first cloud-based platform for automatically generating intuitive geospatial visualizations of dynamic environmental conditions based on field sensors.

Kram recalls discovering that “at Bren, the faculty consistently requested feedback from students and acted upon their input. That was encouraging. I had never seen that at any other school I’d attended.”

Ann Terlaak, PhD 2002
Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Ann Terlaak was in an economics PhD program in Germany when she learned about the Bren School from Bren professor Magali Delmas, who worked at the then-new intersection of business and the environment. Terlaak was interested in applied work, so she transferred. “I was specializing in an area of study that was difficult to categorize, at a brand-new school that had no recognition;” she recalls. “It was eye-opening to discover my situation as I approached the academic job market.” But she was able to take courses and write her dissertation to appear favorably in the business school world, where she hoped to work.

“Twenty years ago, business schools didn’t care about the environment,” she says. “Now you don’t have to finesse that. You can study sustainability, and they are still interested in you.”

Julie Harris, MESM 1998
Associate Planner, City of Santa Barbara

Julie Harris was thinking about working for government or a nonprofit in the environmental field — “looking at the marriage of policy and science” — when she “somehow heard about the Bren School and decided to give it a try. I liked how it was pulling together different focus areas to develop professionals who could cross those boundaries.”

If she and her fellow first Bren students faced challenges — no building, a computer lab that had only four computers and was very cold because the AC was cranked up to cool the server, and frustrations resulting from a curriculum that was not yet fully developed — they also hung in like pioneers, and had fun.

“The class was close-knit,” Harris explains. “We were the first and there were few of us, and we bonded well through all of our shared experiences.”

Tyra Byers, MESM 1998
Program Coordinator, Sustainability Office, University of Georgia

As an undergraduate pursuing a degree in conservation and resource studies, Tyra Byers recalls “studying problems but not solutions.” When she heard about the Bren School, she wanted to apply. “I liked the idea of being in the first class,” she explains. “We were the test case, so we could influence how things turned out. Our struggles with the first Group Project informed how it changed in the future, but it was still a great experience in collaborative interdisciplinary problem-solving. It was the foundation for everything I've done since.”

At the University of Georgia, Tyra works to integrate sustainability into curricula and manages 25 student interns. “What I love most about my job is that on any given day, I can be working with faculty in ecology, engineering, art, economics, or business,” she says.
A 20-YEAR TIMELINE

From an untried idea to a time-tested standard-bearer, here are a few highlights from two decades of interdisciplinary research and education at the Bren School.

- **1996**: Donald Bren Foundation makes a gift to support the school. Bren School renamed to honor Donald Bren.
- **1997**: Bren School opens with 19 master's students.
- **1998**: Jeff Dozier is named as first Bren School dean (1994).
- **1999**: Mike Jennings (PhD '01) enrolls as first Bren doctoral student. Dennis Aigner is named second Bren School dean.
- **2000**: Career Development Program commences. "Rufus Magnus" (Big Red), a six-foot-long fiberglass replica of an endangered California native steelhead trout painted by artist Barbara McIntyre, is installed just south of Bren Hall.
- **2002**: Jim Davidson (UCSB '90) endows Davidson Student Commons Room. Bren Hall opens as the nation's first LEED Platinum laboratory building.
- **2006**: Environmental Implications of Nanotechnology (UC CEIN) receives grant from NSF and EPA to study environmental behavior and effects of engineered nanomaterials. The award is renewed five years later.
- **2007**: Jeff and Linda Dozier make a donation to support outstanding students.

Grand opening of Edison Visitor Center at Bren Hall supported by a gift from Southern California Edison.

Bren professor Patricia Holden is named director of UCSB Natural Reserve System.

Gift from Walton Family Foundation establishes Latin American Fisheries Fellowship Program.

Bren graduate's 1,000th student.

Strategic Environmental Communication and Media focus established; teaches students skills and technologies to better communicate science and reach important stakeholders.

Oil spill cleanup technology evolved from design created by PhD researcher in Professor Arturo Keller’s lab wins XPRIZE Challenge.

