

The Magazine of
Pitzer College
Spring 2024
Volume 57 Issue 1

PARTICIPANT



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Advocating for Earth



Dear Pitzer Community,

When Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* appeared in 1962, it unleashed a wave of environmental activism. Its publication coincided with the early

career of John R. Rodman, who was a young assistant professor at Harvard at the time. When he arrived at Pitzer a few years later, Rodman was full of the fervor inspired by Carson and others in the environmental awareness movement.

Rodman was one of the prime movers behind Pitzer's core mission to support and nurture environmental awareness, both on campus and beyond. In this issue of *Participant*, you'll find him not only in the photo at left, but also highlighted in a cover story examining Pitzer's deep roots in sustainability and environmental awareness.

Today, these terms have become commonplace in higher education, used by many colleges and universities. But they weren't back when Rodman and his colleagues first started asking everyone to consider what he called, according to a conference he organized in the early 1970s, "the rights of nonhuman nature."

Even prior to my arrival at Pitzer, I noted that our beloved College has long nurtured consistent core values that the rest of the world seems to be finally embracing now. Pitzer leads the way in multiple areas, including our sustainability and environmental awareness efforts. This magazine issue tells that story beautifully.

Environmental awareness and sustainability efforts are woven across the entire fabric of our campus life. The work we do today challenges us to think not just about cleaning up the skies, seas, and rivers or fighting for local and global sustainability. It's also about reframing what environmental justice means.

When we strive for environmental justice, we are working on behalf of all living things. When we urge our students to advocate on behalf of communities and vulnerable populations that don't have a voice of their own, that includes our environment, too. The rich ecosystems surrounding us in Claremont and elsewhere in the world can't speak for themselves. They need us—and our students and graduates—to speak for them. They need our help.

I think Professor Rodman would be gratified to know his environmental vision is alive and thriving here.

Provida Futuri,

Strom C. Thacker
President
Pitzer College

A Grove of One's Own

The citrus trees north of the Grove House were just saplings when this photo was taken in the late 1970s. The grove was planted to replicate the original setting surrounding the building, which was known as the Zetterberg house before moving to campus. Involved in the grove's planting was John R. Rodman (pictured), who came to Pitzer College in 1965 as an assistant professor of political studies and nurtured the growth of the College's unique gardens and landscaping. As this issue of *Participant* suggests, Rodman's vision of environmental awareness spreading like branches across the College's culture has thrived—just like those saplings—in the years since the photo was taken.



PARTICIPANT

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Spring 2024 | Volume 57 Issue 1

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Submit alumni news & updates:
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READ PARTICIPANT ONLINE

Visit www.pitzer.edu/participant for related video, extended features, and other exclusives on sustainability at Pitzer College.



SUSTAINABILITY

What Makes a Magazine Sustainable?

A chain of custody and certification are key elements in the process

Sustainable printing has been a hot topic for many years, and the print industry has been working on finding ways to decrease its environmental impact. *Participant* is also sensitive to these issues, and we want to share some information about the production of the magazine.

Participant bears the stamp of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which means that the paper used in our production process has been certified by the FSC. You'll find that stamp located at the bottom of p. 2. The FSC is a highly respected international, nongovernmental organization that promotes responsible forest management related to the print industry. The FSC oversees the entire chain of custody from the forest to the sawmills and lumberyards to the end product. Learn more about the FSC at us.fsc.org.

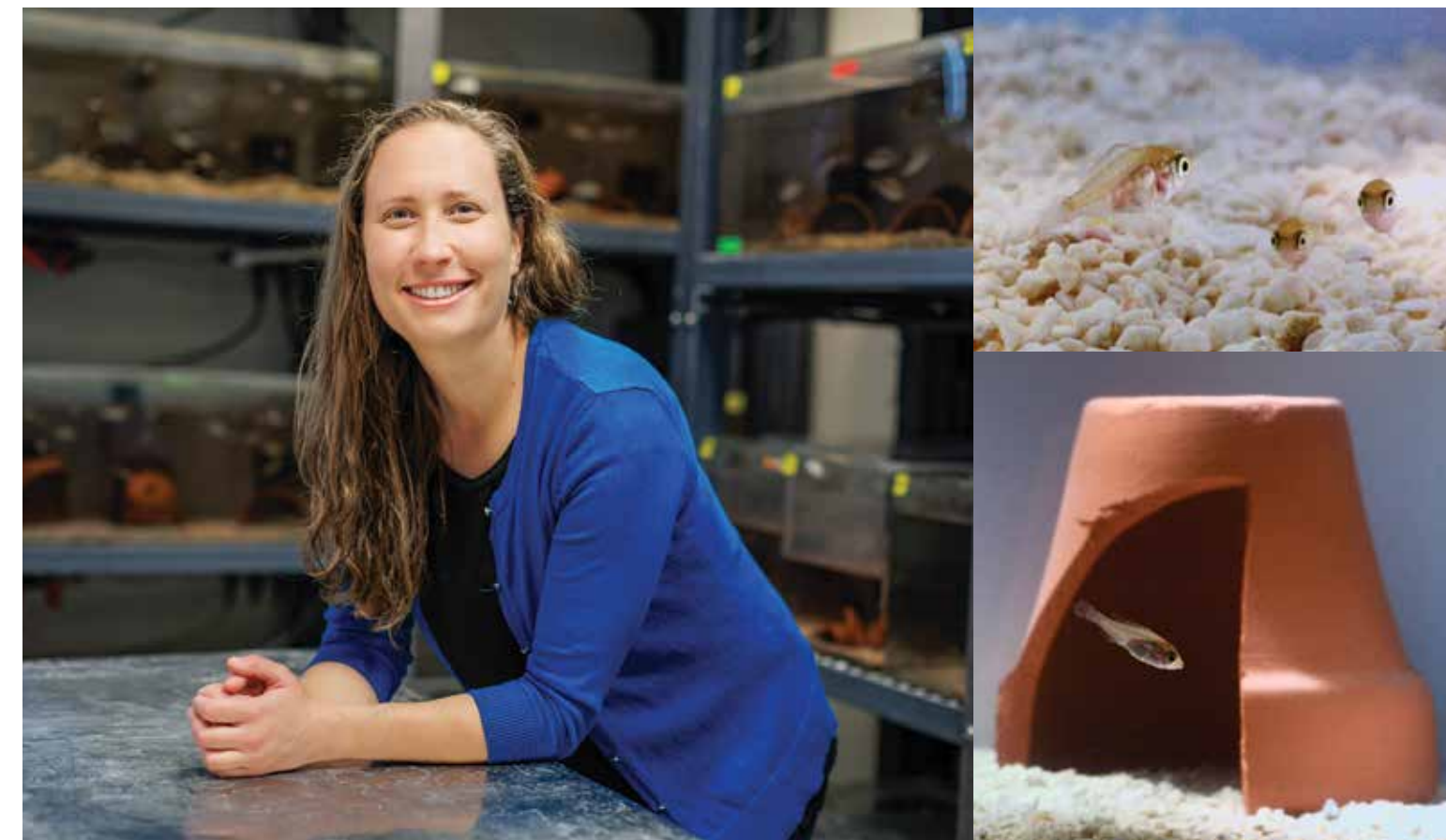
Participant uses the Pacemaker stock of paper, which is FSC certified and comes from responsibly managed forests. The paper stock is produced with a chlorine-free process and uses a mixture of recycled and new materials. Our printer, Precision Services, is also FSC certified and prints with

vegetable-based inks. These inks not only offer technical advantages, such as better color transfer and faster drying times, they are also more environmentally friendly than traditional petroleum-based inks.

In addition to the materials used, we are careful to limit the number of printed copies of each issue. Too often you hear stories of excess magazines or newspapers sitting in boxes for years until someone throws them away. Pitzer community members who don't receive a print copy of *Participant* are invited to read the magazine online at www.pitzer.edu/participant.

In presenting an issue about Pitzer's sustainability efforts, we have sought to make sure the magazine's production is aligned with the themes you'll find here.

Nick Owchar, *Editor*
Stephanie Estrada, *Creative Director*



Assistant Professor of Neuroscience Tessa Solomon-Lane, recipient of a National Science Foundation CAREER grant. (PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID TORRALVA)

FACULTY DISTINCTIONS

Scholarship in Action

An Oxford visit and other scholarly achievements marked a busy academic season

The Social Lives of Fish

The National Science Foundation has awarded a Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) grant to Assistant Professor of Neuroscience **Tessa Solomon-Lane**. The prestigious CAREER program supports early-career faculty in leading advances in their fields and mentoring students.

Solomon-Lane's grant, titled "Early-Life Social Environments Drive Behavioral and Neural Mechanisms of Development," will fund a five-year research project. Through funded summer research programs and increased resources for scientific discovery, Solomon-Lane's CAREER grant will support undergraduate researchers in her lab.

The project will explore causal relationships between early-life social experiences and long-term behavioral impacts by studying Burton's Mouthbrooder, a species of fish found in parts of Africa. Solomon-Lane is focusing on behavioral neuroendocrinology (the study of how hormones and the brain interact).

"Topics in behavioral neuroendocrinology are relevant and impactful not just to the lived experiences of undergraduates, but also more broadly, to the laws impacting life-saving health care for pregnant people and trans people, as well as the environment," said Solomon-Lane.

Elements of Possibility

The *Bristol24/7* magazine and website featured Visiting Professor **David Goldblatt's** art installation, "Utopian Chemistry," at The Galleries

Shopping Centre in central Bristol in the UK. For the installation, Goldblatt created a giant periodic table "of an imagined but plausible future." Goldblatt also held "The Angel of History," an exhibit of his prints, last year at Pitzer through a partnership with Pitzer College Art Galleries.

Embodied Learning

Professor of Asian American Studies **Kathy Yep** presented her student-centered pedagogies and the *qi gong* meditation form at a conference hosted by the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital. Yep's work about *qi gong* also appears in the anthology *Anti-Racist Community Engagement: Principles and Practices*.

Engagement in Higher Ed

Associate Professor of Urban Studies and CASA Pitzer Director **Tessa Hicks Peterson** contributed to the multimedia book *The PLACE Collaboratory: Higher Education, Community Engagement, and the Public Humanities*. The book draws from a network of community-university partnerships (including CASA Pitzer) led by the national higher-ed initiative Bringing Theory to Practice. Alongside Pitzer students and community partners, Hicks Peterson talked about their collaborative community photography project to explore immigrant experiences in the Inland Empire.



Charlotte Richards '25 (left) in Turkey's Nesin Mathematics Village.

A Mathematics Oasis

Assistant Professor of Mathematics **Bahar Acu** received funding from Pitzer's Institute for Global/Local Action & Study to take two students to the Nesin Mathematics Village in Turkey last summer. Acu selected **Caro Harwell '24** and **Charlotte Richards '25**, who served as teaching assistants for Acu's geometric topology class.

Community-Based Mental Health Care

With support from Pitzer's Institute for Global/Local Action & Study, Associate Professor of Psychology **Marcus Rodriguez** has started a partnership with Friendship Bench Zimbabwe. The Friendship Bench provides psychological support interventions to communities around the world. Rodriguez and his students have led virtual trainings for Friendship Bench Zimbabwe's lay health workers to integrate dialectical behavior therapy and crisis response strategies into their practices.

Mathematical Artist

Professor of Mathematics **David Bachman's** artwork was recently featured in the group exhibition "Seeing the Unseen: Math and Art" at Chaffey College's Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art. Bachman used computer-aided design software to implement a variety of mathematical algorithms, and the results were made physical by a pen plotter. Of this process Bachman explained that the results "are sometimes precise, pre-planned shapes, but often they are things that have evolved from the mathematics in ways I could not exactly predict, imitating nature."

Art in the Sciences

Assistant Professor of Art **Sarah Gilbert** has collaborated with a group of artists, biologists, and philosophers on a new book that visually represents how biological systems work on

different levels. The result is the recently released *Drawing Processes of Life: Molecules, Cells, Organisms*. In this collection of essays that intertwine science with art, Gilbert is the co-author of "Process Epistemologies for the Careful Interplay of Art and Biology: An Afterword."

Decolonial Views in Central Asia

Last summer, Professor of Sociology **Azamat Junisbai** interviewed ethnic Qazaqs in the city of Almaty in Khazakhstan about attitudes toward decolonial narratives, the Ukraine war, and Russia as a colonial power. Junisbai presented preliminary findings from these interviews last fall at Pomona College's Oldenborg Luncheon Colloquium series.

Racial Bias in Policing

Associate Professor of Psychology **Steffanie Guillermo** presented her research this spring during a Claremont Discourse lecture at The Claremont Colleges Library. Her talk was titled "Unraveling Racial Bias in Attitudes Towards Police Use of Force." Guillermo shared results from two studies (one of which was conducted with Claremont Colleges students) and her aspirations for research as a CASA Pitzer community scholar in residence.

When in Rome

Bryn Mawr student Marie Litzinger often wrote to her family about her experience studying mathematics in Rome from 1923 to 1924. Litzinger eventually established a career and reputation as a mathematician and researcher. One hundred years later, Associate Professor of Mathematics **Jemma Lorenat** pored over Litzinger's letters for an article that has been published in a recent issue of the journal *Mathematical Intelligencer*. Lorenat described Litzinger's writings as "an unexpected archival peek at the mundane drama of mathematics' imperfectly human creators."

The Dapper Debater

Professor of Sociology and Secular Studies **Phil Zuckerman** participated in a debate hosted by the venerable Oxford Union, a British debating society founded in 1823 that draws participants from across the intellectual spectrum, from academia to politics to science. Bringing his academic expertise in secularism, Zuckerman and his co-participants responded to this proposition: "This House Believes God is a Delusion." To watch Zuckerman's remarks, visit www.pitzer.edu/participant.



Professor Phil Zuckerman (left) with evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins at the Oxford Union.

Shifting Politics in China

In the *American Political Science Review*, Assistant Professor of Political Studies **Hanzhang Liu** recently published an article about how China's civil service exam reinforces regime stability despite rising inequality.

FACULTY

Back to the Batcave

A professor's work in the caves of Borneo offers unique insights on climate change

Caves are forbidding places for most people. They're the lairs of wild animals or places to get lost. But Don McFarlane doesn't feel that way. For him, caves are some of the most important places in the world.

The Kenneth S. Pitzer Professor of Biology and Environmental Science, McFarlane wants us to think of caves as archives in stone. They preserve a powerful record of the world's climate history.

"Caves are amazing natural repositories of all kinds of stuff. I've been interested in them ever since I was a boy," he said. Growing up in the south of England, he said he didn't hesitate to "look in caves whenever I could."

A leading scholar in bio-geomorphology and bio-microclimate studies of caves, McFarlane studies caves to gauge their impact on forests and farmlands. Are caves good sources of nutrients (especially thanks to bats, which bring material from miles away) or do they soak up nutrients before they can benefit the surrounding area?

That's a key question in his work, which was suspended in 2020 because of the pandemic. Last summer, after a three-year halt, McFarlane returned to the Mulu caves of Borneo, where he and his colleagues are conducting three-dimensional laser scanning to reconstruct the caves' systems and better understand how nutrients move through them.

