



Winter 2026 PCC Newsletter Student Voices

Message from PCC Director, Kyle Armour

It has been nearly 20 years since I first became involved in the PCC. As a graduate student, I found the vast landscape of UW climate research both exhilarating and daunting. The PCC served as my guiding light, connecting me with students and faculty across the University and introducing me to cutting-edge research through interdisciplinary courses and events like the PCC Summer Institute. I can trace the roots of every research project I have worked on to the ideas and collaborations I formed through the PCC.



I am honored to now serve as the sixth Director of the PCC and look forward to giving back to this remarkable community. I want to extend a huge thank you to outgoing PCC Director Becky Alexander for her outstanding leadership over the past five years, as well as to recent Directors Cecilia Bitz and LuAnne Thompson for their dedication to building such a vibrant and supportive community.

The PCC is more vital now than ever amid the current challenges facing higher education and scientific research. We remain committed to meeting these challenges, and are able to do so in large part due to the generosity of our donors. Looking forward, we will continue to strengthen our sense of community and foster

interdisciplinary collaboration. Many thanks to the PCC Graduate Steering Committee (P-GraSC) for hosting monthly “Third Thursdays,” which have been a tremendous success. Additional highlights for the coming year include Graubard Fellowships for both incoming graduate students and students nearing the completion of their PhDs, efforts to grow our undergraduate Climate Minor, new rounds of Climate Research Acceleration and Climate Solutions grants, and the launch of a PCC Postdoctoral Fellow program.

I am especially looking forward to the 2026 PCC Summer Institute, to be held September 16-18 at Friday Harbor Laboratories. Please also join us for the annual Winter Welcome on Wednesday, March 11, to welcome new PCC members and to vote on Summer Institute themes.

Supporting our students remains central to the PCC’s mission. This newsletter highlights many student perspectives — please read on to learn more about past and upcoming PCC events.

I am grateful to the many students, past and present who contributed their voices to this newsletter. I invite all members of our community, including PCC alumni, to stay engaged and share your ideas with us.

Program Updates



Paleoclimate Constraints on Future Climate: A Graduate Student Reflection on the 2025 PCC Summer Institute

Sophia Ludtke shares that her experience starting graduate school with an immersion in current thinking on paleoclimate via three days spent at Friday Harbor Laboratories attending the Summer Institute felt fitting. After all, she came to UW motivated to understand the future trajectory of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS).

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2025 Graduate Climate Conference (GCC): Building Community and Belonging

MIT hosted the GCC November 7–9, 2025, at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The conference brought together 104 graduate students from 57 institutions, reflecting its continued growth in size, scope and disciplinary breadth.

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Exploring the PCC Undergraduate Cohort (UCo) Mission and Impacts

UCo's events change with the goals of the student leaders, but the group's mission guides how these events come to fruition and the undergraduate response.

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Building Interdisciplinary Climate Community through the PCC Graduate Steering Committee

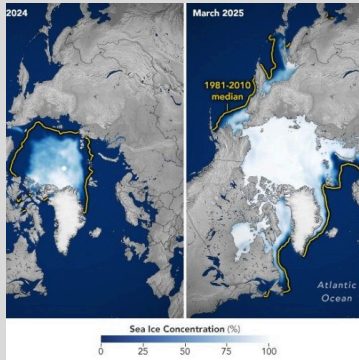
Graduate student leaders lay the groundwork for future research partnerships through treasured shared experiences.

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Research

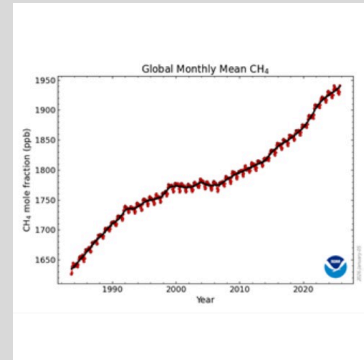
2024 fellows find their footing as new graduate students



Tara Kalia uses proxies to tease out sea-ice behavior during periods of drastic climate change.
[Read more](#)



Claire Jensen completes a season of field work in Antarctica using ice-penetrating radar to study seasonal snow compaction.
[Read more](#)

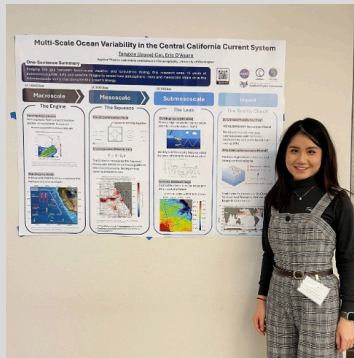


Ianá Ferguson finds her research focus in understanding methane trends.
[Read more](#)