Bren professor Frank Davis is named director of UCSB’s National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS).


2008

Bren Hall becomes first building to earn a second LEED Platinum certification for “Operations and Maintenance.”

2009

Zurich Financial Services endowment establishes Distinguished Visitors Program on Climate Change. Stanford professor Stephen Schneider is first visitor.

2010

Bren School receives a trust from the Michael J. Connell Foundation providing support for students, teaching, and research. Courtyard renamed to honor Michael J. Connell.

2011

Gift from Walton Family Foundation establishes Sustainable Water Markets Fellowship Program.

2012

Bren Strategic Environmental Research Initiative launched; 1st project on wildfire leads to major NSF award.

2013

Bren professor Ben Halpern named NCEAS director.

2014

Bren professor Ashley Conrad-Saydah (MESM ’08) becomes first alumna to deliver the Bren Commencement keynote speech.

2015


2016

Gift from Walton Family Foundation establishes Sustainable Water Markets Fellowship Program.

Steve Gaines is named fourth Bren School dean.

Gift from Walton Family Foundation establishes Sustainable Water Markets Fellowship Program.

Bren professor Patricia Holden is named director of UCSB Natural Reserve System.

Bren professor Frank Davis is named director of UCSB’s National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS).
DEAN’S LIST
A quick look at the five pioneering leaders of the Bren School.

In August 1994, Henry Yang made his first academic appointment as UCSB chancellor, naming Jeff Dozier founding dean of the Bren School. A longtime Earth Science faculty member, Dozier began by writing proposals for the master’s and PhD programs and then hiring faculty. He began with Tom Dunne, a longtime hydrology colleague with a world-class reputation.

“At the time, I'm not sure I really knew what interdisciplinary education was,” Dozier says. “But we had this view that to be a strong interdisciplinary program, our people would have to be perceived as being really strong in their disciplines.”

The initial idea was to have strength in hydrology and water resources, ecology, and economics. “Those would be the pillars on which we would base the school,” Dozier recalls.

The first nineteen students arrived in 1996, as Dozier embarked on the campaign that would lead to the Donald Bren gift.

Dennis Aigner became the second Bren School dean shortly after the Donald Bren gift had been finalized. Aigner served as associate dean from 1998-2001 and was acting dean for the 2000–2001 academic year before spending four more years as dean.

Having been the dean of the UC Irvine business school, Aigner helped to build the corporate and business components of the Bren master’s curriculum. He engaged with the College of Engineering’s Technology Management Program (TMP), the eventual partner in the master’s curriculum. He also continued Aigner’s engagement with the College of Engineering’s Technology Management Program, which resulted in the Eco-Entrepreneurship focus. After three years at Bren, Von Weizsäcker moved to work on energy and resource issues at the Club of Rome.

The Bren School’s third dean, Ernst von Weizsäcker, is a former member of the German parliament. An expert on energy and resource efficiency who wrote a book on the subject, he was introduced to the Bren School by professor (now emeritus) Oran Young. On his first visit, he recalls being impressed by the faculty members who he saw as “open-minded people who were working on immensely interesting things.”

Von Weizsäcker worked closely with Melack, then associate dean, and assistant dean for development, Jennifer Deacon, to learn the fundraising role of American deans. He had a vision of expanding the school’s presence in industrial ecology and taught a course on that subject. He also continued Aigner’s engagement with the College of Engineering’s Technology Management Program, which resulted in the Eco-Entrepreneurship focus.

When Steve Gaines became the fourth Bren School dean, in 2010, he was already engaged with Bren faculty in collaborative, interdisciplinary research. One of the biggest attractions of Bren, he recalls, “was that the school was working really well and didn’t need to be fixed. That has allowed us to step back and look at what we can do to make the program even more impactful and help students become even better problem-solvers.”