Environmental change is inevitable, and caves provide persuasive evidence of that. The real concern is how fast the changes are taking place now.



McFarlane's research also has given him a unique perspective on the issue of climate change.

Environmental change is inevitable, he said, and caves provide persuasive evidence of that. Take the Dream Cave in Derbyshire, U.K., for example. It contains fossils of woolly rhinoceri and hippopotami—two animals that lived in very different ecosystems at different times. That alone, McFarlane said, "shows us how dramatically the environment of one place can change over time."

That is why McFarlane doesn't believe climate change in itself is a problem.

"It's how rapidly these changes are taking place that's the real concern," he explained.



Professor Don McFarlane inside Niah Cave in Gunung Mulu National Park in Borneo.

"The changes that enabled woolly rhinos to live where hippos did took place over tens of thousands of years. We're not talking in those terms anymore. When we talk about something like rising sea levels, we're talking about a short amount of time. There's so much development along coastal regions that even small changes are economically disastrous. You're seeing this now."

McFarlane also sees alarming signs of rapid change in Costa Rica, where he takes students to Pitzer's Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology to study biodiversity. He said the wilderness there was relatively untouched until the 1950s when it was heavily deforested for a homesteading program. Students see for themselves how surges in human activity are imperiling many habitats and ecosystems.

If there's a positive in this, McFarlane said there's a special opportunity for students who wish to become scientists.

"There are certainly bright points in the situation with climate change, especially for a young scientist," he said. "I tell them they have a chance to study closely how climate change is impacting places and then to use that information to determine how to physically protect affected species. There won't be any shortage of scientific opportunities for making positive improvements. There will be plenty of meaningful work waiting for them after graduation."



The Community Engagement Center staff (from left) are Jessica J. Chairez '13, Jack Contreras '22, Tricia Morgan '08, and Crystal Rodriguez '23 (not pictured: Jenessa Flores Parker '10).

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

25 Years of Collaboration

The Community Engagement Center serves as a central campus hub for activism

For Pitzer students, social responsibility isn't just an idea found inside a book—it lives in community gardens, warehouses, classrooms, on street corners, and beyond. Pitzer's Community Engagement Center (CEC) has helped make this work possible for 25 years.

"We're supporting the innovation, ideas, passions, and justice issues arising in our community partners by connecting them with faculty and students," said CEC Director Tricia Morgan '08.

The CEC interweaves professors, students, and local organizations to create community-based research and experiential education. A prime example is Social Responsibility Praxis (SRX) courses, which include a community engagement component of more than 40 hours.

"We're supporting the innovation, ideas, passions, and justice issues arising in our community partners by connecting them with faculty and students."

—CEC Director Tricia Morgan '08

The CEC facilitates the ethics training and partnerships for these courses. Recent SRX courses include Sustainable Sculpture, Media Arts for Social Justice, and B(L)ack to Nature: Poetry & Theory.

Established in 1999, the CEC was originally the Center for California Cultural and Social

Issues. Former Professor Lourdes Arguelles and former Dean of Faculty and Professor Emeritus Alan P. Jones founded the center to leverage institutional resources and join forces with local partners to advance social justice.

The CEC celebrated its anniversary during the 2023–24 academic year with a series of in-person and virtual events including voter registration, gardening, food drives, grassroots organizing training, a festival of storytellers, and more.

Due to its longstanding collaborations with local communities, the CEC played an important role in Pitzer's selection earlier this year as one of 368 institutions to receive the 2024 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement (*for more on the Carnegie classification, see p. 12*).



CASA Pitzer Director Tessa Hicks Peterson (second from left) and students celebrate a successful year of collaborations during a gala event last December.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A Major Milestone

CASA Pitzer celebrates 25 years of community outreach in the Inland Empire

Critical Action & Social Advocacy (CASA) Pitzer has experienced many transformations during its 25 years of justice-oriented learning. Today, CASA Pitzer resides in Ontario in the Frankish Building—where murals, natural light, diagonal bookshelves, and cozy furniture welcome everyone who comes in. Here, activist research and community building become one.

Originally known as Pitzer in Ontario, CASA Pitzer advances critical analysis and local partnerships around issues in incarceration, immigration, education, labor, art, and more. CASA Pitzer brings residents, activists, artists, and nonprofits together with Pitzer faculty and students to enact change.

The two-course CASA Pitzer academic program facilitates student fellowships and community-based participatory action research with 10 core community partners. CASA Pitzer

"There are few places that have what we have, which is an off-campus community center that involves longitudinal research projects for students to engage deeply and hands on."

—CASA Pitzer Director Tessa Hicks Peterson

also offers scholar-in-residence programs to students, faculty, and community members. Meanwhile, the building in Ontario has become a vibrant community center for Pitzer and local residents to host events and exhibitions.

CASA Pitzer has the same founders as the Community Engagement Center—former Pitzer professors Lourdes Arguelles and Alan P.

Jones. While the CEC supports community engagement at large for the College, CASA Pitzer is a place-based, three-credit program that works with a cohort of students every semester.

Students complete a 125-hour fellowship, which "provides deep cultural immersion in the Inland Empire," said CASA Pitzer Director Tessa Hicks Peterson.

"There are few places that have what we have, which is an off-campus community center that involves longitudinal research projects for students to engage deeply and hands on."

Last fall, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians provided a grant for an oral histories project in collaboration with Native and Indigenous communities. This summer, North Atlantic Book Press is publishing CASA Pitzer's work in restorative and healing justice through the Know Justice, Know Peace initiative.

STUDENT DISTINCTIONS

Scholarships & Fellowships

Cultural understanding's at the heart of three recent awards

EXPLORING ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY

Since childhood, **Daisy Okazaki '25** has told stories informed by their experience as an Asian American. Now a media studies major and Asian American studies minor, Okazaki has received support from the Margo Okazawa-Rey (MOR) Fellowship to produce a film. Okazaki is featuring members of Banteay Srei, which promotes community and leadership development for young Southeast Asian women.

"I am interested in telling stories through film and art that are relevant and uplifting towards Asian American communities and histories," said Okazaki.

The MOR Fellowship is offered by the Community Engagement Center (see p. 8) and the Intercollegiate Department of Asian American Studies at The Claremont Colleges.



CULTIVATING FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mark Perez Navarro '24, a political studies senior, is one of 45 fellows in the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program. Perez Navarro is the first Pitzer student to receive this fellowship. Through the fellowship, the Department of State finances a two-year master's graduate program and a career in the foreign service.

Perez Navarro plans to specialize in international security and U.S. foreign policy. He will enter the U.S. Foreign Service, taking assignments in various embassies and consulates across regions that include Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

COSTA RICAN CULTURAL IMMERSION

Zhané Moledina '25 has received the U.S. Department of State's Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad. Moledina is participating in the Pitzer in Costa Rica program this spring.

Moledina is majoring in political studies and organizational studies with a minor in Spanish. She plans to advance her Spanish language skills as she stays with a host family and studies in San José and Pitzer's Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology, which is near the town of Dominical.

"These experiences will promote both my professional and personal development by empowering me to surpass my limits, explore new horizons, and forge meaningful connections," said Moledina.



FACULTY

In the Media



"Women's work was once about women for themselves, women for women's sake. Now what they are saying is that women's rightful place in society—where they can do the most meaningful work—is at home with the family."

—Hanzhang Liu, assistant professor of political studies, about the Chinese Communist Party's attitudes toward women in the *New York Times*



"Amazon's community engagement plan is a textbook example of [public policy analyst Sherry] Arnstein's bottom-most rung: manipulation—what we called 'gaslighting.' Like gaslighting, manipulation is about educating, persuading, and advising uninformed residents about what they should want. These campaigns prime a community to accept corporate wishes and to question contradictory voices that reflect real community knowledge or concerns."

—Susan A. Phillips, professor of environmental analysis and director of the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability, about Amazon's 2024 strategy in the Inland Empire in the *Los Angeles Times*



"Black maternal mortality and infant mortality has become sexy to talk about, but not as sexy to invest in."

—Alicia Bonaparte, professor of sociology and scholar of Black midwifery, about midwifery startups in the *Guardian*



"If I'm going to be able to help these kids, I have to figure out how to collaborate with their parents, how to help them with their own anxiety, and help them learn to not get in the way of their kids' treatment and ultimately support them. I need to help them be almost like co-therapists. If we're going to help kids build lives worth living ... they need collaborative problem-solving with their parents."

—Marcus Rodriguez, associate professor of psychology and director of the Global Mental Health Research Lab, about supporting youth who are suffering from chronic invalidation on the "A Little Help For Our Friends" mental health podcast on iVoox

EASY PZ

Some green facts and figures about the Pitzer community

3

Pitzer's ranking in *Princeton Review's* 2024 category "Green Matters: Everyone Cares About Conservation"

40

Number of sustainability-related features (including green roofs, permeable concrete, storm retention basins, drought-tolerant plants, and green-belt areas) that have been incorporated into the design of Pitzer's residence halls

>50%

Percentage of field groups at Pitzer now offering sustainability-related courses (see story, p. 18) as part of their curricula

<50%

Percentage of water usage reduction in campus bathrooms thanks to the implementation of low-flow shower heads, faucets, toilets, and other features

\$1.8 million

Size of grant awarded to the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability to study agrivoltaics—the practice of installing solar panels on farmland (see story, p. 30)



Microbiologist Jason Tor (right) during a lab with his Chem 14 students.

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Department Name Emphasizes Natural Sciences

The W.M. Keck Science Department has announced its renaming as The Department of Natural Sciences of Pitzer and Scripps Colleges. The name change was determined last fall following several rounds of nominations and voting by the department's faculty and staff. A decision was made to emphasize "natural sciences" in the title because it is central to the department's identity, explained Ulysses J. Sofia, who serves as the department's dean.



"We wanted a name that truly describes who we are," he said.

"Everyone decided that 'natural' should be used for clarity to differentiate us from the social sciences."

The department provides the hub for science training for students from Pitzer College, Scripps College, and Claremont McKenna College (CMC is currently transitioning out of the department to operate its own science program).

A key feature of the department's approach to science education is providing science majors with intimate classroom experiences and opportunities to work closely with faculty. The department offers majors in biology, chemistry, or physics along with interdisciplinary majors in biology-chemistry, neuroscience, environmental science, and more.

Until 2009, it was known as the Joint Science Department; in that year, the department and its building were renamed as the Keck Science Department in recognition of a gift to the program from the Keck Foundation.

In addition to the name change, Sofia said that the faculty and staff of The Department of Natural Sciences are awaiting another highly anticipated change for the department later this year: completed construction of The Nucleus. The 70,000-square-foot building, which is located just west of the department, will expand science resources and facilities for faculty and Pitzer and Scripps science students. The Nucleus is expected to open in the fall.

RECOGNITION

Pitzer Receives Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement

Pitzer College is the recipient of a 2024 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement, which acknowledges a deep commitment to community engagement and effective collaboration with community partners in substantial and impactful ways.

"We recognize these institutions for their exceptional commitment to community engagement and their work to transform knowledge into meaningful action," said Timothy Knowles, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in a statement released by the foundation to announce this year's recipients.

Pitzer is among 368 institutions across the country holding this designation and has held this special classification since 2006, when the program was first established to recognize the public service of higher education institutions. Classifications are awarded following a process of extensive self-study by each institution, which is then assessed by a national review committee.

"It is an honor to have Pitzer's efforts in serving the public honored with this prestigious designation again this year," said Tricia Morgan '08, who directs Pitzer's Community Engagement Center (CEC) and served as the lead on the Carnegie application.

"This work is made possible by the dedicated faculty, students, and community partners of Pitzer College."

—Tricia Morgan '08, director of Pitzer's Community Engagement Center

Community engagement is woven across the academic experience at Pitzer. Though the College does not "have an institutionally sanctioned definition of community engagement," noted Morgan in the application, Pitzer does espouse "a largely decentralized approach to community engagement, embedding these practices across multiple curricular and co-curricular areas of the institution."

That decentralized approach includes—but isn't limited to—the work being done by the CEC, Critical Action Social Advocacy Pitzer, the Justice Education Initiative, and the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability. Morgan noted many other campus groups and programs actively involved in outreach to community partners.

The College's notification of its selection was accompanied by a note from the Carnegie team expressing hope that the College "will find ways to support campuses that are in earlier stages of institutionalizing community engagement. Your guidance will contribute significantly to the strength of community engagement across higher education."

For Morgan, that message "is a lovely acknowledgement that Pitzer is truly a leader in the field."



This spring's "Three Mothers" event featured (from left) Anna Malaika Tubbs, Jan Barker Alexander, and Bee Joyner '24.

INITIATIVE

President Launches Initiative to Encourage Dialogue on Challenging Issues

In response to a cultural climate that often turns conversations on important issues into yelling matches, President Strom C. Thacker has launched the Pitzer College Presidential Initiative on Constructive Dialogue. Earlier this year, Thacker convened a campus organizing committee to plan events and facilitate related programming.

In a message to the community, Thacker described the initiative's goal to support "the development of a vibrant and inclusive campus culture where individuals feel heard, respected, and empowered to engage in meaningful conversations that contribute to enhanced and shared learning and understanding, as well as personal and collective growth."

As of publication, the initiative has sponsored several events this spring. Author Anna Malaika Tubbs visited campus to discuss her book, *The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation* (co-sponsored by the Melvin L. Oliver Racial Justice Initiative) with Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Jan Barker Alexander and Bee Joyner '24.

Thacker moderated "How Do We Talk About Israel and Palestine?"—a conversation between Muslim Public Affairs Council Co-founder Salam Al-Marayati and New Israel Fund CEO and author Daniel Sokatch.

The initiative also hosted a screening of the 2024 Academy Award-nominated short film, *The Barber of Little Rock*, and a discussion with co-director John Hoffman and the film's titular subject, Arlo Washington. This event was also cosponsored by the Racial Justice Initiative.



Tubbs (center) with Trustee Ruett Foster '81 (left) and President Strom C. Thacker.

Thacker's initiative seeks to counter the false notion that civil dialogue requires giving priority to politeness over frank and often passionate discussions. As Thacker explained during the event with Al-Marayati and Sokatch, he hopes the initiative will demonstrate how it's possible to "agree to disagree agreeably" on sensitive topics and to learn from each other in the process.

Visit www.pitzer.edu/participant to read more about the presidential initiative and watch videos of the events with Tubbs, Al-Marayati, and Sokatch.

FULBRIGHT

Pitzer College Named a Top Fulbright Producer in 2023-24

Pitzer College is one of the top producers of Fulbright students in 2023-24, according to a U.S. Fulbright announcement released this spring. This marks the 15th consecutive year that Pitzer has been recognized for this achievement.

The Fulbright is a highly competitive program administered by the U.S. Department of State to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between recipients and some 140 countries worldwide.

During their grants, recipients study, work, conduct research, and live with people from their host country to gain a deeper appreciation of other beliefs and cultural perspectives.

Top-producing schools are divided into two categories: those with the most Fulbright scholars (which refers to faculty members or other professionals) and those with the most Fulbright students (which applies to undergraduates).

