Dear MES Community,

Greetings from Olympia! For those of us in the Pacific Northwest, this summer brought a welcome respite from the smoky skies of previous summers. The MES faculty and staff have done some outdoor adventuring and also made progress on various research and teaching projects. We’re excited to share an overview of faculty research and teaching on our website [LINK] Here are selected highlights.

I’ve been working with one MES student and two Evergreen undergraduate students to determine whether our applicants’ performance on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is a strong predictor of our students’ future academic success. Evergreen’s narrative evaluations are a unique resource that might inform broader conversations about the value of the GRE for graduate admissions, because they provide granular data about each student’s academic work in specific areas—writing, critical thinking, quantitative analysis—that are assessed by the GRE. Based on a preliminary study two years ago, we decided to make the GRE an optional component of our admissions criteria and replaced it with a required analytical essay on environmental policy. Hopefully, this more rigorous and extensive study, once published, will help other graduate programs as they evaluate their application requirements and decision-making process.

I’m continually impressed by the scholarship of [MES faculty](https://www.evergreen.edu/mes/master-environmental-studies-faculty). Consider [Shawn Hazboun’s](https://www.evergreen.edu/directory/people/hazbouns) sociological research as a case in point. In recent years, coastal and waterway communities in the Pacific Northwest have faced proposals to build or expand infrastructure facilitating the movement of fossil fuels, including export terminals, shipping transfer stations, storage facilities, refineries, railroads, and pipelines. For the past year, Shawn has worked to understand how these frontline communities are evaluating the ecological, economic, and social risks and benefits posed by these facilities and how to be involved in decision-making processes about them. Shawn also saw three previous research projects come to fruition as publications. These studies examined the way western communities respond to different frames for renewable energy projects, gender differences in pro-environmental behaviors around transportation, and alcohol consumption trends in fracking “boomtowns.” All three studies improve our understanding of the human dimensions of environmental issues through rigorous data collection and analysis.

Evergreen continues to receive accolades for its outstanding graduate programs. [Washington Monthly Magazine named Evergreen first out of 606 schools in the Master Degree Category](https://www.evergreen.edu/news/post/washington-monthly-names-evergreen-best-nation-master%E2%80%99s-university-category)! We believe that our excellent reputation comes, in no small part, from our passionate network of alumni who serve as advocates for the program and mentors for our students. We encourage you to stay involved with MES in the upcoming academic year.

**Upcoming Events:**

[**Return to Evergreen!**](https://www.evergreen.edu/return/2019) For 2019, this annual celebration of Greener alumni will happen over four days of events, including a robust day of activities at the Olympia campus on October 19. MES and MPA alumni are featured in a session on how their thesis or capstone project led them to their first post-graduate job: Theory to Practice: Graduate Alumni on a Capstone Shaping a Career. See all sessions for October 19, and join the event on the [Registration Page](https://3897.thankyou4caring.org/pages/return)

**Thesis Idea Fair!** Each fall, MES invites scientists, researchers, and leaders of the local environmental community to bring their research needs to MES students. The Thesis Idea Fair was created by alumni Dennis Buckingham, and has fostered many successful partnerships for research, internships, and networking between MES students and the greater community, including many NGOs and government agencies! Our 2019 event is Tuesday, November 5 from 4-6 pm. Interested in joining or learning more? Contact Assistant Director Andrea Martin at martina@evergreen.edu

As in previous years, the first week of the quarter will bring both a **new cohort of students** (meet a few of them on our [Current Students](https://www.evergreen.edu/mes/current-mes-students) page), and the opening of [**our application**](https://www.evergreen.edu/mes/apply) **to join the MES Program** in Fall 2020! If you know anyone interested in earning their MES at Evergreen please tell them to reach out to Assistant Director Andrea Martin at [martina@evergreen.edu](mailto:martina@evergreen.edu). They can also see upcoming information sessions and other ways to connect with us on our [Visit Us page](https://www.evergreen.edu/mes/visit)

We look forward to seeing many of you this fall and in the coming year!

Kevin Francis