Gaines has focused on building networks for graduates and developing communication training for students. The Latin American Fisheries Fellowship and Sustainable Water Markets Fellowship programs were launched, the Strategic Environmental Communication and Media focus was created, PhD students began presenting their work at an annual symposium, the Eco-Entrepreneurship focus has expanded, Master’s Projects have grown in impact and visibility, advisory councils have been formed to support the entrepreneurial and legal curricula, and students and researchers have engaged with counterparts in China on a range of sustainability issues. Looking forward, the dean sees the opportunity to expand training in environmental data science.

The key to the Bren School’s current and future success is its ability to respond quickly to emerging issues in environmental science and management and invest in relevant research and training.
SOLUTiON FOCUSeD

Twenty successes from twenty years of Bren School research.

1. Students in a 2006 Group Project developed a strategy to identify locations for marine protected areas in California. Their work led to a paper in Conservation Biology and has influenced reserve planning from the U.S. to Fiji and South Africa.

2. Victoria Broje, PhD ‘06, worked with Professor Arturo Keller to redesign a drum skimmer used to collect oil spilled in marine environments. The new skimmer was patented, licensed, and improved further to win a $1 million XPRIZE Challenge in 2011.

3. Professors Jeff Dozier and James Frew have been pioneers in using data science, remote sensing, and field data to better understand the volume of water contained in snow, information that is critical to water managers who manage water from snowmelt.

4. In dozens of projects around the world, the Sustainable Fisheries Group, founded in 2006 by Bren School dean Steve Gaines and professor of resource economics Chris Costello, has developed innovative approaches to support sustainable fishing and restore depleted small-scale fisheries.

5. In a 2015 Science article, Professor Roland Geyer and his co-authors became the first to quantify the amount of plastic in the world’s oceans. Their finding: enough to cover an area 34 times the size of Manhattan ankle-deep in plastic waste.

6. The inaugural project of the Bren Strategic Environmental Research Initiative, SERI Fire, combines the perspectives of economics, ecology, and policy to managing wildfire, particularly in the arid West under climate change.

7. Students in a 2008 Group Project used Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) to design a tool that was used by packaging engineers at Toyota Motor Sales to quickly compare the relative merits of various packaging and shipping options from an LCA perspective.

8. As a lead chapter author of the 2007 Synthesis Report published by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Professor (now emeritus) Charles Kolstad earned part of the Nobel Prize.

9. As lead scientists for the UC Center for Environmental Implications of Nanotechnology, Professors Patricia Holden, Arturo Keller, Hunter Lenihan, and Sangwon Suh have been instrumental in addressing environmental concerns arising from the burgeoning nanomaterials industry.

10. The 2016 WILDLiGHT Group Project members worked with multiple stakeholder groups to identify optimal locations for utility-scale solar installations in California’s San Joaquin Valley. They presented their findings in Governor Jerry Brown’s office.

11. Eco-Entrepreneurship alumni Norah Eddy and Laura Johnson (both MESM 2014) have earned international attention for their startup, Salty Girl Seafood, which provides sustainably caught, honestly packaged, fresh-from-the-boat seafood.

12. In 2013 Professor Sangwon Suh opened the “black box” of federal-government procurement, identifying environmental hotspots in some $7.5 million purchases by the General Services Administration.

13. Professor Patricia Holden’s lab has developed new techniques for tracing bacterial contaminants in Santa Barbara area creeks and, thus, preventing ocean pollution.

14. Students in a 2010 Group Project developed modeling software to help community leaders meet mandated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The software was later used to support greening efforts at a new industrial-residential city in China.

15. As a member of a science advisory committee for the CalFed Bay Delta project, Professor Tom Dunne, a world expert on river morphology, heard a proposition to “nourish” a river by spending $115 million to add gravel to it, without knowing how much they’d need. Dunne’s suggestion: do a study and let science inform the work.

16. Since 2004, Professor Hunter Lenihan has returned annually to the island of Moorea, in French Polynesia, to study coral resilience as part of the Moorea Coral Reef Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) project. His goal is to “unlock the secrets of coral resilience to better manage the ecosystem.”