Sharing Our Science



Carlyn Schmidgall collaborates with artist Jill Pelto and SASSIE scientists to visualize the story of ice loss in the Arctic.
[Read more](#)



3 graduate students share their research funded by PCC philanthropic initiatives at the December College of the Environment Symposium.
[Read more](#)



Masha Vernik on “How farmers are changing cropping strategies in response to a changing climate,” a Growing for Market podcast.
[Listen to it](#)

Philanthropy Update

New \$1.5M donation transforms PCC support of interdisciplinary climate research

The Program on Climate Change is expanding interdisciplinary climate science research efforts across the University thanks to the recent generous donation from Professors William Calvin and Katherine Graubard. In addition to supporting graduate student fellowships and climate research acceleration awards, this milestone contribution allows the Program on Climate Change to expand to create an all-new Postdoctoral Fellowship within the Program on Climate Change!

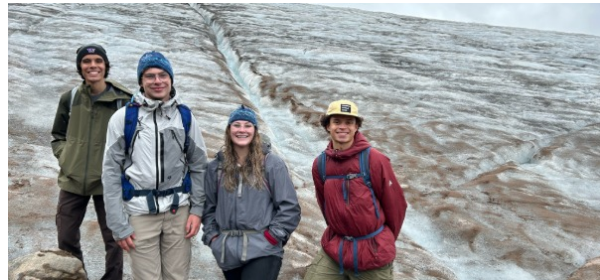
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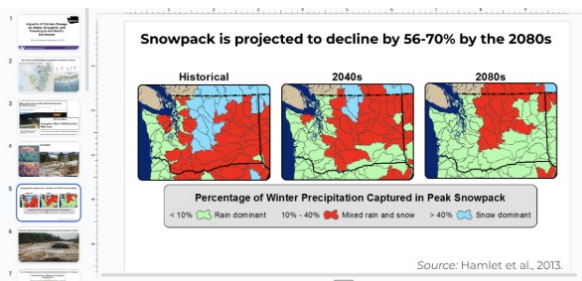
Academics

My Research Journey: Building a Bridge Between Science and People through Interdisciplinary Solutions

Marc Sailer's path from climate science minor to first-year PhD student at CU Boulder in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences.



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A Graduate Student's Experience as a PNW Climate Ambassador

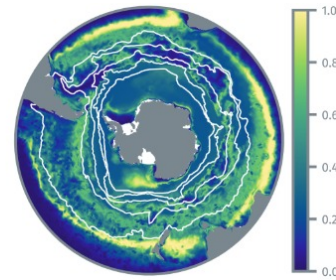
Amirah Casey (SAFS) writes about her research interests and commitment to climate communication.

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An Undergraduate Computer Science Major Engages in Interdisciplinary Research on Southern Ocean Phytoplankton Modeling

Ayush Nag expands his scope while contributing to Alison Gray and Hannah Joy-Warren's [2023 PCC Research Acceleration Project](#).



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Upcoming Events

- **PCC Communication Seminar:** “The spread and correction of climate change misinformation,” Madeline Jalbert (Center for an Informed Public) Tuesday, February 17 at 2 p.m. in OCN 425
- **PCC Current Research in Climate Seminar:** Wildfires, Brian Harvey (SEFS) Tuesday, February 17 at 3:30 p.m. in OCN 425
- **Third Thursday:** Thursday, February 19, 5-7 p.m. at the Greenhouse
- **PCC Colloquium:** “Climate Change and Health: Frontiers in Decision Support and Implementation Science,” Jeremy Hess (DEOHS) Friday, February 27 at 3:30 p.m. in MGH 389; joint with ATMOS Colloquium
- **Annual Winter Welcome:** Wednesday, March 11, 5-8 p.m. [RSVP now!](#)
- **UCo Grad Chat with Stella Heflin (ATMOS):** Tuesday, February 17, 5-6 p.m.
- **UCo Burke Museum Walk-Through:** Sunday, February 22, 2 p.m. at the Burke entrance
- **UCo Grad Chat with Amelia Dogan (iSchool):** Tuesday, March 3, 5-6 p.m.
- **Spring GCeCS (certificate) Q&A Drop-In Hours:** Tuesday, April 14, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. in OCN 335A. [More info](#)
- **PCC Annual Summer Institute:** September 16-18 at Friday Harbor Labs. [Learn more](#)

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