



*Join us in celebrating and
congratulating all the 2021
Endowed Award Recipients*



As on the scheduled CSUS Graduate Endowed Awards date for Spring 2020, MSU still is functioning under pandemic guidelines during Spring 2021. Therefore, our awards ceremony will be conducted via Zoom on Friday, March 26, 2021, beginning at noon.

Even though we are having a group celebration, we decided to create this “booklet” again this year to extend recognition beyond the ceremony.

*This also provides an opportunity to celebrate all the wonderful work that **all our students** are doing, and will be doing into the future. Our Endowed Awards celebration is only one of these opportunities. After you congratulate recipients on March 26, 2021, spend a bit of time reflecting on all your own positive work, learning, and contributions.*

Malcolm & Ann Kerr: *Excellence in Scholarship*



By promoting international understanding through higher education, and teaching and research partnerships contributing

to the common good, the Kerrs' careers have embodied the spirit of MSU's Land Grant ideals in an international context. Malcolm Kerr, a renowned scholar of Middle Eastern politics and history, is best known as author of *The Arab Cold War*. He was president of AUB 1982-84, and was assassinated there while on his way to work. Ann Kerr has carried on their legacy, serving on the AUB Board of Trustees, as well as on a presidential advisory board for EARTH University in Costa Rica. She also teaches a UCLA course on international cross-cultural understanding.

Tanya Iretskaia is a second-year PhD student who is pursuing her degree in Sustainable Tourism and Protected Area Management.

Tanya's future goals include making an impact through teaching. In her application, Tanya identified her main motivation for teaching being "a desire to inspire the next generation to conserve, preserve, develop and simply appreciate our fragile planet." In her ongoing journey to develop as an educator, Tanya has attended the Johns Hopkins Teaching Institute, completed the MSU Certificate in College Teaching, and has attended workshops run by the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning at MSU.

Integrated with her interests in teaching is her research focus, which centers around ecological food and farming systems. Additionally, Tanya is an avid traveler, having visited over 70 countries. Tanya's letters of support illustrate her potential for excellence as a teacher. One letter reads "Tanya has excelled academically and professionally throughout her life, so it should come as no surprise that she has committed herself to becoming the best possible teacher she can be." Another letter writer shared, "Coming from a family of educators, Tanya now has clarified for herself that she wants to become an educator, in part due to the impact that the education and learning process can have on others." We wish her the best as she continues her growth as an educator through this experience and beyond.



Tatiana "Tanya" Iretskaia (STPAM)

George & Nancy Axinn International Scholarship



Nancy and George Axinn were committed to international development, and to improving life conditions of poor people in developing countries. Professors George and Nancy Axinn endowed this scholarship to support graduate students who are pursuing careers in international development. Recipients must be enrolled as graduate students in the Department of Community Sustainability (CSUS) and must focus their studies and careers on international development.

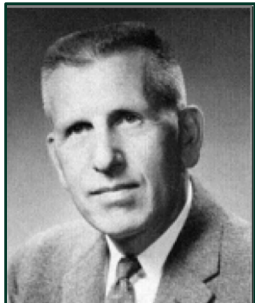
Adam's work unites mechanical engineering and design with community participation and sustainability. His project involved investigating and implementing a new participatory design process, one in which he collaboratively designed appropriate technology with a small group of village farmers located outside of Kasama, Zambia. Adam lived 15 months in Kasama, eventually having to be evacuated because of the Covid-19 pandemic. But even after he left, the group in Zambia continued the design work, meeting regularly, sharing their experiences, evaluating the various designs, and discussing and executing design modifications. Adam continues to work with the group leader providing technical advice and prototype blueprints as needed. He also continues to support the group financially, funding design activities and personnel. Despite the pandemic and his evacuation, Adam returned to his field site to complete the project.

Adam may be one of a kind. Both Drs. Kerr and Chung identified Adam as a generational talent with respect to the Axinn criteria. Dr. Chung wrote, "In my 20 years in CSUS, I have never met a student that so closely embodies the principles that the Axinns stood for in international development." Dr. Kerr concurs: "In all my years at MSU, Adam embodies what George & Nancy represented more than any other student I have encountered . . . Adam is easily the single most qualified applicant I have seen." Adam's hopes upon degree completion are to launch his career as a participatory design scholar-practitioner, facilitating actionable change through design and international development.



Adam Lyman (CSUS)

Gilbert W. Mouser Scholarship: *Conservation & Environmental Education*



This award was created by Dr. John McVickar to recognize outstanding graduate students in CANR focused on the study and practice of conservation and environmental

education. Dr. McVickar received his MS in Resource Development from Michigan State College (MSC) in 1953. During this time, Dr. Mouser was one of his major professors, and had a profound impact on Dr. McVickar. Over the years, his professional relationship with Dr. Mouser formed the basis for his strong and positive memories of MSC. The excellent program that Dr. Mouser and his colleagues provided for students became the motivation for him to create this scholarship in Dr. Mouser's memory.