17. Professor John Melack is a co-PI for the land component of a 16-year-old LTER project that has informed policy related to Southern California’s coastal kelp forests. A specialist in freshwater systems, Melack studies sources and amounts of pollutants, nutrients, soil, and other materials that enter the ocean in runoff water and affect kelp forests.

18. Professor Arturo Keller contributed key science to the Ohio River Basic Water Quality Trading Project, which sets maximum daily loads for such nutrients as nitrogen and phosphorus, and established a system for trading credits.

19. As part of her doctoral research, Darcy Bradley (PhD 2016) led a population study of grey reef sharks on the pristine Palmyra atoll that disproved findings from an earlier study that had overestimated the predators’ number by a factor of 100.

20. In his widely recognized work on biodiversity, Professor David Tilman has shown that the greater an ecosystem’s diversity, the better it resists a wide range of disturbances.
Dawn Cunningham (MESM) is nearing his eight-year anniversary of working on water policy at Western Resource Advocates. After two years of legislative effort, he helped secure passage of a bill in the state to legalize rain barrels in Colorado. He also helped with the effort to auction off at an annual fundraiser a couple of rain barrels signed by Governor Hickenlooper. After eight years at the Alliance to Save Energy, Renee Lefrenz (MESM) became the new sustainability and energy manager for the Oakland Unified School District. In her short time there, the district has been recognized as a Visionary School District by the California State Architect for their efforts in Zero Net Energy.

2000

While vacationing aboard an expedition ship sailing the southern part of South America and Antarctica, Dana Armanino (MESM), a sustainability planner for Marin County, encountered Lindsey Peavey (PhD '16), who was working as a researcher and lecturer aboard the ship.

2004

In November Brooke (O’Hanley) Selzer (MESM) and her husband, Elliot, welcomed a second daughter, Gigi Rose. Also, after accepting a permanent position as an attorney for the Department of Toxic Substances Control, Brooke and her family moved from San Francisco to Berkeley.

2005

After spending several years in Sacramento and staying home to raise her two children, Damien and Amelia (now 8 and 5 respectively), Dawn Cunningham (MESM) returned to the environmental-consulting field. In January, she accepted a position as an associate biologist at the environmental planning firm GPA Consulting, based in El Segundo, California.

Katie DeLeuw (MESM) and Josh Miller (MESM) and their family — Declan (5) and Kiera (3) — relocated from Seattle to the Bay Area in 2016. Having spent ten years in Seattle with Envirosissues, Katie is now the Oakland manager leading the firm’s expansion into northern California with the opening of an office in Oakland. Envirosissues is a public-engagement and communications firm supporting local, regional, and state projects.

Lt. Col. James Uwins (MESM) assumed command of Marine Wing Support Squadron 473 (the Mighty Gargoyles), a Marine Corps Reserve unit of about 650 Marines who construct expeditionary airfields in far-reaching places. James is still also with ManTech International’s Environmental Services group and collaborates with fellow Brennies Allison Turner (MESM '03) and Breanna Flanagan (MESM '08).

2006

After ten years as a consultant for high-performance sustainable building, Betty Seto (MESM) was appointed to head the Sustainable Building and Communities team at DNV GL. She manages a team of technical consultants.

Drew Beckwith (MESM) is nearing his eight-year anniversary of working on water policy at Western Resource Advocates. After two years of legislative effort, he helped secure passage of a bill in the state to legalize rain barrels in Colorado. He also helped with the effort to auction off at an annual fundraiser a couple of rain barrels signed by Governor Hickenlooper.

2008

In January, after nine years as a senior consultant with the Boston-based consulting firm thinkstep, Peter Canepa (MESM) joined the Materials Management program at the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality as a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) specialist. Peter supports various research initiatives and targets opportunities for partnerships to build LCA capacity elsewhere in Oregon.

Anne Middleton (MESM) and Charlie Redden married in June 2016 and are living in San Diego. Anne spent a couple of years as sustainability and community relations manager at a sawmill owned by Taylor Guitars in Cameroon.

After relocating from Washington, D.C., Marion Wittmann (PhD, MESM '04), has returned to UCSB, where she is now executive director of the UCSB Natural Reserve System. The director is Bren professor Patricia Holden.