With nine Pitzer students awarded for 2023-24, Pitzer places among the top 13 institutions in the baccalaureate category.

For Pitzer President Strom C. Thacker, who was a Fulbright scholar in Mexico, the College's continuing success as a top producer enhances its global reputation.

"I am thrilled to see Pitzer recognized once again this year as a top producer of Fulbright recipients," he said. "I'm honored by this recognition of our College's leadership in this realm and so proud of our brilliant students and the outstanding faculty and staff who support them. They will continue to advance Pitzer's mission and values and, with this support, will be able to make an even bigger difference in the world."

AROUND THE MOUNDS

Dressing Up in Sustainable Fashions

When she started PZ Threads in 2019, **Tasha Gardiner-Feldman '23** had a clear purpose: She wanted to educate her classmates and others on the value of the clothes already hiding at the bottom of their closets.

PZ Threads challenged the popularity of “fast fashion,” a term referring to the ethically questionable practices behind the clothes promoted by the apparel industry. That includes the considerable waste of resources and the exploitation of an underpaid labor force, all to keep up with public demand for the hottest new trends. Gardiner’s club started out as a Pitzer-centric effort that produced a magazine and hosted fashion shows and bazaars to foster excitement about vintage clothing and its stylish possibilities.



Tasha Gardiner-Feldman '23 with her PZ Threads magazine. RIGHT: THREAD5 club members posed outside the Green Bike Program building at Pitzer (Club Co-President Iza Harris '26 is seated, center; Co-President Bella Hottenrott HMC '26 is seated above her). PHOTO COURTESY OF ELLIE ATTISANI SCR '26

Though there was uncertainty that PZ Threads would continue after Gardiner-Feldman’s graduation, it is thriving today and has expanded into a 5C-wide club. This year, the club’s leadership includes Co-Presidents **Iza Harris '26** and **Bella Hottenrott HMC '26**. “When I began running the club with Bella, after brainstorming a bit about what to name the club, we renamed it THREAD5 with the number 5 to keep its essence while affirming that everyone is welcome,” Harris explained. “We talked to our members, and everyone felt that it was only appropriate to emphasize that we are open to students from all the 5Cs.”

Since the fall, THREAD5 has held a fashion show as well as a bazaar on the Pitzer Mounds open to students from The Claremont Colleges. During the bazaar event, students sipped on free coffee as they shopped with different student vendors. The bazaar, fashion show, and other activities are a vibrant way of connecting students with the sustainability ethos.

Harris said the club has more activities planned for later this year. Follow @thread5c on Instagram for the club’s latest updates.



A Triple Victory

The Pomona-Pitzer men’s cross-country team clinched three major wins in Division III athletics in the fall. First, the Sagehens ran to their third-straight Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) Championship in dominant fashion, finishing with 23 team points and all five scorers placing in the top 10. The team then ran their way to the West Region Championship Crown for the sixth year in a row. Finally, in their most impressive feat of the season, the Sagehens fought their way against stiff competition to a one-point victory and secured the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III Men’s Cross Country National Championship.



Unbeaten in the Regular Season

In the fall, the Pomona-Pitzer women’s soccer team had breakthrough SCIAC victories. After a draw with Occidental College, the Sagehens ended the regular season unbeaten for the first time in program history with a 13-0-3 overall record and a 9-0-3 SCIAC mark. The Sagehens earned their fifth-straight title as the co-champions with California Lutheran University. This victory was followed by the team claiming its fourth-straight SCIAC Tournament Championship with a win over Cal Lutheran and advancing into the NCAA Tournament with a 15-0-3 overall record.

Rebuilding Pitzer’s Tree Canopy

Pitzer College lost 12 mature trees on campus due to a major windstorm in January 2022. This year, the Treestorming replanting project will add 22 trees (almost double the number of lost trees) to the campus footprint. The project is a collaboration with many of the stakeholders who previously participated in re-envisioning and expanding the Student Garden: Pitzer students, the sustainability committee, the facilities and Robert Redford Conservancy teams, and consultants who are again providing pro bono help for this Pitzer community effort. These consultants include architect Steve Lang; arborists from California Botanic Garden; and Bruce Mills, Hamilton Construction. According to Patrice Langevin, associate vice president of facilities, capital projects, and safety, one goal of the effort is to give students experience leading a project that will leave a lasting impact on their campus.



Senior Facilities Director Mark Crawback (center) joined students and Redford Conservancy Director Susan A. Phillips to determine the placement of new trees on campus.

An Iconic Campus Landmark Returns

On a late afternoon last December, **Spencer Skaling '27** (pictured) found an easy way to clear his mind after studying all day for finals: He stood in the freezing waters of the fountain on Pellissier Mall.

Just a few months before, that wouldn’t have been possible. The fountain, which was completed in 1969, had been deactivated for seven years due to ongoing drought conditions in Southern California.

But with the implementation of a recycled water system, the fountain is running again. It was reactivated last October as part of the celebratory festivities for Strom C. Thacker’s inauguration as Pitzer’s seventh president. The reactivation was made possible after receiving approvals from Pitzer’s Student Senate and Sustainability Committee.



The fountain employs a recirculating system to use water responsibly. Falling water is captured in a catch basin hidden under the base, which is constructed of local rocks (affectionately known by some as “Claremont potatoes”). The fountain also recirculates fresh water, not gray or wastewater, which means that the fountain serves as an ideal spot for students to gather on hot days or, in Skaling’s case, to take an unexpected (and chilly) study break.



Installation view of Lauren Bon and The Metabolic Studio: Bending the River, at Pitzer College Art Galleries (Lenzner Family Art Gallery), September 24 - December 16, 2022. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER WORMALD/FULCRUM ARTS)

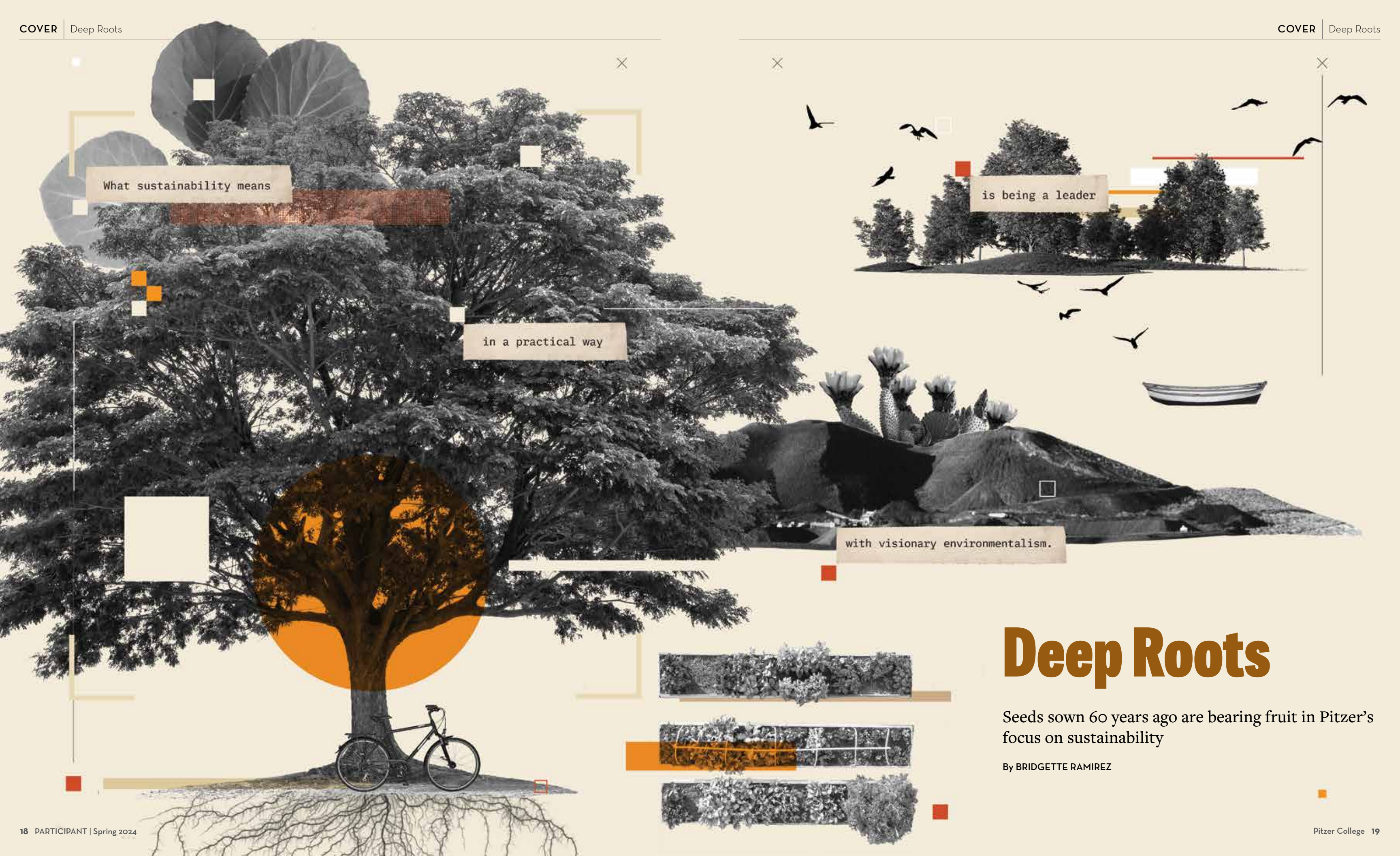
ART EXHIBITION

At the River's Edge

Environmental artist Lauren Bon's exhibit, "Bending the River," imagines a watershed moment for the L.A. River

Can a river be reimagined or redirected? Acclaimed environmental artist Lauren Bon thinks so. The exhibition, "Lauren Bon and The Metabolic Studio: Bending the River," hosted in fall 2022 by Pitzer College Art Galleries, gave visitors a glimpse into Bon's project to draw water from the Los Angeles River and distribute it in surrounding communities. She has described this effort as "an infrastructure artwork" that takes water from that river, which in its current concrete form serves as a flood channel moving wastewater to the sea, and restores it to its original nourishing purpose. Bon's Metabolic Studio has worked with local communities and government agencies to make it possible to divert 106 acre-feet of water annually to irrigate some 50 acres of land in the historic core of downtown L.A. The Pitzer exhibition culminated with Bon delivering the annual Murray Pepper and Vicki Reynolds Pepper Distinguished Visiting Artist Lecture.

See more photos like this one from the exhibition at www.pitzer.edu/participant.



What sustainability means

in a practical way

is being a leader

with visionary environmentalism.

Deep Roots

Seeds sown 60 years ago are bearing fruit in Pitzer's focus on sustainability

By BRIDGETTE RAMIREZ



Pitzer students visit Indian Canyon, Anza Borrego desert, in 1985 as part of a class on desert ecology. (PHOTO COURTESY OF PITZER ARCHIVES)

In the spring of 1976, Professors Carl Hertel and Paul Shepard immersed six students in Baja California’s desertscape of native shrubs and rolling hills colored in purple, orange, and sepia.

It was a special experience. By day, they roamed through majestic archaeological sites. They sat around the campfire late into the night to talk about nature. They took a boat to a remote island in the Gulf of California to study birds.

This three-week field trip was part of Hertel and Shepard’s course, The Desert Colloquium, and it was a formative experience for their student Paul Faulstich ’79. Faulstich later became a professor of environmental analysis at Pitzer College (he retired in spring 2022). Hertel and Shepard’s class was so inspiring that, as a professor, Faulstich adapted that class for his students. He called his class *The Desert as a Place*, an interdisciplinary exploration of arid environments that included multiday camping field trips and studies in anthropology, art, and literature. This class is still taught at Pitzer.

“Environmentalism and sustainability permeate so many of the disciplines and courses,” said Faulstich. “It’s flowing throughout the curriculum.”

That flow, in fact, is something many institutions in higher education are trying to develop now.

Climate consciousness is rising among colleges and universities according to a recent report from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. After a devastating 2018 wildfire near California State University, Chico, the *Chronicle* noted that “62 faculty members in more than 30 disciplines across six Cal State campuses revamped 75 courses to incorporate climate issues.”

Sustainability and the environment have also become top of mind for many students. *Inside Higher Ed*, *College Pulse*, and *Kaplan* recently

“Environmentalism and sustainability permeate so many of the disciplines and courses. ... It’s flowing throughout the curriculum.”

—Paul Faulstich, professor emeritus of environmental analysis

surveyed 2,164 undergraduates. Eighty-one percent of students said they were at least somewhat worried about climate change. In the same survey, 46 percent of students reported taking sustainability-related courses, and another 25 percent would like to do so.

But there’s a challenge for many institutions. It’s not that adding features related to sustainability is difficult, it’s ensuring that these additions are organic and meaningful. It isn’t enough, notes *Inside Higher Ed*, to have a recycling program or a compost pile. Pitzer has a well-established approach to sustainability across its academic and campus life thanks to the community’s work over six decades, not a handful of years. For Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Allen M. Omoto, there’s an obvious reason why Pitzer’s ongoing efforts are deeper than what one finds elsewhere: the College’s mission.

“Our educational mission is derived from the College’s core values, one of which is sustainability,” he explained. “Pitzer’s curriculum is deeply integrated and is closely connected to enduring societal concerns. That’s not the case with some of our peers that have only recently begun to embrace the ethos of sustainability in their curriculum. They are realizing the critical importance of sustainability, and that’s terrific, but they don’t necessarily have the deep heritage, the deep roots that we have.”

Curriculum is the Key

Educators agree that the most important way to achieve an intensive, holistic integration of sustainability—or any other subject area, for that matter—into a higher education institution boils down to how the institution develops its curriculum.

In *Princeton Review’s* 2024 student surveys, Pitzer’s comprehensive approach to its curriculum along with a deep integration of sustainability-related features in campus life has earned the College a ranking of No. 3 in the area of “Green Matters: Everyone Cares About Conservation.”

The College also achieved a gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in 2023. The AASHE is considered the gold standard in sustainability education; it is a nonprofit associated with colleges, universities, businesses, charitable organizations, government agencies, and K-12 schools all over the world working to create a sustainable future through higher education.

According to Pitzer’s latest AASHE report, more than half of the College’s field groups offer sustainability courses. From literature to art to STEM, faculty continue taking the coursework to the next level.

“To have so many of our field groups addressing sustainability is not coincidental,” said Omoto. “It’s the result of intentional planning and institutional commitment. It shows you how deeply Pitzer cares about this. In fact, this emphasis and course offerings will expand. We are in the process of hiring new faculty across the College, and by design, many of them will have expertise and research interests related to climate change and sustainability issues.”

“To have so many of our field groups addressing sustainability is not coincidental. It’s the result of intentional planning and institutional commitment.”

—Allen M. Omoto, vice president for academic affairs and dean of faculty

The Academic Planning Committee (APC) has been fundamental in this process and has especially provided “vision and planning” for further integrating sustainability and the environment across Pitzer’s curriculum, according to Professor Amanda Lagji, who chairs the Curriculum Committee. Last year, the APC allocated several faculty expansion lines “that clustered around environmental issues,” said Lagji. Searches are now underway.