Gelica is from Jamaica where she first developed her passion for environmental education. Inspired by a 10th grade motivational high school teacher, she was driven to blend her interests in nature and education early in life. Her work in CSUS clearly has been within the realm of Conservation and Environmental Education. Her dissertation research looks at how outdoor activities foster a sense of belonging in the broader community. Her teaching experience spans K-12 systems (in the US and Jamaica), various roles within higher education. She has worked with the Liberty Hyde Bailey Scholars program and as a mentor for the CSUS 301 course. She also has assumed leadership roles in MANNRS.

Gelica's advisor, Dr. Shari Dann, filled the F&W position vacated upon Dr. Mouser's departure. She writes that Gelica has built an impressive record of scholarship, and is a delight to work with in the classroom. "Through her work in conservation/environmental education projects, she has mentored students who have demonstrated the motivation and capacity to achieve their goals."

Dr. Diane Doberneck writes: "Gelica is a hard-working student who strongly believes connections to the outdoors foster deep sense of belonging. It's through these personal experiences in and connections to nature that foster lifelong conservation habits." Gelica reflects the spirit and memory of Dr. Mouser and his commitment to conservation and environmental education.



Angel "Gelica" Forde (STPAM)

Harriette B. Sherman Fellowship: *Recreation & Tourism Systems*



The Sherman Fellowship was created, with a founding contribution by Robert Ruigh, to support non-traditional students enrolled in the Dept. of Community Sustainability and who are pursuing

a degree in Sustainable Tourism & Protected Areas Management. Applicants meet ≥ 2 of the following criteria, all indicators of the determination for non-traditional students to pursue advanced degree work:

- *be 35 years or older;*
- *be employed >30 hours/week while enrolled (excluding assistantships);*
- *have returned to school >10 years after enrollment in a degree program; and/or*
- *be a single parent or supporting/caring for dependents other than a spouse.*

Tatiana Iretskaia came to CSUS after highly interdisciplinary career. She holds a BS in Business Management, BS and MS degrees in Environmental Geosciences. She has had varied life experiences, including years of working in the tourism industry and getting significant experience with protected areas. Tanya's interest in tourism is grounded in the tenets of sustainability and she sees tourism and protected areas as parts of the system that define sustainability issues in communities. Before coming to MSU, Tanya worked for the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Wisconsin, conducting projects related to land ethics and land management, citizen science, and curriculum development for conservation leadership. She also has experience with cross-cultural programming and has been a member of scientific teams that have monitored reef systems in Madagascar, and conducted wildlife observations in Montana, Costa Rica, Argentina, and the Galapagos.

When unable to work in Mongolia and the Arctic last summer due to the pandemic, she worked in MI state parks and learned R. She wrote: “[my work] involved maintaining facilities, selling passes to visitors, and doing physical work; ... most of all it was an opportunity to be in the beautiful outdoors, to swim at sunset, and to appreciate the hard work that is put into making state parks safe and welcoming places.”

Dr. Dan McCole writes: “As Harriette Sherman, Tanya is a lifelong learner with a passion for the outdoors, natural environment, and the arts. Tanya clearly represents the qualifications and spirit of this award.”



Tatiana “Tanya” Iretskaia (STPAM)

Jon F. Bartholic Award: for Ensuring the Future of Michigan's Natural Resources



Dr. Jon Bartholic created this award to support graduate students who identify and study water and land resource problems and work toward

their solutions through cooperative efforts with partners outside the University. When he created the award endowment, Jon indicated that he hopes this award will help the Department of Community Sustainability continue its role as a boundary organization connecting new knowledge with end users who identify needs and contribute critically important practical knowledge for implementing new applications in the field.

Brockton Feltman, a third-year doctoral student in Community Sustainability, is passionate about using his CSUS degrees to benefit his home state of Michigan, whether pursuing a career in academia or state government. For his dissertation research, Brockton has been working on a project funded by the National Science Foundation that involves collaborating with multiple decision makers to model irrigation trends on a national scale, build predictive models based on economic, environmental, and individual decision factors, and connect irrigation policy to irrigation behavior over time. He currently is working with Dr. Bartholic to examine the role of advanced modeling technologies in facilitating polycentric governance and sustainability within MI agricultural contexts. The research involves collaborations between researchers, non-governmental organizations, and other partners to develop and apply new knowledge for natural resource governance that sustains water resources while meeting needs of a changing society.