2009

Alicia Glassco Appel (MESM) and her husband, Carlos, welcomed a daughter, Veronica Christine, in March 2016. Alicia works on storm water compliance and permitting as a senior environmental programs specialist for the City of Escondido.

Lara (Polansky) Buluç (MESM) and her husband, Aydin, welcomed their first baby, a son named Aslan, last September. Lara continues to serve as a sustainable operations and climate change coordinator with the U.S. Forest Service in California.

Julie (Randall) Colbert and her husband, Cort, welcomed a baby boy, Dylan Howard, in June 2016. Dylan’s older sister, Shelby, will turn five this September. Julie is currently in her ninth year working for the Santa Ynez Chumash as a Water Quality Specialist.

2010

Allison (King) Wood (MESM) and husband, Kevin, welcomed their first child, a daughter named Etta, in December 2016. Allison continues to work as a regional energy/climate planner at the San Diego Association of Governments.

2011

Last fall, Laura Grant (PhD) joined Claremont McKenna College as a tenure-track faculty member after several years as an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. She is thrilled to be back in sunny California at a top liberal arts institution that specializes in economics.

Serra Hoagland (MESM) completed her PhD in forestry at Northern Arizona University in May 2016. She recently accepted a position with the Rocky Mountain Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service, working as a liaison officer with the Salish Kootenai Tribal College in Pablo, Montana.

Anderson Shephard and Liz Whiteley (both MESM) were married on September 24, 2016 in Crested Butte, Colorado. The ceremony was attended by a group of other Bren MESMs.

2012

Ed Walsh (MESM) is the new Division Environmental Manager of Lennar Homes, Bay Area. He works closely with Lennar’s Regional Environmental Manager, Kim Aldrich (MESM ’01).
Last October, Jamie Afflerbach and Jon Montgomery (both MESM) were wed at the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, Jamie works at UCSB’s National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, and Jon works at Rincon Consulting.

Gavin McDonald (MESM) and colleagues published six articles on fisheries management in 2016, including one titled “An indicator-based adaptive management framework and its application to data-limited fisheries in Belize.”

Taylor Debevec (MESM) and her husband, Bassem Shoucri, welcomed their first child, a daughter named Noura Margaret Shoucri, on December 28, 2016.


In fall 2016, Franciska Santana (MESM) began a doctoral program at the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources at Stanford University. Her work will focus on how humans interact, respond, and impact the coastal environment in the context of climate change.

Neil Wilson (MESM) and Megan Byrn (MESM ‘13) were engaged in December 2016 while vacationing in Big Sur.

Last October, after a year with AmeriCorps, Alana Yurkanin (MESM) began a new position as a marine coordinator for The Nature Conservancy Hawaii. She helps to implement marine conservation programs in Maui Nui.

Sara Denka (MESM) and Jared Dorgan became engaged in January. Sara recently began her PhD studies in geosciences at Florida Atlantic University, in Boca Raton, with the goal of working in academia.

Since 2015, Natalie Phares (MESM) has put her Bren skills to good use as a water-resource scientist at Wright Water Engineers, Inc. (WWE) in Denver. She leads water sustainability projects.

In November 2015 Diana Rosenberg (MESM) accepted a new position as a global sustainability specialist for Gap Inc. in San Francisco.

In January Micah Eggleton (MESM) became engaged to Julie Dean. Micah currently works as an environmental and water resource planner for RMC Water and Environment in Walnut Creek.

Two members of the MESM Class of ’16 received California Sea Grant Fellowships this year. Tova Handelman (PhD) is working with the Ocean Protection Council in Sacramento, and Lily Tsukayama is working for the Port of San Diego.

Last October, Lindsey Peavey (PhD) began a new job as a research specialist for NOAA’s Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. She also encountered fellow Bren graduate Dana Armanino (MESM ’00) on an expedition ship in Antarctica.

Recent Donors

The Bren School would like to thank the following donors for their recent gifts of support.