Professor Claudia Strauss, who chairs the APC this year, said that Pitzer’s Board of Trustees created an exciting opportunity when they approved six new faculty positions. Pitzer faculty were interested in a cluster hire, which makes hires in different fields based on the same theme. The environmental analysis field group and Pitzer’s Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability proposed the cluster hire with climate crisis as the theme.

“The primary topic that emerged as the focus for a cluster hire was the climate crisis because it is one of the most pressing issues facing the planet,” said Strauss.

As last year’s APC chair, Professor Emeritus Daniel A. Segal helped move the proposals forward. Strauss pointed out how transdisciplinary climate crisis education is illustrated in the proposals that APC approved, including “a media studies professor specializing in ecomedia, a math professor specializing in climate modeling, and an Africana Studies professor specializing in environmental justice.”

With current courses, such as Environmental Economics, Ethnoecology, and Nature and Society in Amazonia, students have many ways to



Professor John R. Rodman and an unidentified man on the shore of the Robert J. Bernard Biological Field Station’s pHake Lake, which consists of a half-acre marshy habitat and a one-acre pond with a depth of 20 feet. (PHOTO COURTESY OF PITZER ARCHIVES)

learn and live environmental values even if they aren’t majoring in environmental analysis or a related field.

“Students who are exposed to different disciplinary approaches to the same issue can think about it more flexibly and see new connections,” said Strauss.

Pitzer’s course offerings are already becoming more robust with the hiring of new faculty just this academic year. Lagji has seen this happen firsthand; more sustainability-related courses are on the way.

Pitzer’s Environmental Education Origins

That threading of environmental awareness throughout the curriculum dates to Pitzer establishing an environmental studies program in 1970. Pitzer was one of the first colleges in the nation to do so.

But even before that, Pitzer faculty wove the environment into the curriculum.

In 1968–69, Hertel, who was a professor of art and environmental design, taught the Environments and Happenings Seminar, which was described as “a seminar in ‘the new art.’” Professor of Sociology Thomas E. Carrol also taught Urban Environment. The next year, Professor of Political Studies John R. Rodman taught Contemporary American Problems: The Environment and Environmental Policy.

Rodman spearheaded environmental consciousness not only in his classes but in Pitzer’s landscape. He facilitated creating the arboretum and Outback Preserve in the 1980s as safe havens for native vegetation and as living laboratories for classes in creative writing, art, anthropology, environmental studies, and more.

“John Rodman had this vision of environmental studies being like a tree,” said Faulstich. “The branches would reach out into different avenues and the roots would hold us deep to our commitment to place. He had that vision of creating a landscape that is sustainable and facilitates teaching about sustainability.”

Unexpected Examples

On a weekday afternoon you might see activity out in the garden next to the Office of Black Student Affairs (OBBSA) on Seventh Street. It’s an unexpected example of Rodman’s vision of a branching tree.



Ella Schweizer '26 (center) works with classmates Elshiekh Ahmed PO'25 (left) and Tadius Frank PO'24 in the garden by the Office of Black Student Affairs as part of Professor Laura Harris's class, B(L)ack to Nature: Poetry & Theory.

It would be easy to assume the students trimming the plants and taking care of the yards are biology or botany students. But they're members of Professor Laura Harris' class, B(L)ack to Nature: Poetry & Theory.

Writing and gardening? They're far more intertwined with ideas of Blackness, nature, and creativity than one might think, Harris said.

Harris described her course "as a creative writing course centering 20th-century Black feminist poetic forms and themes, specifically nature poems and environmental justice themes at the intersections of Blackness, gender, class, and queer sexualities." Students kept a reading journal as they delved into Ntozake Shange, Claudia Rankine, and other authors. Then they wrote poetry, from haiku to spoken word.

"The course provides a poetic historical context to environmental knowledge in Black artistic expression," said Harris. "In some Black aesthetic traditions, the garden is a poem."

Harris' class made this point literal by developing and tending to the

"The course provides a poetic historical context to environmental knowledge in Black artistic expression. ... In some Black aesthetic traditions, the garden is a poem."

—Laura Harris, professor of English and world literature and Africana studies

OBSA garden, based on a plot of land offered by OBSA Dean and Director Lydia Middleton. As they felt the sunlight from above and the soil below, students became environmental stewards of what Harris terms "a Black culturally relevant student space."

"A garden project provides a tactile opportunity for a creative writing class to 'put hands to dirt' as both resonating with and part of creative process," said Harris.

A Hands-On Approach

Combining poetry with gardening is not the only way that sustainability creeps into unexpected corners of Pitzer's curriculum. Professor Sarah Gilbert's Sustainable Sculpture class trains students in the foundations of art creation and also takes pains to emphasize the creative and ethical use of found materials—from carving a broken bookshelf to scavenging and replanting seeds from food scraps.

"At an art supply store, you decontextualize where your wood comes from," said Gilbert. "We're thinking of how extraction works globally and locally."

As a resource- and labor-intensive art form, sculpture requires collaboration. This is a regular practice for Gilbert's students, who focus not just on individual success but forming a collective.

"The first goal is building community in our classroom," said Gilbert. "The second is to take stock of the ecologies of the 5Cs and materials that are just being thrown away. We're thinking of community not just in terms of humans but the plants and animals we rely on."



Top: Professor Sarah Gilbert (front row, first on far right) with her Sustainable Sculpture class at the Julia Bogany Talking Circle. The site's design was completed during this academic year by Gilbert, students, and Bogany's relatives.

Far Left: Back in 1994, a 12,000-square-foot parking lot was transformed into the Pitzer Student Garden. It was revitalized in 2021 thanks to the efforts of a committed group of stakeholders, including students, faculty, donors, and staff.

Left: Olivia Frakt SCR '27 prepares her hanging sculpture as part of an exhibit for Professor Sarah Gilbert's Sustainable Sculpture class.

“As Julia [Bogany] was quick to point out, Tongva history is also Tongva futurism. We can feel this with Julia’s legacy being so present and visible here at Pitzer and throughout the region.”

—Sarah Gilbert, assistant professor of art

Last fall, her class also worked with Tongva community members for a Talking Circle installation that honors the late Tongva elder Julia Bogany. Gilbert’s class installed a sculptural glass sign and a native plants border designed with Bogany before her death and later with her granddaughter and great-granddaughter. A dedication ceremony took place in November.

“In her meetings with students and her generous sharing of Tongva culture, Julia focused on reciprocal relationships with the environment,” said Gilbert. “As Julia was quick to point out, Tongva history is also Tongva futurism. We can feel this with Julia’s legacy being so present and visible here at Pitzer and throughout the region. The glass sculpture bearing her name is part of a larger installation that contributes to this visibility by highlighting and activating interactions with the environment as it reflects the light, trees, and skies.”

More Than Just the Facts

While professors in many field groups are pursuing similar approaches to sustainability integration, Pitzer’s interdisciplinary education is apparent in the environmental analysis program. In 2011–12, the College changed the environmental studies major to environmental analysis. Now, the major comes with four tracks: environmental science, environmental policy, environment and society, and sustainability and the built environment.

In every track, the major draws from the social sciences, arts and humanities, and natural sciences to build creative solutions for environmental problems. Additionally, all environmental analysis majors complete a semester-long intensive internship that takes them beyond the classroom and into the community.

Faulstich, an environmental analysis field group member for over 30 years, believes combining passion with transformation is what makes Pitzer’s environmental education unique.

“Environmental analysis isn’t just about understanding the facts,” said Faulstich. “I don’t know a place that does better than Pitzer in merging intellectual engagement with on-the-ground living.”

Other Branches

Rodman’s vision of sustainability touching almost everything can be seen in other complementary features at Pitzer.

These features vary from Pitzer’s LEED-certified residence halls to green roofs to a gym powered by people’s workouts. The Green Bike Program (founded in 2001) promotes cycling and provides free loaner bikes. McConnell Dining Hall participates in community composting. The Pitzer Student Garden hosts workshops in planting, pruning, and caring for the chickens. Pitzer’s roots in sustainability, in other words, have borne a lot of fruit.

Pitzer has also had several firsts in sustainability in higher education. The Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability holds the first higher education building certification in California for using zero net energy. In response to student activism, Pitzer also became the first higher education institution in Southern California to commit to divesting its endowment of fossil fuel stocks in 2014.

That passion for sustainability also extends far beyond campus, from local community partnerships to international ecological sites. A few examples include:

- Leadership in Environmental Education Partnership (LEEP) has brought ecological literacy to over 3,000 local children since 1996. At LEEP, Pitzer students and Native elders teach elementary school children from diverse socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Critical Action & Social Advocacy (CASA) Pitzer collaborates with Huerta del Valle, an urban farm and community garden. Students are involved in community-based participatory action research and engagement with Huerta del Valle (for more on CASA Pitzer, see p. 9).
- The Firestone Center for Restoration Ecology in Costa Rica has provided intercultural explorations of environmental stewardship since 2005 and features collaborative resource management, human and tropical ecology, and more.
- The Adelanto Water Justice Coalition joined Pitzer’s Community Engagement Center, Redford Conservancy, Department of Natural Sciences (Keck Science), and CASA Pitzer to collaborate in science and activism with students, faculty, and local partners about water quality in the city of Adelanto.



For Professor Emeritus Paul Faulstich, seen here in 2013 planting trees with students in The Outback, Pitzer’s momentum in developing its sustainability focus will continue in the years ahead. (PHOTO COURTESY OF PITZER ARCHIVES)

Of course, the greenest jewel in Pitzer’s sustainability crown is the Redford Conservancy. The Conservancy advanced environmental justice in the Inland Empire through mapping warehouse growth, climate adaptation planning, agrivoltaics, and other initiatives (for more on the Conservancy, see the profile on p. 30).

The Future

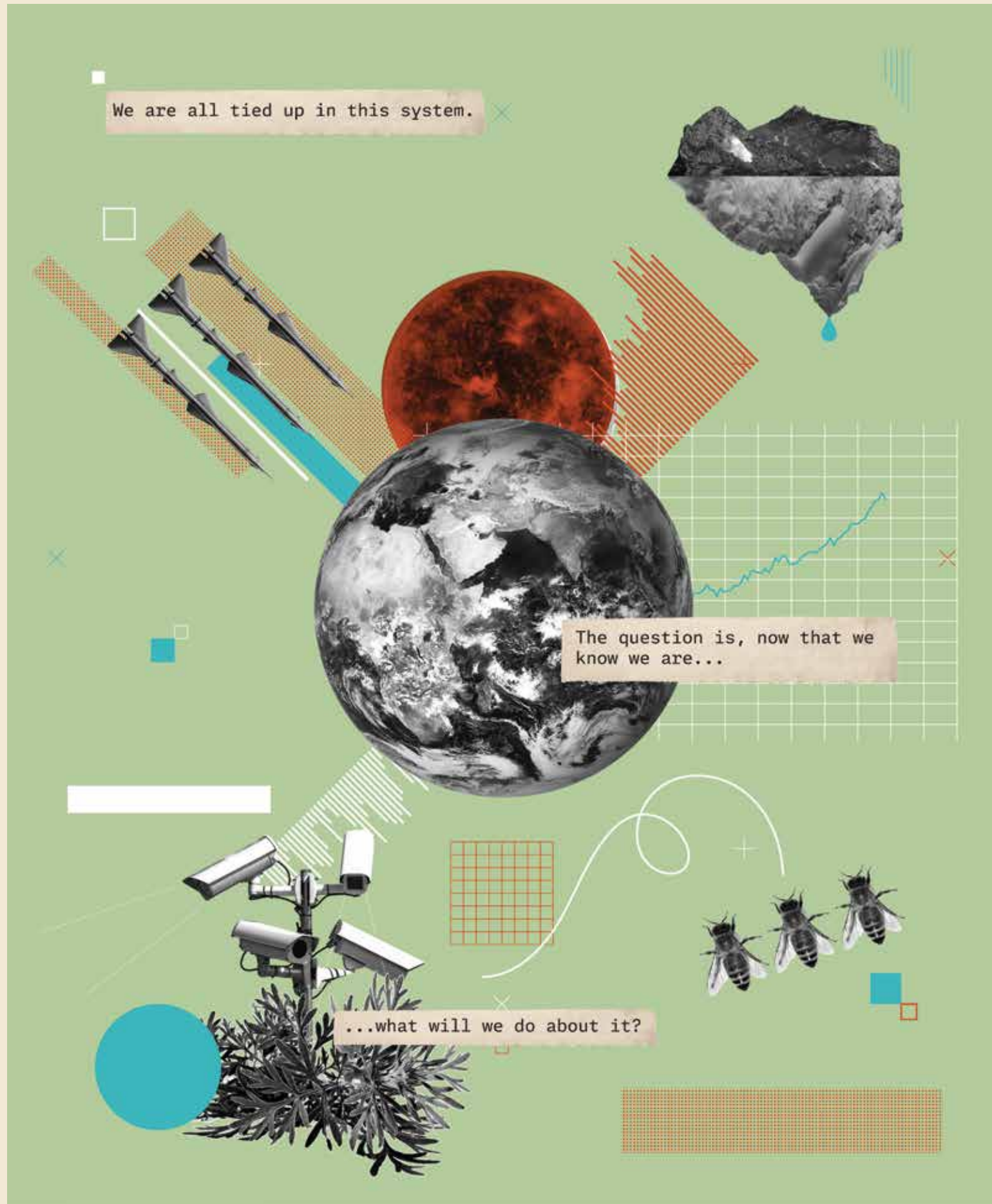
Despite the increased attention that many higher education institutions are paying to climate change, there is room for these schools to do more. At Pitzer, the challenge has been keeping up the momentum. As they demand change, students are playing an important part in this momentum. Last fall, for example, in Professor Barbara Junisbai’s Organizational Theory class, students produced a podcast sharing student activists’ assessment of environmental education at Pitzer and how the College should do more.

For Faulstich, keeping up momentum shouldn’t be a problem. The beauty of sustainability efforts at Pitzer is that they are not limited to one building or major. Every innovation made for greener living and learning is a new leaf sprouting forth, reaching for a brighter and more resilient world. “What sustainability means in a practical way is being a leader with

visionary environmentalism,” said Faulstich. “I do think that Pitzer is that. It is fostering an awareness of environmental concerns that all students are exposed to and are able to translate from awareness into action.”



Check out the Environmental Sustainability timeline:
www.pitzer.edu/timeline/environmental-sustainability/



Climate Optimism in Challenging Times

To prepare students to engage with environmental complexities, educators must help them find hope in the face of difficult future scenarios

By ARTHUR LEVINE '14
Applied Research Fellow, Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability

In summer 2009, I was drawn to sunny Southern California because it was as far from my hometown of New York City as I could go for school and because of Pitzer's beautiful campus and core values. I left behind a summer of activism and didn't consider myself naive when I got to Pitzer—not after spending two years in racial and environmental justice work in the Gulf Coast and working with community gardens and urban farms in New York. But nothing could have prepared me for emerging from my dorm on my second day of college and seeing black skies, a red sun, and falling soot. I expected idyllic California skies, but I was greeted instead with the first of many wildfires I'd experience on the West Coast.