Dr. Robby Richardson, on Brockton's committee, notes: "Brockton has built a solid foundation in applied research in sustainability to advance understanding of Governance of social-ecological systems. Furthermore, his academic and professional objectives are clearly related to the scholarship of sustainability, and his experiences and qualifications are well aligned with the legacy of Dr. Bartholic's career in research related to water resources management. Brockton's advisor, Dr. Adam Zwickle, adds "...His collaboration with public and private stakeholders embodies the mission of both this award and CSUS overall."



Brockton Feltman (CSUS)

Milton H. Steinmueller Fellowship: *Natural Resources & Environmental Policy*



The M.H. Steinmueller Fellowship was established with gifts from alumni, colleagues, and friends wishing to honor the career of Dr. Steinmueller, who served for over 30 years

as Professor in the Department of Resource Development (now within the Department of Community Sustainability). The long-term goals of this fellowship are two-fold: **First**, it intends to create a living memorial in honor of Professor Steinmueller, who devoted his career to being a caring teacher of undergraduate and graduate students. **Second**, the fellowship aims to recruit and retain highly qualified graduate students to the Department who intend to emulate the career of Professor Steinmueller.

Maria Alejandra Garcia is a third year doctoral student in Community Sustainability, and her home country is Colombia. Her previous degrees include a master's in sociology, and her work experience includes research in the subdivision of gender and agriculture for Latin America in the International Center for Tropical Agriculture. She shared two lessons that led her to explore an interdisciplinary PhD. "First, knowledge construction for policymaking is only possible when the perspective and experience of people from different genders, races, nationalities, social classes, education, and expertise come together. Second, to comprehend and tackle agricultural problems, it is necessary a holistic perspective that includes natural and social dimensions, which implies for my research to link rural and environmental problems.

Her career goal is to be a faculty member in a rural or environmental studies department in a Latin American university. She envisions herself as a role-model of interdisciplinarity, ethical practices, and advocacy for social change for social-ecological systems with a strong sensibility for teaching.

One letter writer said "Her experience at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture has led to sophisticated understanding of literature on gender and agriculture, and a clear understanding of the relevance of her work." Another wrote that her research will analyze household decision making for farming activities, and propose policy recommendations for equitable agricultural development.



Maria Alejandra Garcia (CSUS)

Milton H. Steinmueller Fellowship: *Natural Resources & Environmental Policy*



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Morgan Mathisonslee is a fourth year doctoral student in Community Sustainability, and is in the final stages of working on her dissertation. Her previous degrees include a master of international studies from the University of Wyoming where she was a graduate teaching assistant. She plans to apply for tenure-stream positions at a college or university that values teaching, mentoring, and advising. She considers teaching and learning as important components of her future career, and works to include issues around diversity, equity and inclusion in all she does. Her current research focuses on the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices and their associations with farmer well being. In her future research she hopes to influence natural resources policies at the local, state, and national levels. She describes herself: “I have displayed the qualities exemplified by Dr. Steinmueller – diverse academic interests, intellectual curiosity, an ability to teach effectively, dedication to teaching all students, being a caring and effective advisor and mentor, an eagerness to share knowledge with and learn from others, and a desire to be open and caring with my students and colleagues.”

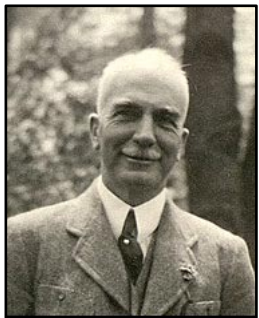
One letter writer said, “... she will be the kind of supportive teacher that everyone wishes they’d had in college.”

Another said that she will be an excellent and effective educator due to “her humility and hard work, in combination with her deep knowledge base about the content she wants to teach, and desire to form meaningful connections with those she is teaching.”



Morgan MathisonSlee (CSUS)

C.S. Mott Pre-doctoral Fellowships: *Sustainable Agriculture*



Charles S. Mott, one of the most influential characters in Flint, MI. Begun in 1916, his charitable foundation now provides strong support for education, the environment, and health. In line with this

Credit: CS Mott Foundation

support are the C.S. Mott Pre-doctoral Fellowships offered at MSU and affiliated with the Center for Regional Food Systems. These fellowships are for students beginning a PhD program at MSU. They are intended to encourage research and training in those areas of agriculture and food systems critical for enhancing sustainability while increasing the pool of future researchers in this arena.

Brianna Foster is pursuing dual degrees in Entomology and in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, with a specialization in Ecological Food and Farming Systems. She received her BS in Fisheries & Wildlife BS from the University of Minnesota.

