

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY SEMINAR
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“Communicating ecological science by designing an urban wetland to foster a culture of sustainability - the case of *the Rain Project*”

I present an interdisciplinary, on-campus, student project, titled “The Rain Project” that I designed as an urban ecosystem restoration model as well as a collaborative pedagogical approach between ecological science and art at George Mason University (GMU), Virginia, USA. A group of students from several disciplines (e.g., environmental science, art, civil engineering, biology, communication, and film/media) participated in designing and constructing a floating wetland for a campus stormwater pond as part of sustainable stormwater management. The Rain Project has numerous implications for college education, scholarship, and service while presenting a novel way of building a sense of community among undergraduate students for ecological awareness and literacy. The floating wetland built was launched and maintained during the summer three months in 2015, filtering suspended sediments and nutrients. There is a great deal of interest and attention to be paid to link art and the science of ecosystem restoration to best obtain improvements in much-needed communication for the success of community participatory restoration projects, starting with college campuses for sustainability. I also believe that this kind of interdisciplinary, campus project can facilitate the changes we need to train next generation ecological engineers to be able to both think differently and communicate effectively. The Rain Project introduced students to new learning strategies that connected “systems thinking” with art, ecological science, and restoration practices.

TUESDAY November 8, 2016
3:00-4:15 PM
Innovation Hall Room 131