ALUMNI

Kim Aldrich ’01
Nicholas Alegria ’16
Terra Alpaugh ’16
Sarah Antonelli ’16
Aliana Arcenas-Utley ’10
Karen Askeland ’16
James Baglia ’16
Jane Ballard ’16
Jennifer Bankie ’16
Henry Bart ’16
Edward Belden ’04
Ian Bell ’16
Alexandra Bell ’08
Alexander Bennett ’16
Eliza Rose Berry ’16
Andrew Bilich ’16
Jennifer Bone ’16
Ria Boner ’16
Kristen Boysen ’16
Summer Broeck-Smith ’16
Nicholas Bruce ’16
Lillian Burns ’16
Kaitlin Carney ’16
Jonathan Chang ’13
Amanda Chao ’16
Christopher Coburn ’00
Natalie Cochran ’16
Ashley Conrad-Saydah ’08
Michael Conrardy ’10
Sarah-Catherine Coxon ’16
Jaime Dietenhofer ’02
Cameron Dunning ’16
Micah Eggleton ’16
Kristine Falloon ’00
Erica Felins ’16
Leah Fine ’16
Jesse Goldstein ’16
Love Goyal ’16
Michelle Graff ’16
Stephanie Griffin ’16
David Gruen ’16
Towa Handelman ’16
James Hansen ’16
Ryan Harding ’03
Niko Hartline ’16
Juliana Herrera ’16
Heather Hochrein ’08
Aaron Howard ’16
Catherine Iantosca ’16
Talia Ibarguen ’04
Evan William Johnson ’08
Kelley Johnson ’16
Stephanie Karba ’16
Brandon Kayser ’16
Rení Keane-Dergel ’08
Jennifer Kidson ’16
Jonathan Koehn ’05
Anjana Krishnan ’16
Kevin Langham ’16
Cheryl Lee ’07
Adriel Leon ’16
Smadar Levy ’16
Serena Lomonico ’16
Melissa Maggias ’16
Mitchell Maier ’16
Juliana Matos ’16
Juan Mayorga ’16
Sarah McCutcheon ’08
Zachary McKelvey ’16
Martin Merz ’16
Elena Meza ’16
Katherine Millage ’16
Kendall Mills ’16
Michael Millstein ’16
Dominique Monie ’08
Danny Morris ’08
Kate Nixon Anania ’12
Pablo Obregón ’14
Rachel O’Connor ’16
John Onderdonk ’03
Juliano Palacios-Abrantes ’16
Julia Paltseva ’16
Hyé Min Park ’16
Sean Parker ’17
Vanessa Perkins ’16
Jennifer Pesda ’16
Charles Piechowski ’16
Brooke Prentice-Dekker ’16
Matt Riley ’03
Laura Lea Rubino ’16
Elizabeth Ruff ’16
Jennifer Sajor ’16
Jessica Sexton ’16
Iris Shin ’16
Jota Shohtoku ’02
Claudia Shohtoku ’02
Amanda Silver-Westrick ’16
Michael Smith ’16
Shreyo Sonar ’16
Patricia Song ’16
Devin Spencer ’16
Marc Steele ’16
Amy Stuyvesant ’16
Ljin Sun ’17
Adam Teepe ’04
Lily Tsukayama ’16
Alexandra Vasquez ’16
Shannon Walker ’16
Owen Watson ’16
Scott Webb ’09
Geoff Willard ’16
Das Williams ’05
Erin Williamson ’15
Melvin Willis ’99, ’03
Crispin Wong ’07

FACULTY & STAFF

Dennis Agner (Ret.)
Satie Akamé
Sarah Anderson
Steve Gaines and Peggy Lubchenco
John and Karen Jostes
David Parker
Beth Pitton-August