Fast-forward to 2023. I never expected to see images on the news of my hometown covered in orange-gray haze from wildfires burning in Canada. It didn't seem possible that the smoky skies I'd experienced at Pitzer could ever happen there. Our planet is on fire. It's not an overstatement to say that. There are relative pockets of safety and calm, but in reality, a socio-ecological crisis is surrounding us everywhere.

Our students understand that. If only that was the sole thing they had to worry about. But today they're confronted by so many issues: absurd U.S. politics, the explosion of surveillance capitalism, AI, and crushing student debt with relief that was stopped by the Supreme Court. That isn't all: There are floods in Pakistan and heat domes in the Pacific Northwest; melting sea ice; the sixth mass extinction (which is being caused by human



Arthur Levine '14 (center) points out that Pitzer College's 31 acres contain numerous features like the Pitzer Student Garden where students can develop their environmental thinking.

activity); wars raging in Yemen, Sudan, Ukraine, and Gaza; and hundreds of thousands of climate refugees fleeing drought and crop failure as emissions calculators and carbon concentration meters tick up.

An Uphill Battle

When I talk to Pitzer students now, it's clear that being a socially responsible, critical thinker today can be overwhelming for them. It doesn't surprise me.

And yet, sitting in my office at Pitzer's Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability and watching the sage grow and listening to the bees hum and birds chirp, I feel a terrible cognitive dissonance. It's something that I share with so many in The Claremont Colleges community. Life can be beautiful here. It grows slowly and regenerates. We are here in Claremont to share knowledge and plan for our future, but what awaits us beyond the safety of this moment? I've been working since I was in high school to create spaces for solution making, but sometimes it feels like an uphill battle.

Our students are not immune to this upsetting reality. They're facing it in their own way in the Claremont bubble and challenging each other to do something about it. But the rich and powerful seem determined to drag us off a climate cliff regardless of our activism or our science.



A grim future climate scenario shouldn't be a reason to give up, explains Arthur Levine '14, it's a call to take action.

“The Redford Conservancy may be a small organization in the grand scheme, but we prepare students to avoid falling into this trap. ... Through all our projects, we are showing them a pathway through despair to the future.”

—Arthur Levine '14

I've had chances to talk with some students about things like the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), which proposes four future environmental scenarios that are possible for our world. These scenarios are Order from Strength, Global Orchestration, Adapting Mosaic, and Techno Garden. I tell them that it feels like we're experiencing a perverse hybrid of all four in which nations spend more on militarism, border walls, and surveillance than on climate finance to maintain order; where global orchestration around big issues is facilitated by the United Nations yet co-opted by fossil fuel interests; where AI, renewable energy, and the Internet of Things are at once our best hope for solving complex problems and digging us deeper to the point of no return.

Adaptation is happening, but are we working together or simply vying for top position in a changing geopolitical landscape?

A Thin Veneer of Safety

For anyone on campus, these big questions can seem far from the classrooms or the Grove House. Everything still seems OK here. And yet the veneer of safety and calm isn't so thick that students can't see past

the citrus grove into a complex and challenging landscape. Even within our regional context, the same global patterns are being replicated. Our little corner of the world is in fact a node in a massive system of diesel emissions and globalized trade and distribution across webs of e-commerce. Students are at once activists pushing for change and consumers driving more mining, industrial processes, shipping, and ultimately the disposal of cheap goods.

We are all tied up in this system. The question is, now that we know we are, what will we do about it?

Southern California's Inland Empire region, which extends from Claremont to Nevada, reflects the larger world. Our region has some of the most diverse populations and some of the worst air quality and living conditions in the U.S. It is also home to billionaires and infrastructure for Amazon and other Fortune 500 companies to make their profits. Warehouses and truck traffic dominate the soil, water, and air and push aside native plants, animals, and lands. The climate is heating, drought is increasing, and the population is growing, even though the region faces increasing vulnerability.

The Inland Empire gives us a picture of what's coming for many

other communities as the global climate patterns shift toward hotter, drier ones. It's also a microcosm of what students will face after college. Whether they stick around, like I have, or go anywhere else, they are likely to encounter similar complexities. At the Redford Conservancy, we are intimately involved in communities outside of the 5Cs because that is where our mission is realized. Our crucial role is connecting our students with the challenging work that's needed to make changes happen. We show them how opposing the displacement of biodiversity by warehouses, supporting environmental justice struggles, using mapping and data to advocate for community benefits, and participating in regenerative projects like community gardens or agrivoltaics is part of turning despair into action.

Small Steps Still Matter

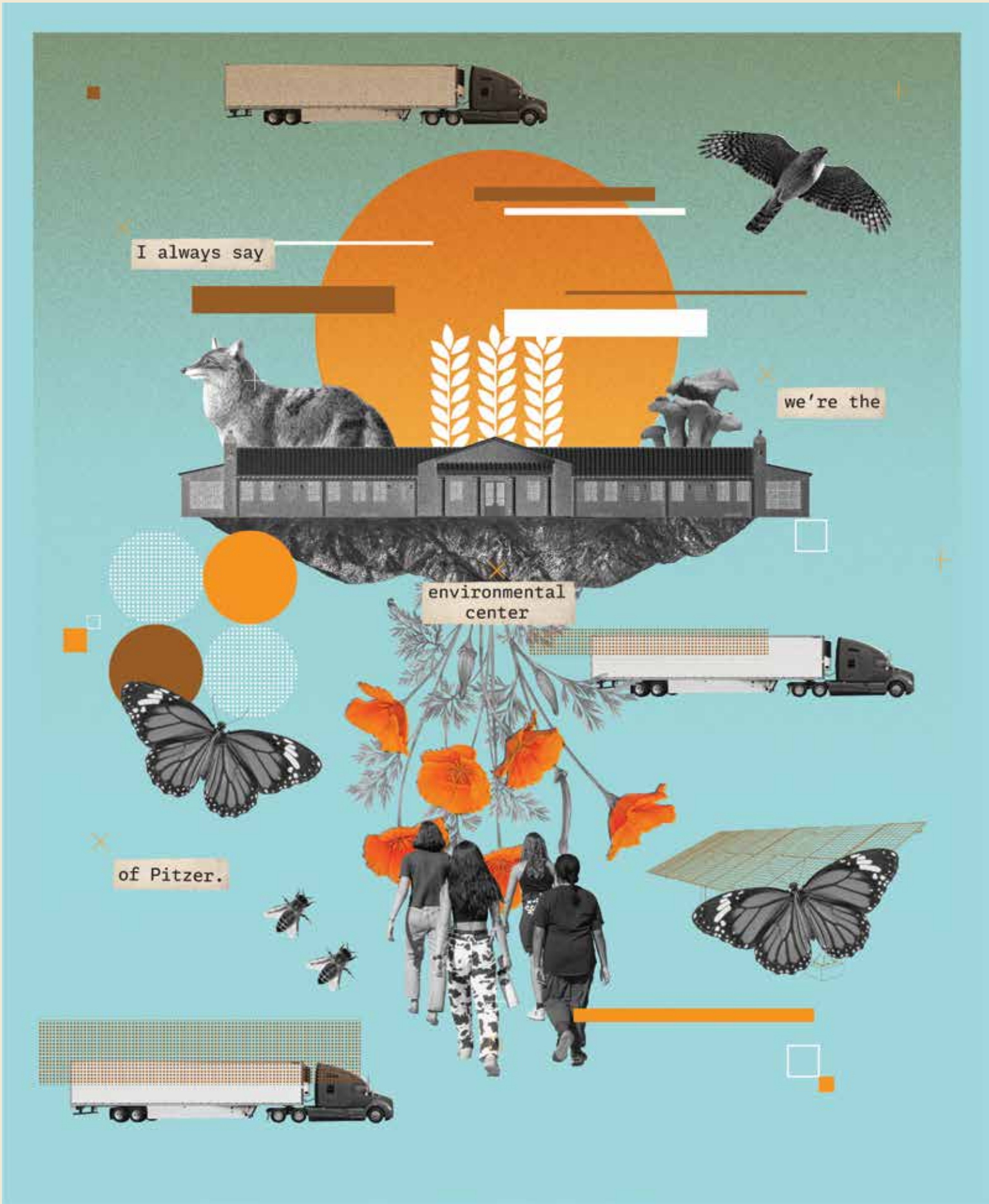
Our students have avenues to get involved in transitioning to an ecologically sound society. As a member of the Redford Conservancy team and a broader member of the 5Cs community, I feel like this is my biggest contribution to them. When students feel cynical about the future and

their contribution, they want to give up. That's exactly where fossil fuel, big tech, and big pharma want them to be.

The Redford Conservancy may be a small organization in the grand scheme, but we prepare students to avoid falling into this trap. Our students learn to support communities on the front lines, confront harmful projects at the planning and advocacy level, expose corruption, write, document their work, generate and visualize data, and do meaningful scientific research and solution-building. Through all our projects, we are showing them a pathway through despair to the future.

If students feel that they can plug in and get to work making the world a better place, that is a victory. It matters. Reminding them how to do this is one of the most important victories we can strive for as educators.

Arthur Levine '14 is an applied research fellow at Pitzer's Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability. He has a Master of Science in Regenerative Studies, sits on the advisory boards of Riverside Food Systems Alliance and Agroecology Commons, and is a steering committee member for the Inland Southern California Climate Collaborative.



Rewiring Society's View of the Environment

Pitzer's sustainability research efforts are thriving—and one reason is the Robert Redford Conservancy

By LISA BUTTERWORTH

Tucked into a quiet Claremont neighborhood just north of Foothill Boulevard is a nondescript chain link fence set among the houses. The winding driveway it secures leads to a veritable oasis—a recently renovated LEED-certified and zero-energy building on grounds teeming with native plants abuzz with pollinators, the home of the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability. “I always say we’re the environmental center of Pitzer,” said Susan A. Phillips, a professor of environmental analysis and the Conservancy’s director since 2020.

Yet much like the fungi studied in the on-site mycology lab, the beneficial impacts of the Conservancy are proliferating throughout the region thanks to strategic collaborations with students, faculty, and community partners.

Warehouses: A Billion-Foot Problem

“The first thing I wanted to do as director was create an animated map of warehouse growth in the Inland Empire, because the 20 years I’ve been at Pitzer College have been absolutely pivotal in terms of the footprint of this industry on the region, just swallowing up land,” Phillips said.

With the help of a student fellow, Graham Brady ’21, the Conservancy created a rudimentary map, published in the *Los Angeles Times*, which showed warehouses counting for more than a billion square feet in the Inland Empire. The exponentially increasing sprawl has an immense environmental impact in terms of air, noise, and light pollution, disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities.

Mike McCarthy, an atmospheric scientist fighting a proposed development in his own backyard as a member of Riverside Neighbors Opposing Warehouses, contacted Phillips after seeing the map and partnered with the Conservancy to create a user-friendly app, Warehouse CITY, that visualizes and quantifies the data, making it easily accessible.



The outdoor classrooms at the Redford Conservancy offer spaces for faculty, including Adjunct Assistant Professor of Environmental Analysis Monica Mahoney (center), to discuss environmental challenges and solutions with students.

“Communities have lived experience that [warehouses are] degrading their quality of life, but they can’t put that into technical language,” McCarthy said. “My goal was to try to enable conversations that include and facilitate community engagement with the public planning process in a way that is not available right now just because of the asymmetry in information and knowledge that’s inherent in the process.”

Now used by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the tool has helped in litigation cases in both Riverside and Inland Empire counties and supports the work of local groups addressing environmental injustice. It continues to gain traction, and the Conservancy recently applied for a California Environmental Protection Agency grant to create a version for the state’s Central Valley.

An Appeal to the Governor

Phillips, along with representatives from the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice and the Sierra Club, used the data as a springboard to write a comprehensive report, “A Region in Crisis: The Rationale for a Public Health State of Emergency in the Inland Empire.”

In addition to coverage by numerous media outlets, including the *L.A. Times* and the *Guardian*, the report was sent to California Gov. Gavin Newsom’s office. The report was accompanied by a letter asking the governor to declare a halt on the construction of new warehouse space until the full environmental impact could be ascertained.

As of publication, that construction continues, but Phillips said the effort has earned the Conservancy a seat at the table, including invitations to discussions with developers, city council members, and an upcoming meeting with Rob Bonta, California’s attorney general.

“We did this thing that I like to teach and do,” said Phillips, “which is a blend of activism and scholarship.”

Dual-use farming—also known as agrivoltaics—pairs regenerative farming with solar energy production on the same land. The Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research awarded Pitzer College \$1.8 million to study its impact in a project led by Director Susan A. Phillips (pictured, inset) and Conservancy Fellow Arthur Levine ’14.



A new app tracking warehouse sprawl encourages more "community engagement with the public planning process in a way that is not available right now."

—Mike McCarthy, atmospheric scientist

Making Farming More Attractive

That ethos guides much of the Conservancy’s work, including its interest in regenerative agriculture. San Bernardino and Riverside counties are losing farmland faster than any other area in California and are in the top 12 counties of the nation in terms of farmland acreage loss, according to a recent report by American Farmland Trust.

“This farmland is this precious asset, it’s part of food security, it’s part of climate resilience, it’s part of ecosystem support and stewardship and we’re paving it over,” said Arthur Levine ’14, a Pitzer grad and a Fellow in Applied Research with the Conservancy who is focused on sustainable agriculture.

One way to address this issue is to make farming more appealing, economically viable, and multibeneficial. The Conservancy was recently awarded a \$1.8 million grant from the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research to study agrivoltaics—the practice of installing solar panels on farmland over crops. This gives the crops (and farmworkers) shade while preserving water and producing energy.

The three-year project, which will include three quarter-acre research plots, is the first of its kind in Southern California and will employ the expertise of soil geochemists and microbiologists, crop and climate scientists, as well as students who will be involved in the research.



The Conservancy is located on land adjacent to the Bernard Field Station, where Pitzer students go into the field to examine thriving local habitats just a few blocks from campus.

“[The dashboard’s] not just giving people access to the data, it’s giving people a taste of what a liberal arts college can do in terms of thinking and situating data in real-world ways that matter for real-world, everyday people.”

—Susan A. Phillips, director, Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability

Under Threat: Local Habitats

Students are playing a large role in another of the Conservancy’s major projects: an interactive dashboard that looks at the impact of pollution on animals and ecosystems in Southern California funded by a gift from Pitzer trustee Harold A. Brown (*learn more about that gift on p. 40*).

“The dashboard is drawing everything together,” Phillips said. “We have an incredible data set to share and [the dashboard’s] not just giving people access to the data, it’s giving people a taste of what a liberal arts college can do in terms of thinking and situating data in real-world ways that matter for real-world, everyday people.”

She sees the dashboard, which launched this April, being used in advocacy efforts by environmental groups, in planning and development, in an educational capacity for students from kindergarten through college, and by the average person looking to make informed decisions.

“We’re also creating a lot of interactivities to engage people in a learning

process that we hope will create a paradigm shift in terms of how people view this problem and the urgency of making change,” Phillips said.

For Levine, such efforts demonstrate how even small organizations can produce a larger beneficial effect.

“The Redford Conservancy is small but mighty,” he said. “We have a very ambitious portfolio of things we’re working on. We’re excited to share it, and we’re excited for people who want to be involved.”