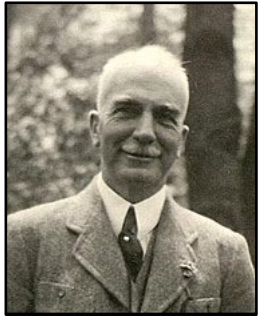
A former faculty supervisor wrote...“She was instrumental in keeping the crew organized, on task, anticipating difficulties and prudently calling to consult when serious questions arose that required clarification. I was pleased with how the crew under her leadership individually and jointly handled the multiple challenges posed over a suite of research projects and the vagaries of summer weather on outdoor research activities... In both lab and field settings, she demonstrated excellent research skills... She’s adaptive, demonstrates a quick grasp of concepts, displays strong observational skills, persists in challenging situations, and is quite willing to expend the effort needed to persevere.”

For her Entomology PhD, Brianna is working in Dr. Szűcs’s lab where they study biological control of invasive insect pests and weeds. Her project focuses on biological control of two invasive weed species. She seeks to understand what factors affect its establishment, its synchronicity with the MI climate, and effectiveness of a defoliating moth to control swallow-wort vines. She will monitor population growth, impact and spread in MI, and how the presence of the biocontrol agent may mediate monarch oviposition on swallow-worts. Her project will contribute to promoting sustainable agriculture.



Brianna Foster (ENT)

C.S. Mott Pre-doctoral Fellowships: *Sustainable Agriculture*



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Kayleigh Hauri received her BS in Biology from Georgetown University. She also received her MS in Entomology from Michigan State University.

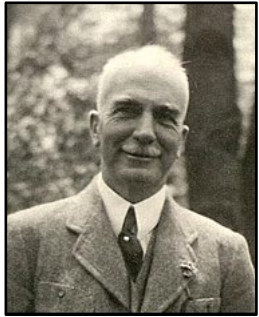
A former lab supervisor and faculty member wrote: “She is exceptionally intelligent, passionate, and knowledgeable— someone clearly destined to succeed in graduate school and beyond. Kayleigh is one of the most impressive young scientists I have worked with... I cannot emphasize enough that Kayleigh is a tremendous scientific collaborator, colleague, and community member. One of her many strengths is her vocal passion and enthusiasm about entomology, ecology, and science in general. Her excitement elevates the quality of all her interactions, including our one-on-one meetings, group collaborations, lab meetings, and interactions with the broader MSU Entomology and Ecology community.”

For her PhD program, she will be working in Dr. Szendrei in the Vegetable Entomology lab on plant-mediated interactions between Colorado potato beetle and lesion nematodes in potato. Colorado potato beetles and nematodes are both prevalent pests in many potato fields and often co-occur; even though they are spatially separated, recent evidence has shown they can affect each other through changes to the plant's chemistry and nutrients. Kayleigh is interested in how these interactions alter plant chemical defense and the resulting effects on biocontrol, pest dispersal, and host choice, and what types of management strategies alter interaction outcomes.



Kayleigh Hauri (ENT)

C.S. Mott Pre-doctoral Fellowships: *Sustainable Agriculture*



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Ojo Paul is working with Dr. Bruno Basso in PSMS. He received his BS in Agriculture from the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Nigeria, then received his MS in Soil Science from Punjab Agricultural University in India. He earned a MS also in Biology from Miami University of Ohio. He was recognized for his meritorious national development work by the National Youth Service Corps of Nigeria for various community and youth development projects he executed in the areas of education and agriculture during his national service year.

A former professor wrote: “My observation is that he displays scholastic integrity. Paul is a leader who also works well with others and is indeed very quick in grasping and applying new concepts... Paul has shown excellent initiative and self-motivation by optionally participating in several practical and field study programs. Also, I can comment on his impeccable character and sincerity.”

For his PhD work, Paul is working in Dr. Basso’s lab, developing and applying advanced crop system models to predict the impact of weather, soil and management on short-term and long-term yield, nutrient uptake, water use efficiency and environmental outcomes. Specifically, Paul is focusing on integration of crop modeling and remote sensing in understanding the spatio-temporal variability of soil health. This is an aspect of digital agriculture in which he will be exploring the drivers of crop yield variability and soil carbon dynamics using geospatial techniques.



Ojo Paul (PSMS)



Thank you to all who served on award review committees and wrote letters of recommendations for the nominees.

Axinn Review Committee

Doug Bessette, Dan McCole

Mouser Review Committee

Wynne Wright, Buddy McKendree

Sherman Review Committee

Crystal Eustice, Kimberly Chung

Steinmueller Review Committee

Phil Howard, Phil Warsaw, Lissy Goralnik

Kerr Review Committee

Pat Norris, Laura Schmitt Olabisi, Aaron McKim

Bartholic Fund Award

Ruth Kline Robach, Micahel Kaplowitz

C.S. Mott Pre-doctoral Awards

Center for Regional Food Systems,
Mike Hamm, Rich Pirog, Emma McNabb

Thank you to Marsha Edington for all her behind-the-scenes work to collect, process, track, and distribute all nomination packets, and to order plaques. Thanks to Kim Richards for processing checks, and to Emma McNabb for compiling Mott Fellowship materials.