FRIENDS

Dennis Allen
Jack Amon
Christopher Arcenas-Utley
Sarah Argyropoulos
Russell and Tanya Birchm
Robert Boughton, III
Sally Boughton
John and Gail Campanella
Craig and Gayle Cummings
Brent and Dagny Dehlsen
Dennis & Patty Forster
Brandon and Dori Friesen
Paulo Guedes-Pinto and Adriana Bearzi
Avi Handelman
Fred and Pamela Harris
Daniel Hattline and Petra Lenz
Robert Iantosca
Dennis Jung
John and Jennifer Kammeyer
Gerhard and Elisabeth Karba
Kim Kimbell
Andrew Kongsberg and Elena Engel
John Krist
H. William Kuni
Marllyn Lee and Harvey Schneider
Yongxin Liu and Jinjirn Yang
Jordan Monroe
Franklin and Mary Moslander
Michael and Betty Noling
Katrina Onderdonk
Lindene Patton
Helen Petley (1918-2016)
Thomas Peters and Joy Dittberner
Samantha Putnam
Bill and Leah Rubio
Christine Ryerson
Jeff and Patricia Saly
Lynn Scarlett
Ross Sheldon
Daniel and Michele Shoemaker
Lisa Silverman
Monica Smith
Thomas Smith
Gregory and Dale Stamos
Dave and Denise Stillinger
Marc Stuart and Sheryl Gorchow-Stuart
Daniel and Dianne Vapnek
Cassidy Wallerstein
Danielle Willis
Jules Zimmer

FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS & NGOs

Agilent Technologies
Allen Construction
Alston & Bird LLP
American Honda Motor Company, Inc.
Association of Environmental Professionals
Bloomberg Philanthropies
California Homebuilding Foundation
Michael J. Connell Trust
Cushman Family Foundation
Deckers Outdoor Corporation
DUDEN
Eleven Engineering, Inc.
Farm Bureau of Ventura County
Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards
Hermosa Mountain Brewery
Infinity Renewables, LLC
Irvin Ranch Conservancy
Kaiser Permanente
Mesa Lane Partners
Natural Communities Coalition
Ocean Conservancy
Recon Consultants, Inc.
Oceana
The Nature Conservancy
The Stebbins Fund, Inc.
Wait Foundation
Walton Family Foundation
Yardi Systems, Inc.
Bren Distinctions

We asked faculty, students, and alumni to identify elements of the Bren School that stand out to them. Here is a fraction of what they said.

The greatest compliment I can pay my Bren degree is that I use it every day.
Ryan McMullan (MESM ’05), Manager of Sustainability, Environmental, and Safety, Toyota Motors North America

The Bren community is the most encouraging, innovative, and collaborative group of people I’ve ever encountered. It has shaped my outlook on work, on life, and on how to effect meaningful, sustainable change in the world.
Amanda Silver-Westrick (MESM ’16), Water Resources Planner, RMC, a Woodard & Curran Company

I feel like I am automatically friends with every person who has ever attended Bren or will in the future. That’s comforting and unique. I love Brennies!
Avra Goldman (MESM ’07), Data Visualization Designer, 7Park Data

At Bren, people don’t care about disciplinary boundaries; they care about solving problems. They take their research and teaching wherever the problems demand. This is the future of applied scholarship.
Matthew Burgess, Postdoctoral Researcher, Sustainable Fisheries Group

The inclusion of non-environmental disciplines in the curriculum, such as economics, negotiation, and personality theory, make Bren unique. Reality is complicated, and someone who can bridge multiple disciplines to lead a diverse group forward is the most important, yet hardest to find, resource.
April Teekell (MESM ’04), Natural Resources Manager, Pacific Missile Range Facility, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii

Bren has by far the best career-services department I have ever experienced. With how many job opportunities they share, they are like the Monster.com of environmental management.
Josh Simmons (MESM ’08), Principal Consultant / Attorney, Prosper Sustainably

Brennies constitute the most passionate, positive, and supportive family I have ever been part of.
Shaun Skinner Wolfe (MESM ’18)

A major appeal of the Bren School was its focus on applied problem solving. The quantitative analysis I learned in the classroom is nearly identical to the sort of work I do now at Disney.
Casey Garrett (MESM ’15), Financial Analyst, Strategic Philanthropy, The Walt Disney Company