With a small staff and 15 student fellows a year, the Conservancy is working to move mountains, or, more specifically, preserve them, while ushering in a change of consciousness in Southern California and beyond.

“What we need is a fundamental rewiring of society, and that’s what we’re interested in at the Conservancy,” Phillips said. “We’re really interested in that big picture.”

Read more about the new Conservancy interactive dashboard and Trustee Brown’s support on p. 40.



Lessons From a Little Farm

The author reflects on what she’s learned about the balance of nature from getting up extra early and living communally

By WYNNE CHASE '26
2023–24 Grove House Caretaker

My whole life I’ve worked on little farms. When I was young, my mom sent me to a co-ed overnight camp in Massachusetts, which, to this day, provides the brightest memories when I’m feeling nostalgic about my childhood. I would wake up surrounded by about 25 other sleeping children my age and make breakfast with the other early risers for everybody on the farm. Each day varied, but, as an animal and crop farm, generally we would do farm maintenance and take care of all the sweet animals. We did not have electronics at the farm, so in our spare time we told stories, made crafts, walked the lovely trails on the property, and more. It was idyllic.

When I outgrew camps, I got my farm fix through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF); I was alone in the big world to gain independence in an agricultural setting. If you haven’t heard of WWOOF, it’s an organization in which people who own farms allow visitors room and board in exchange for farm work.

Last year, during some dreary winter days in Claremont, I allowed myself to dream of the upcoming summer. I feared, though, with all my potential plans, I would finally out-farm myself, and I would be too weary of the early mornings and manual labor.

But that wasn’t the case. In fact, when summer started, my love for the agricultural world grew. In spades! But I never can explain my love for farming without a jumble of praises, so I’ve finally taken the time here to carefully delineate some of the most important experiences and lessons I’ve had.

Waking Up Early

I’ve always been an early riser, but few people rise as early as a farmer. I am never-endingly amazed when I wake up at 6:30 a.m., thinking it must be the middle of the night, and the head farmer has already been up for two hours doing likely the most back-breaking work in recorded history. Eventually, I came to realize that spending time with others resulted in our sleep schedules beginning to align. And when my elder-farmer idol and I started to get up at the same time, I certainly took notice.

Waking when farmers do made me feel like I got an extra day within each existing day. I was able to do more, and it made me realize that prior to this improvement in my circadian rhythm, I could never have made the most of each day because I just wasn’t awake enough to do so.

Along with the ability to add more substance to my days, I also had

the opportunity to enjoy life slowly. Waking earlier meant I could eat breakfast lazily; suddenly I had time to track the leaves outside the window that were whisked away by a spontaneous gust of wind. I sat with the farm dogs and gave them the love and attention they deserved (and begged for). Few things now are as important to me as taking it slowly. Admittedly, in college, it’s hard to slow down. The world is moving so quickly around us, and if we take a step back, we risk being left in the dust. Due to this pressured pace, I value (and do sometimes hate—because I am only human) my long walks to classes at Pomona College that are built into my days. I get to spend 23 minutes listening to the bustle of ever-busy students and watching how different seasons are reflected in the environment around me.

Helping One Another

When living on the farm, possibly the most pivotal culture shock was being asked, “How can I help you?” Hello?! I never expected anyone to just offer themselves up to help me right after finishing all of their chores. And the craziest part is, I started to reciprocate with that question! I’m sure the guilt of feeling like the least kind person on the farm would have gotten to me if I didn’t offer. I truly think that offering up your services to work together in such a beautiful collective effort, even when your own work is finished for the day, is one of the kindest and most rewarding things that a person can do.

The give and take of offering and accepting creates a community that can, and does, rely on each other. I cannot possibly explain how close this brings members of these communities.

Living Communally

In a college setting, we’re incredibly lucky because we mostly live walking distance from all our peers. Opportunities for such a lifestyle dwindle impressively after and away from college. There is something special about places where you can see your peers at all hours because you get to experience when they’re not performing—when they’re sleepy or stressed or emotional or uncontrollably happy.

Farms provide that environment; typically, in this setting, members of the community will cook together or for one another, take care of anybody who is sick (sometimes with some incredible plant-made remedies), and just generally spend almost every second together.



“The land is what grounds us. We were born on it, and it’s where we’ve lived our whole lives. Working on farms has given me an understanding and appreciation of nature, and all the environmental concerns and issues you hear about every day, in a completely unexpected and intimate way.”

—Wynne Chase '26

Getting Absolutely Disgusting

At the end of each day on one of the farms, I had chicken excrement coating every inch of my shoes and pants. My hands were perpetually dirt-covered, and one day a bird actually thought my hair looked like the most luxurious toilet of all. It didn't matter. I wasn't embarrassed. Everyone looked disgusting.

And there is something so freeing about no longer worrying about conforming to every single beauty standard. It would be insane of me to claim that all of these standards no longer irritatingly shadowed my days just because I was on a farm, but certainly many of them melted away due to the situation and the community.

Talking to Animals, Trees, Bugs, Yourself

As much as I've stressed the community on farms, sometimes there are not many people there. Sometimes you work alone and sleep alone and wake up alone. This lifestyle can take some getting used to, but it can provide the most impactful opportunity to look inward or get creative about entertainment and one's interactions.

I realized, on a farm in Maine, that my closest friend might be the llama I was trying to win over.

He would stay away from me, on the opposite side of the pasture, and mirror my movements like an incredibly adept boxer circling the perimeter of the ring. I finally decided to start talking to him the way you do with animals you're trying to befriend.

I used a high, soft voice and reassuring phrases. I didn't realize that

what I really wanted was to talk to somebody. Eventually, as time went on, the llama warmed up (slightly) to me. I giggled (assumably with him) when a chicken flew up and sat on his back. I talked to him a lot; he listened to many speeches about the potential symbiosis of our friendship. Talking to him made me feel like I had company.

I also talked to myself through the form of journaling. I use my journal mostly as a way to recall the events of my days, instead of a place to describe emotions. I journaled so much during those days, and I found moments every day to write about. I went from just needing a friend to talk with to having a llama partner who sort of liked me and having a robust journal that I still look back at now and cry while reading.

Giving Back to Nature

The land is what grounds us. We were born on it, and it's where we've lived our whole lives. Working on farms has given me an understanding and appreciation of nature, and all the environmental concerns and issues you hear about every day, in a completely unexpected and intimate way.

No matter how removed we may become or feel from the natural world, it is always giving to us. And, to me, farming feels like the first step in reciprocating those gifts.

And if I were to opine slightly here, I would add that anything we can do to help the Earth survive a little longer is our most important work.

This piece has been adapted from a Dec. 7, 2023, article in *The Outback News* student publication.

“But Climate Change Isn't Real”

Student responses to the naysayers



Who worries the most about the environmental future? Gen Zers. According to a recent Pew Institute study, a higher percentage of people born between 1997 and 2012 are concerned about climate change issues than any older generation.

The study's results shouldn't be a surprise since Gen Zers—and the groups following them—will experience more of the effects of climate change over their lifetimes than older groups. What do they think of the charges of climate change deniers? *Participant* asked three current environmental analysis majors to respond to some of the typical climate denial statements one hears today.

Argument: “OK, even if climate change is real, there’s nothing to be done about it—it’s too late. The level of cuts in greenhouse gas emissions that are needed is on a scale that’s just too large.”



When Sia Were '25 hears this, she shakes her head. “I believe it is honestly the bare minimum to focus on the environment in my collegiate pursuit because I value being here—on this planet,”

she said. “Living sustainably is a form of actively loving this planet. I believe cultivating a healthy connection with the Earth propels a better well-being.” In response to the argument that it's too late, she said there is always something that can be done.

“As epidemiologist Nancy Krieger once said, ‘Ignorance forestalls action.’ What I take from this is that the minute someone exhibits resignation or palatability to climate change it usually means they are not being directly impacted by it,” she explained. “What is more, if they do not see the harm or feel the harm they usually have no incentive to change. I would simply ask them a question about where the metals for their technological devices are sourced from and see what they say. It affects all of us, whether we're aware of it or not.”

Argument: “People are already developing new, green technology right now, so there’s nothing to be done until it’s ready. We just need to wait for it.”



How long can we wait? Sofia Ledor '26 doesn't think we can. “Waiting for technology is a counterproductive use of time and hinders our ability to mitigate the ongoing

impacts of climate change right now,” she said. “As I look at my generation, we must advocate for and implement holistic solutions that address the immediate challenges while paving the way for a sustainable future.”

For her, the argument that green technologies are already in development produces a false sense of security. “Climate change is an urgent and global challenge demanding immediate action,” she said. “Waiting for future technologies leaves us vulnerable to the current consequences of climate change. Green technologies already exist that can reduce emissions. The current barriers to implementing them and curbing emissions are largely linked to policy issues. The key lies in assessing the economic viability of these options and fostering the political will of individuals, organizations, and corporations to embrace green change.”

Argument: “Plants and animals are able to adapt to climate change. We can too. What’s the big deal?”



Ben Shostak '24 said adaptation is possible, but this argument oversimplifies the issue. “I do think humans can adapt to climate change,” he said. “But I think the big deal here is that

if humans are going to successfully adapt to a changing climate, we still need to end the use of fossil fuels. That doesn't seem likely right now. It doesn't seem like fossil fuel companies are going to stop before 2050.”

What he believes is necessary are more economic incentives. “I think if humans continue down a capitalistic and materialistic path, the sustainable option must be an economically incentivized option as well. Otherwise, humans will just continue to consume the land and its resources while giving nothing in return,” he said. “Anthropogenic climate change is the most important problem my generation is going to face. Everyone will be impacted by the climate changes that humans are creating. That is why building a sustainable economy powered by renewable energy sources is so crucial for us. It's the only way I see to have any hope of limiting the planet's warming in the future.”

COMMUNITY BOOKSHELF

Red Planet Rising

The Pitzer community's latest offerings range from a plan for colonizing Mars to texts on childbirth, yoga, and murder most foul

1. A CITY ON MARS: CAN WE SETTLE SPACE, SHOULD WE SETTLE SPACE, AND HAVE WE REALLY THOUGHT THIS THROUGH?

(PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE)

If grim predictions about climate change come true, what next? Would Mars serve as a good alternative to Earth? Is living in space all it's cracked up to be? In this *New York Times* bestseller, **Zach Weinersmith '03** and Kelly Weinersmith offer a sometimes tongue-in-cheek off-world investigation of these questions. Equipped with charming cartoon illustrations and humorous anecdotes, their book fearlessly probes the ethical and scientific concerns of space settlement. Can you make babies in space? Should corporations govern space settlements? What about space war? Their book considers the possibility of lunar colonization and Mars settlements, and both are daunting options now. The authors don't rule out life in space, but, as *Kirkus Reviews* points out, their timeline "is centuries rather than decades" despite the "optimism of SF writers and the current crop of adventurous billionaires."

2. BREAK AND FLOW: HIP HOP POETICS IN THE AMERICAS

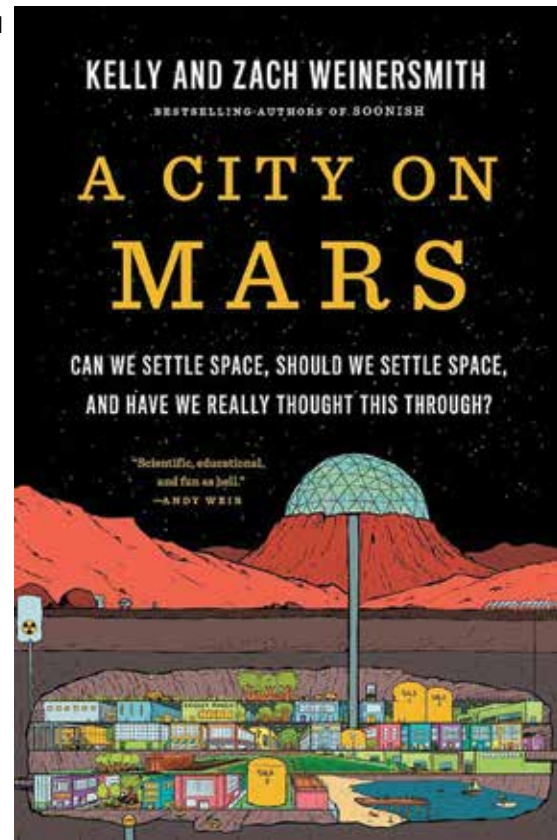
(UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA PRESS)

Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish and Portuguese **Charlie Hankin** evokes hip hop as a means of empowerment, resistance, and creative expression for rap artists around the world. Hankin draws from song archives and ethnographic fieldwork in Cuba, Brazil, and Haiti to uncover shared Afro-diasporic poetics and transatlantic yearnings. In a recent review, UCLA Professor Adam Bradley says the book "showcases the poetic innovation and political impact of rap artists responding to colonial legacies, present-day political circumstances, and their own aesthetic imperatives."

3. I LOVE YOU SO MUCH IT'S KILLING US BOTH

(SOFT SKULL PRESS)

Set in the suburbs of L.A. and New York City, the debut novel by **Mariah Stovall '15** is an immersive journey into the life and mind of Khaki Oliver, who's perennially trying to disappear into codependent friendships, a relationship with an ill-advised boyfriend, the punk scene, or simply the ether.



Kirkus Reviews describes Stovall's story as "a powerful testimony to the enduring violence of harmful relationships and the profoundly difficult task of recovery."

4. GRANDMA'S HANDS

THE FLUTE

(FREEDOM THREE PUBLISHING)

In 1971, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame musician Bill Withers wrote the song "Grandma's Hands" in honor of his maternal grandmother. The heartwarming musical tribute reached No. 18 on the Best-Selling Soul Singles chart and No. 42 on the Billboard Hot 100. Fifty years later, **Joel Harper '95** and **Marcia J. Withers '74** have adapted the song as an illustrated book for children. Harper also recently scribed another children's book,

The Flute, in which a young boy has his video games taken away by his parents and discovers the power of music instead (the story includes a QR code to listen to Harper's original flute music).

5. BIRTHING JUSTICE: BLACK WOMEN, PREGNANCY, AND CHILDBIRTH

(ROUTLEDGE)

In the second edition of this widely taught staple, editor (with Julia Chinyere Oparah) and Professor of Sociology **Alicia Bonaparte** offers six new chapters on breastfeeding, Black infant health, and other aspects of childbirth in Black communities. *Birthing Justice* serves as a seminal text for those interested in maternal health care, reproductive justice, health equity, intersectional racial justice, and how to fix a broken maternal care system.

6. THE NEUROSCIENCE OF YOGA AND MEDITATION

(SINGING DRAGON)

In this "must-have" for any yogi, **Brittany Fair '11** presents a comprehensive review of scientific research on how yoga and meditation affect the brain. Fair also offers useful tools for lay readers to interpret scientific jargon as well as exploring the current limitations in studying these practices. According to an advance review by physical therapist Kaleigh Mulpeter, Fair's book is for anyone with an interest in examining "the mind-body connection through an evidence-based, Western lens."

7. ROOTS OF RESISTANCE: A STORY OF GENDER, RACE, AND LABOR ON THE NORTH COAST OF HONDURAS

(UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS)

The treatise by Associate Professor of Chicano/a-Latino/a Transnational Studies **Suyapa Portillo Villeda '96** has been hailed as a first-of-its-kind study of the working-class culture of resistance on the Honduran North Coast and the radical organizing that challenged U.S. capital and foreign intervention at the onset of the Cold War. The book looks at the intersection of gender, race, and place and received the 2021 Sara A. Whaley Prize of the National Women's Studies Association.

8. CAMILO PESSANHA'S MACAU STORIES

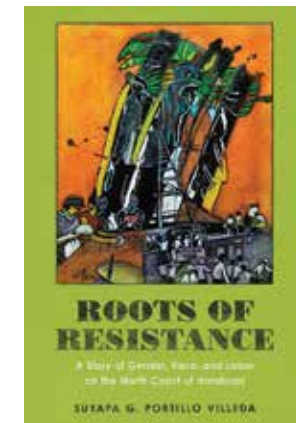
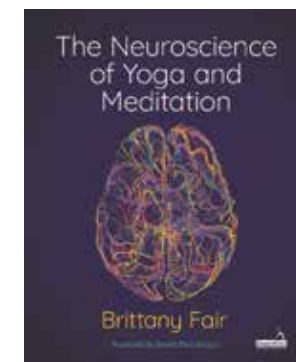
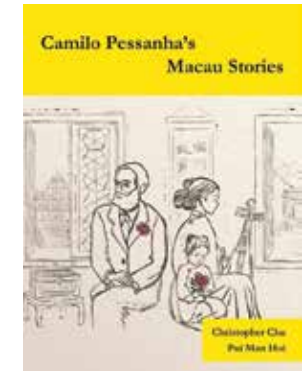
(MACANESE PUBLISHING)

Poet Camilo Pessanha is the subject of a new biography by **Christopher Chu '04** and Maggie Hoi. Pessanha was a leading figure of Portuguese symbolism on the strength of a single published work, *Clepsidra*, which appeared six years before his death in 1926. "Pessanha is a relatively well-known person in Macao, but at the same time he's not," Chu explained. Their book aims to correct that ambiguous situation.

9. DEVIL HOUSE

(MACMILLAN)

From bestselling author and musician **John Darnielle '95** comes a gripping novel about murder, truth, artistic obsession, and the dangers of storytelling. Darnielle chronicles the efforts of a true crime author working on an unsolved double homicide with satanic overtones. According to Dwight Garner writing in the *New York Times*, the book, which is now available in paperback, is a "confident, creepy, and soulful page-turner."



I had no idea where it was going in the best possible sense. ... It's never quite the book you think it is. It's better."

10. ...AND SO THE WIND WAS BORN

(FLOWERSONG PRESS)

A book of poetry by **Gina Duran '19** delves into the themes of love, friendship, community, and the desire to heal. Duran examines the ways we struggle and fall during the healing process and how the power of the love of a single person can inspire a community to lift each other up during (and after) the experiences of trauma and hardship.



CONSERVANCY GIFT

Brown Gift Supports New Interactive Dashboard on Environmental Threats

A digital tool that enables the public to view Southern California environmental and climate data on everything from pollution and food security to habitats and coastal vulnerability was launched this spring with the support of a \$100,000 gift from The Eileen and Harold Brown Foundation. Harold A. Brown is a member of the Board of Trustees of Pitzer College. This is the second gift the Browns have given in support of the Conservancy.

The gift was used to complete the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability’s Dashboard Project, which is viewable at socalearth.org. The new data tool—titled “So Cal Earth”—offers an online interactive approach to raising public awareness about the importance of climate-first and community-first decision-making in the region.

The dashboard features several mapping and data visualization entry points as well as an “Interactivities” section. Stories, illustrations, and data vividly bring to life the plight and power of many plant and animal species in a format accessible for non-scientists.

As lifelong supporters of environmental awareness efforts, the Browns saw an opportunity to become involved with the Conservancy’s work through this project, which encourages users to think more deeply about their surrounding environment.

For Director Susan A. Phillips, the completion of this project with the Browns’ support marks an exciting new development for the Conservancy’s educational outreach strategy.

“Having this tool is really exciting,” Phillips said. “We have an incredible data set to share with all of Southern California. We’re not just giving people access to the data, we’re giving them a taste of what a liberal arts college can do in terms of thinking and situating data in real-world ways that matter to everyone.”

For more on the dashboard, see p. 31 or visit www.pitzer.edu/participant.

“We’re not just giving people access to the data, we’re giving them a taste of what a liberal arts college can do in terms of thinking and situating data in real-world ways that matter to everyone.”

—Redford Conservancy Director
Susan A. Phillips

FUND UPDATE

Women of the Sixties Fund Targets Student Emergencies

The Women of the Sixties Endowed Emergency Fund is the new name for an effort to help students whose families experience a sudden financial change affecting the student’s ability to continue at Pitzer. Pitzer’s Advancement team and the alumnae behind the fund are seeking support in the form of gifts of cash, stock, donor-advised funds, and other planned-giving vehicles involving bequests for the fund. Once the endowment is complete, Pitzer sophomores through seniors will be eligible to apply.

For more information, contact Assistant Vice President of Advancement Yulanda Davis-Quarrie at Yulanda_Davis-Quarrie@pitzer.edu.



GRANT

Inside-Out Program Receives \$25,000 to Support Students After Incarceration

Pitzer’s trailblazing effort in the area of prison education has received a boost with a gift of \$25,000 from the Sam Simon Charitable Foundation in support of the Inside-Out Pathway-to-BA program and reentry help for formerly incarcerated students.

The foundation, which creates pathways out of poverty for many individuals and helps to support animal welfare efforts, made the gift to establish the Sam Simon Foundation Scholarship.

The foundation gift recognizes that improving outcomes for incarcerated students doesn’t end with their release. Eligible candidates for the scholarship include formerly incarcerated students who are continuing their educational journey and students at risk of facing housing insecurity while pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

The Inside-Out program introduced its first classes in 2015. Since then, the program has graduated two cohorts, totaling 16 students, with a third cohort scheduled to graduate this year.



FUNDRAISING MILESTONE

A Record Season of Giving Thanks to Alumni and Family Support

Pitzer closed 2023 with a record-setting Season of Giving campaign that marked a major milestone in Pitzer’s recent fundraising history.

Funds will be used to help current and future students in three areas: scholarships, internships, and support in the areas of greatest need.

Propelled by many alumni and families, along with several special challenges, Pitzer netted more than \$1.1 million during the campaign, which started with Giving Tuesday on Nov. 28 and ran through Dec. 31.

In 2022, the Season of Giving campaign raised about \$500,000. The 2023 total not only

doubled that amount, it also surged past its goal of enlisting 625 donors, reaching 718.

The Pitzer Advancement team attributed success to a significant number of alumni and families who responded to appeals and contributed during the monthlong campaign. About 44% of Pitzer alumni and 33% of current families gave gifts in support of the campaign.

Several special challenges incentivized the Pitzer community to participate. These included the President’s Challenge, which was sponsored by Strom and Isabelle Thacker and promised a gift of \$10,000 when 500 donors contributed to the campaign (that goal was

reached). A challenge organized by the Board of Trustees resulted in unlocking an additional \$157,000.

Other successful challenges were issued by the Alumni Board; Family Leadership Council; John and Janie Barman P’20, P’27; and Lupe and Alvaro Cardenas P’25.

“A culture of philanthropy is vital to any school’s fundraising efforts,” said Shannon Spaccarotelli, senior director for alumni and family engagement and annual giving. “Our success this year is a strong sign that such a culture is thriving and growing in our community.”

GRANT

San Manuel Grant Will Enhance Native and Indigenous Outreach

Pitzer College has received a \$60,000 grant from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians in support of the College’s efforts to support Native and Indigenous students and communities through cultural education, archives, oral histories, internship opportunities, and relationships with local tribes.

The grant will provide funding to the Native & Indigenous Initiatives at Pitzer College, a program that is housed in the College’s Community Engagement Center (CEC), and to a new oral history project of Pitzer’s CASA (Critical Action & Social Advocacy) community center and community-based research program.

The \$60,000 grant, which was awarded last fall, is the latest example of San Manuel’s long history of supporting Pitzer’s efforts to support Native and Indigenous populations.

“Pitzer’s Native Indigenous Initiatives programs align with San Manuel’s giving pillars of ‘Inspiring our Future through Education’ and ‘Preserving Cultural Traditions,’” said Lynn Valbuena, Chairwoman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. “It is important to collaborate with local communities in this work, and we are pleased to be able to assist Pitzer on an important initiative that will benefit Native and Indigenous students in this region and beyond.”



ALUMNI

Eco Awareness is Royally Important

An alum educates New York City schoolkids—and an unexpected visitor—about a harbor teeming with life



ABOVE: Shinara Sunderlal '17 of the Billion Oyster Project greeted England's Prince William on his recent visit to New York City. TOP: "Oysters are very resilient," said Sunderlal, holding up a specimen on a recent outing in New York Harbor. (PHOTOS COURTESY OF ZACH HETRICK/SPRINT STEP)

By TOM JOHNSON

For Shinara Sunderlal '17, protecting the environment is personal. In her work for the last two-and-a-half years as education outreach manager for the Billion Oyster Project, she's spread the word to hundreds of New York City schoolkids about the nonprofit's goal to reseed the harbor with oysters (that "billion" is no exaggeration) by 2035.

One of the people Sunderlal recently connected with wasn't a New Yorker, but he evinced an intense interest in the Billion Oyster Project nonetheless—Britain's Prince William. "I got looped in a couple of days before he visited. It was a visit I came to find out had been in the planning stages for two years," Sunderlal said.

The prince regularly comes to New York City for the Earthshot Prize, which is a £1 million prize awarded each year to a deserving nonprofit.

"They stumbled across us because they wanted to visit a nonprofit as he was promoting the prize," she said. The prince "came straight from the airport. Our boat picked him up at JFK and he got off at Governor's Island in the harbor south of Manhattan. That's where I received him."

The prince spent about an hour on the island before being motored up the East River and over to Brooklyn Bridge Park. He was hardly in a spectator's position; Sunderlal and her colleagues had the prince actually wade into the water to view the oyster reef.

"We put him in waders, and he explored the little critters with some middle-schoolers," she said. "He left, and here's the beautiful part: It started raining two seconds later. It had been raining all day and it broke just for him, for his visit."

According to Sunderlal, just like for the prince, it all comes down to taking personal responsibility.

"There should be respect underscoring every action we take," she said. "For me, that's where I identified the biggest impact I could have. I love talking with people and personally showing them the beauty and wonders of the environment. It's really about making a personal connection with the environment—that's what ultimately will change behaviors."

After majoring in environmental analysis with a focus on environmental policy and minoring in biology at Pitzer, Sunderlal went straight to grad school at New York University's Steinhardt

School of Culture, Education, and Human Development.

"The jobs I was getting out of college I was really overqualified for because I had already learned a great deal during my time at Pitzer," she said. "The policy degree wasn't giving me the recognition I needed in my field, so I ended up going to grad school, which was one-and-a-half years."

Sunderlal's first job after grad school was at Wildlife Conservation Society, a global nonprofit, followed by a stint at the New York Aquarium in Brooklyn. "It was pretty structured in the aquarium world," she said. "They knew what they were doing getting people connected with the environment. I really learned a lot and changed my mind on how I felt about zoos and aquariums."

Although Sunderlal said she hadn't visited an aquarium since she was a child and only went for the interview, the job turned out to be a "lucky break." "I was there through the pandemic, and I didn't get laid off as most informal educators did during that period." Soon after, she transitioned to the Billion Oyster Project.

"In addition to restoring the vibrancy of New York Harbor's oyster population, Sunderlal said the organization wants to connect with a million New Yorkers. "That's where my job comes in," she said. "I work with teachers and student audiences as communications manager and event coordinator, mostly K-12, but I also work with pre-K through grad school. My main focus

"In my case, it's just getting students to realize that the harbor exists. Most students don't think of it—that they live on an island. To let them know of all the life in the harbor and that it's the healthiest it has been in decades is real-world stuff that they can take part in."

—Shinara Sunderlal '17

is to train teachers and inspire them to get their students outdoors and figure out what they can be doing on the waterfront."

New York Harbor was once the U.S. capital for oyster harvesting and was teeming with oyster beds. According to Sunderlal, the beds were functionally extinct until the reseeded began. The oysters are a viable keystone species here; they create reefs, which attract a multitude of positive impacts on the city.

"Oysters are very resilient," she said. "Natural populations were found that we didn't even reintroduce in places like the Gowanus Canal, which is a toxic superfund site, so go figure!



For Sunderlal, educating school children is a crucial first step in raising public awareness.

As long as there is oxygen and food for them, oysters can survive even in high-nitrogen waters."

"In my case, it's just getting students to realize that the harbor exists," she continued. "Most students don't think of it—that they live on an island. To let them know of all the life in the harbor and that it's the healthiest it has been in decades is real-world stuff that they can take part in."

Looking back on the prince's visit, Sunderlal said that reporters were everywhere and that she had never been remotely part of something like that.

"I was basically in charge of talking about our education work," she said. "I think they gave me six minutes. The prince seemed like

a very genuine guy and good at what he does. He was present and asked insightful questions. It really felt like he was listening. He's also very tall and kind of loomed over me."

Sunderlal said that her "walk and talk" with Prince William can serve as an object lesson for all of us in connecting with the environment.

"We all get caught up in life and sometimes forget to take pauses," she said. "Just taking a 20-minute walk outside can affect decisions you might subsequently make for the betterment of our natural world."

For Sunderlal and the rest of us, that just might be the pearl in the oyster.

ALUMNI NEWS

New Board Members Demonstrate Expertise in Communications, Education, Entrepreneurship, and Research

Six new members have joined the Alumni Board of Pitzer College, which is tasked with serving and engaging the Pitzer community by fostering lifelong relationships between alumni and the College:

Linda deBaun '68 worked as a drama and English teacher at Yucaipa High School, retiring after 40 years in 2020. She serves on the board of directors for the Yucaipa-Calimesa Educational Enrichment Foundation. She earned her bachelor's degree in English literature from Pitzer and went on to earn a master's in English from Claremont Graduate University in 1972 and a master's in theater from Cal State Fullerton in 1999.

Susan Warren '78 has been developing, inspiring, teaching, and directing children and educational research, curriculum, and courses for more than 45 years. In 1980, she co-founded (on Pitzer's campus) and still directs Project Think, a nonprofit organization committed to supporting and enriching the lives of children through excellence in STEAM—science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math—education. She earned a bachelor's degree in organizational studies and psychology at Pitzer and holds a doctorate in urban leadership from Claremont Graduate University.

Leeshawn Cradoc Moore '87 serves as the director of institutional research and assessment at Pitzer. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and Spanish from Pitzer and holds a doctorate in higher education from Claremont Graduate University. She has also served at Pitzer as an associate dean of admission and associate dean of students and is a former director of institutional research at two other institutions.

Meena Duguay '93 is a 12th grade English teacher at California Online Public Schools. She earned her bachelor's degree in theater from Pitzer and a master's degree in teaching and learning from the University of La Verne. She has served as an assistant director of musicals for the Ontario-Montclair School District for the past 14 years and is a current cast member in the children's television series "Learn With Me," a project made possible through a collaboration between the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools and PBS affiliate KVCR-TV.



Linda deBaun '68



Susan Warren '78



Leeshawn Cradoc Moore '87



Meena Duguay '93



Brandi Redick '01



Jumane Redway-Upshur '01

Brandi Redick '01 is a social media director at Carol H. Williams Advertising, one of the largest, independent, and female-owned communications agencies in the U.S. She earned her bachelor's degree in English world literature and gender studies from Pitzer and a master's in education from USC.

Jumane Redway-Upshur '01 is the founder and executive director of My Black History Calendar and the My-BHC mobile app. He earned his bachelor's degree in organizational studies and media studies from Pitzer and an MBA in sports marketing and a JD degree from the University of Oregon. He also serves as a community ambassador and social equity partner for the Bay Area-based cannabis company STIIIZY.

Returning to the board this year are Mark A. Cunningham '89, P'25, who is serving the first year of his two-year term as president; Diana Bob '02, former board president; Derric J. Johnson '95, Race and Justice Committee chair; Elijah Pantoja '18, secretary; Josue Pasillas '17, Reunion Committee chair; Paolina Cuevas '20; Kyle K. Dalrymple '17; Steven Liang '10; Jai Phillips '02; and Angela Sanbrano '75.

A Message From the Alumni Director



Dear Pitzer Alumni,

I'm thrilled to share the remarkable progress we've made together in my first year as the director of alumni programs. The Alumni Listening Tour—including the regional gatherings—has been at the forefront of our achievements with your stories taking center stage.

Thank you for giving your work, wisdom, and wealth to Pitzer College. Your financial

contributions have been the backbone of our success, driving positive changes across the College. Your service to the College as a volunteer has also been critical to our success. Your generosity in all ways

ensures that Pitzer remains a beacon of excellence for current and future students.

The Race and Justice Committee, with its commitment to fostering inclusiveness and social justice, has flourished in its first year thanks to your dedication. The Reunion Committee helped us achieve great results with Alumni Weekend 2024 and will very soon start planning Alumni Weekend 2025. The festivities will take place April 25-27 and will celebrate all class years ending in 0s and 5s.

Here's to the next chapter of shared success and impactful collaboration!

With immense gratitude,
Justin Baker
Director of Alumni Programs

CLASS NOTES ARE AVAILABLE ONLY VIA THE PRINT ISSUE OF PARTICIPANT.

IN MEMORIAM



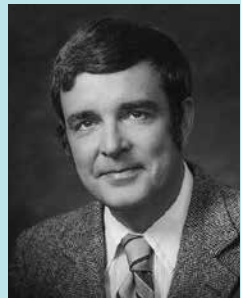
Katrelya Ann Angus '84

English Literature

Scholar and community activist Katrelya Ann Angus passed away last August. She was 62. A lifelong resident of Sierra Madre, California, Angus was a critic and lecturer on the works of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. Her work was featured in a variety of publications and websites, including TheOneRing.net and *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,*

Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature. She was also a belly dancer who performed at public events, including Sierra Madre's annual July Fourth parade.

An English major at Pitzer College, Angus was involved in volunteer work relating to nature and saving wildlife. She was also vocal at city board meetings and in the editorial pages of local newspapers in support of environmental issues, including clean water and water conservation.



Robert H. Atwell

President, Pitzer College

Robert (Bob) H. Atwell, who succeeded John W. Atherton to lead Pitzer College as its second president, passed away last October. He was 92.

During more than 40 years in higher education, Atwell was hailed as a leader who recognized the value of the student educational and cocurricular experience.

He served as vice chancellor for administration of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, before assuming the Pitzer presidency in 1970, and he was instrumental in the College's growth and development. Drawing on his experience in budget analysis while previously working for the U.S. Bureau of the Budget and in organizing mental health centers for the National Institute of Mental Health, Atwell blended expertise on budgetary matters with a progressive vision for Pitzer to occupy a place at the forefront of social reform.

During his eight-year tenure at Pitzer, Atwell reinforced and expanded the College's approach to innovative instruction, work-study experiences, experimentation, interdisciplinary learning, and social outreach. Immediately following his time at Pitzer, he went on to work for the American Council of Education in Washington, D.C., and served as the council's president for 12 years. Atwell was an advocate for higher education throughout his career, building coalitions across public, private, religious, and secular schools to promote better outcomes for students of all backgrounds. He was a nationally recognized and admired leader in higher education and received 17 honorary degrees.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio, and a master's in public administration from the University of Minnesota.

A private memorial service was held last fall in Sarasota, Florida; and his family is planning another memorial service in his honor to be held this summer in Wisconsin.



Devon Hartman '77

Psychology

An architect with a human-centered vision of environmental responsibility, Devon Hartman died in February after a long battle with cancer. He was 73.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Hartman took a circuitous route through several colleges and social justice organizations before attending Pitzer College, where he created his own

major in French and social activism. During a semester abroad in France helping restore a chateau in Burgundy, he fell in love with buildings and craftsmanship and switched career paths to architecture. In 1979, with partner and good friend Bill Baldwin, he co-founded the successful and award-winning HartmanBaldwin Design/Build, a full-service architecture, construction, interior design, and historic restoration company based in Claremont.

Hartman retired from the firm in 2010 to devote his efforts to fighting global warming. He focused on educating and engaging the community, retrofitting buildings, and teaching builders and homeowners alike how to reduce energy use. In 2015, he founded the Claremont-based nonprofit Community and Home Energy Revolution Project (CHERP), which has a mission of creating local jobs, saving money for needy residents, and putting funds back into the local economies, all while helping to respond to the effects of climate change and environmental injustice.



Jesse Lopez '24

Physics

A beloved student who forged friendships across The Claremont Colleges, Jesse Lopez '24 passed away on campus last October. He was 22. Born in Aspen, Colorado, Lopez attended Pitzer College to study physics and was the recipient of a prestigious scholarship from the Daniels Fund, which awards high-achieving students in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico.

Lopez overcame personal tragedy as a young teen when his parents were shot and killed by a relative in 2014. A 2019 profile in the *Aspen Times* describes the shattering, life-altering impact of their deaths on him and his older brother, Eliseo, and how the Aspen community rallied behind Lopez to support his academic aspirations. He was involved with a variety of organizations at Pitzer and The Claremont Colleges, including FirstGen, Latinx Student Union, ROTC, Gold Student Center, and ballroom dancing (he competed in waltz and tango competitions at UC San Diego, among other competitions).

During a memorial service last fall, faculty and friends described him as personable, hardworking, caring, friendly, welcoming, and possessing a good sense of humor. Pitzer's Latinx Student Union also created a community altar in the Gold Student Center's Dolores Huerta room, and students wrote messages and memories about Lopez on notecards to place at the altar. His cousin, Amy Amaya, thanked the Pitzer community at the service for its love and support. She recalled her cousin's warmth and humor and the impact he made on her life. "His laughter could fill the room," she said. "He was my beacon of light leading me home whenever I was lost."

Lopez is survived by his brother, Eliseo Mauricio Lopez; his aunt, Blanca Edith Argueta Amaya; his uncle, Jose Antonio Amaya Lopez; and his cousin, Amy Amaya.



Carolyn Bergson O'Brien '71

Psychology

Carolyn O'Brien passed away last October in North Carolina. She was 74. O'Brien was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and studied psychology at Pitzer College. As an undergraduate, she met her future husband, Ralph, a student at Claremont McKenna College (which was then Claremont Men's College). In 1981, she earned her master's degree in educational program

evaluation from the University of Virginia.

O'Brien's interest in education evaluation led to serving as a research assistant for a major longitudinal experiment in early child education, a study that continues as the Carolina Abecedarian Project. An avid fan of the UVA men's basketball team, she continued to work in education and health studies until retiring in 2014.



Susan Patron '69

English Literature

Acclaimed children's author Susan Patron died last October in Los Angeles. She was 75. Patron was a distinguished children's librarian and champion of intellectual freedom best known for her Newbery Medal-winning novel, *The Higher Power of Lucky*.

Born in San Gabriel, California, she later told interviewers how she knew as a child that she wanted to be a writer. As a Pitzer College student, Patron spent her junior year abroad at Dublin's Trinity College, where she sharpened her listening-for-stories skills. She recalled being surrounded by "gowned professors as well as the cab drivers, the children, and the pub orators—the best extemporaneous talkers in the world."

After graduation, she married René Patron, a rare-book restorer, and earned a Master of Library Science. She was then hired as children's librarian by the Los Angeles Public Library. She authored four picture books and five novels for middle-grade readers.



Elizabeth Russell '74

English Literature

Health-care executive Elizabeth Russell passed away last fall after battling cancer. She was 72. Born in Pasadena, she grew up in La Cañada, California, and attended Westridge School for Girls. At Pitzer College, she studied English literature and earned an MBA at USC. She worked in health management on contract negotiation and strategic network development.

Russell moved into senior management roles at Healthcare Partners Medical Group, Heritage Provider Group, and Scan Health Plan, where she served as the president and CEO of Scan Health Plan of Arizona. She also started a new company, Agilon Health, which was aligned with her beliefs in rethinking care for seniors. She was a trustee of Westridge School for Girls and co-founder of the Westridge Forever Fund, an endowment to create equitable financial assistance for students.



Al Schwartz

Professor Emeritus, Sociology

A professor emeritus and former dean who helped expand academic opportunities for students, Albert (Al) Schwartz passed away last December. He was 90.

Born in 1933 in the South Bronx, New York, Schwartz joined the Pitzer College faculty in 1965 and was the first sociologist hired by the College. Over the course of 32 years at Pitzer,

Schwartz served as dean of faculty from 1971 to 1977, dean of students from 1977 to 1978, and special assistant to the president from 1982 to 1983.

Schwartz earned his bachelor's degree from Hunter College and went on to receive a master's from Ohio State University, where he met and married Suzanne Connett. As one of the College's first faculty members, he described his early days at Pitzer as "heady times, the first six or seven years. We were trying to create an institution that reflected the ideals of the people who came together at that time. Our good fortune was that we had the human resources to build a community." At Pitzer he also met his second wife, Jill Benton, a Pitzer professor of literature, and they married in 1988.

Schwartz was an important advocate for the New Resources Program, which was founded under his name to make the college experience available to nontraditional-aged students. He established a scholarship in support of the program. Throughout his years of scholarship and teaching, Schwartz continued to serve as a popular commentator for the media on the sociology of Super Bowl viewing and other favorite American pastimes. His areas of expertise included construction of social and personal realities, crowds and fads, sports, and deviance.

In 1993 Schwartz played a key role in the founding of Miyazaki International University on the Japanese Island of Kyushu. As academic president and dean of faculty, he designed the entire curriculum, hired its first-year faculty, and led the enterprise through a challenging federal accreditation process conducted by the Japanese Ministry of Education.

Schwartz is survived by his wife, Jill; his son, Aaron; his stepchildren, Kate Nyce Tandon and Chris Nyce; and a large extended family. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to Pitzer College in support of the New Resources Scholarship Fund in memory of Al Schwartz.



Marvin Steindler '76

Philosophy

Calabasas Style Magazine Chief Photographer Marvin Steindler passed away last fall. He was 68. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he studied philosophy at Pitzer College before starting as a portrait studio photographer and building a career in portraiture, weddings, events, and residential and commercial photography projects.

Of his craft Steindler said: "To create a poignant portrait, it surpasses aesthetics, visual language, and technicalities. ... For me, it's about leaving an indelible mark on people's lives during significant moments."

Steindler and his wife, Linda, moved from Los Angeles to the Conejo Valley. In 2012, he started as staff photographer for *Calabasas Style Magazine* and produced its signature cover family photos for the next 11 years.

The magazine's editors paid tribute to Steindler, stating that "every job was a fresh creative challenge, and his passion never waned over the 47 years that he worked in this field."

PARTICIPATING

Taking on a Towering Issue

How one alum welds together feminism, environmentalism, and social justice in her art

By MARGUERITE ELLIOT '71

It's been an honor to have three of my environmentally themed "Sentinel" sculptures installed at Pitzer. Fifty-plus years ago, I lived in Holden Hall in my freshman and sophomore years, so it is now very fitting that my sculptures are standing on that space, which is now Holden Garden.

When I was an undergraduate, we didn't have an art department. But being part of The Claremont Colleges still gave us an opportunity to study at other schools in the consortium. At the time, a member of the Scripps faculty was Paul Soldner, one of the great ceramicists of the 20th century. His work emerged as ceramics was moving from a craft to an art. I had a chance to study with him.

I soon became entranced by ceramics. The transformation of wet malleable earth into a solid form was life changing. The intense heat of the gas-fired kiln changed the chemistry of the clay and made it rock hard. Today, I work with steel. The 3200 degrees Fahrenheit temperature of my welding torch makes the steel soft and malleable. Remove the heat and, voilà, it's rock solid again! I was in love with the transformative process.

After graduating, I immersed myself in the feminist art movement in Los Angeles in the early 1970s and created large-scale public installations at prominent locations including City Hall, all of which garnered widespread media coverage.

Today, living in Northern California, I've become a welder and create large-scale environmentally themed public art. Taking art out of the gallery makes it available to everyone.

The sentinels in Holden Garden are part of the "Sentinels: Protectors of Wild and Beautiful Places" series. They stand watch and witness what is happening to our environment. Five years ago, when I was an artist in residence staying in the Arctic Circle in northern Finland, I learned that the Arctic was warming much faster than the rest of the planet. I took a three-day solo drive to the farthest reaches of Finland and Norway. I drove through miles and miles of vast forests, marshes, and wildlands. No towns, no other cars, nothing. I realized I was totally dependent on cell phone towers and the GPS on my phone to guide me. My sentinels were inspired by the cell phone towers we are so dependent on. They reflect the precarious interface between technology and the environment. For example, the golden flame sitting atop one of the Holden Garden sentinels represents the tragedy of our recent wildfires in California and now all over the earth. The

"Welding has always been treated as a man's job. But every time I work with an electric welder, gas torch, and heavy steel, I feel that I'm making a statement. I see it as a feminist act."



flame also stands for hope and purification.

At Pitzer I learned to combine activism with art. And even though I didn't start welding until much later in my career, I can still find a connection between my welding work and my Pitzer experiences. Welding has always been treated as a man's job. But every time I weld steel, I feel that I'm making a statement. I see it as a feminist act. Activism and art go hand in hand, and in sculptures like my sentinels, the many kinds of activism that are important to me—feminism, women's rights, environmental and social justice—have come together thanks to heavy steel, a torch, and the transformative power of fire.

Marguerite Elliot '71 works on a Medusa Tree sculpture in the same studio where she created her "Sentinels" series.

Marguerite Elliot '71 is a Bay Area sculptor. Works from her "Sentinels" series are installed in Pitzer's Holden Garden through June 2024.



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What five key areas have guided Pitzer since 1963?

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See page 13 for more!

