

CDRE

The CENTER For DISASTER RESEARCH & EDUCATION Biannual Newsletter

Spring 2016

CDRE Congratulates Sepi Yalda

Chris Soelle *April 1, 2016*

Dr. Sepi Yalda was the recipient of Millersville University's 2015-2016 Educator of the Year. This prestigious award is given annually to one faculty or staff member in recognition of sustained exemplary teaching, counseling, mentoring, and advising. Candidates for the award are nominated during the fall semester. Nominees are then asked to provide personal narratives, curriculum vitae, and three reference letters from current and former students. The selection committee is composed of students, alumni, faculty, and staff.



Dr. Yalda is the director of the Millersville University's Center for Disaster Research and Education (CDRE), serves as the coordinator for the Master of Science in Emergency Management (MSEM) program, and a professor of meteorology. Additionally, she serves as the program director for the undergraduate degree in Multidisciplinary Studies with a focus on Environmental Hazards and Emergency Management (MDST), and the Minor in Environmental Hazards and Emergency Management (EHEM). In her role as CDRE director, she is involved in local, regional and national efforts related to disaster education, mitigation, planning and response. Her research interests are in the areas of climate dynamics, regional climate

change, and science education. She has taught over 15 different courses at Millersville including EMGT 614 – Natural Hazards Primer for the MSEM program.

Current and former students praised Dr. Yalda for the amount of energy she invests in classes as well as her advising and mentoring. Additionally, Dr. Yalda has a reputation for bringing out the best in her students through the high rigor required by many of her courses. Beyond her exemplary instruction, she has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to Millersville's vision of transforming each learner's unique potential into the capacity for successful engagement in career and life opportunities. Many former students attributed the success they have in their careers not only to what they learned in her courses, but to Dr. Yalda's mentoring, which often extends years beyond graduation.

Further information of the Educator of the Year Award and a list of previous awardees can be found at [HERE](#).

MSEM Student Hired as 1st PA State Meteorologist


Chris Soelle *March 3, 2016*

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) created a new position in the fall of 2015. Jeff Jumper (MSEM, 16) was selected to fill the position as Pennsylvania's first state meteorologist as a result of a nation-wide competitive search. Jeff received a B.S. in meteorology from Penn State University in 2006 and has a decade of professional experience as a broadcast meteorologist and eighteen years of experience as a first responder. He will receive his Master of Science in emergency management in May 2016.

He credits the MSEM program with helping him transition into the emergency management field.

"I needed to bridge the gap between disciplines [meteorology and emergency management] and that's exactly what the MSEM program has done," Jeff stated.

Jeff serves as the subject matter expert in meteorology for the Commonwealth. His primary role is to forecast for state agencies and other stakeholders in the emergency management community. He also provides onsite meteorological support in PEMA's emergency operations center when an emergency occurs. Jeff is also busy when



the weather isn't hairy. He is responsible for researching and planning hazardous weather mitigation techniques, developing and delivering trainings and exercises, and expanding weather safety outreach activities



Jeff was a very busy person when the Blizzard of 2016 (Winter Storm Jonas or #Snowzilla) hit Pennsylvania on January 22nd and 23rd. The snowstorm blanketed areas of central, southern and eastern PA in over two feet of snow. Some schools were closed for an entire week and hundreds of motorists were stranded for 24 hours on a section of the PA Turnpike. Jeff began preparing for the storm over a week in advance when forecast models began to indicate the potential of a significant event. He quickly made sure state agencies were aware of the potential impacts and the likelihood of forecasted snowfall to increase or decrease.

“I worked closely with National Weather Service (NWS) Offices (Pennsylvania is served by five NWS Offices) and ensured updates were pushed out quickly leading up to and during the event,” recalled Jeff. Jeff also briefed Governor Wolf, the Governor’s cabinet, and participated in the Governor’s press conferences as much of the state braced for the historic winter storm.

Currently, almost a dozen states employ a state meteorologist. Jeff hopes more states will create positions for meteorologists within their emergency management agency.

“Each state has a unique set of weather hazards and having someone versed in emergency management and meteorology on hand can immensely help prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters, both natural and man-made,” said Jeff. “The benefit of integrating the two [meteorology and emergency management] goes well beyond forecasting for the incident. Developing mitigation priorities through hazard assessment and finding methods to better prepare and respond to incidents based on meteorological understanding will help advance emergency management for the whole community. A person who is bilingual in emergency management and meteorology will be an essential part of the emergency management structure in the future.”

Jeff looks forward to continuing to support the mission of PEMA as the state meteorologist. Follow Jeff Jumper on Twitter [@JeffJumperWX](https://twitter.com/JeffJumperWX) for updates on all the weather affecting PA.

The Millersville MSEM program is committed to helping other meteorologists transition into the field of emergency management. Our 30 credit hour master's program is taught completely online and offers courses taught by highly experienced academia and emergency management professionals. For more information visit www.millersville.edu/cdre/msem

New Graduate Certificate: Emergency and Disaster Management

Sepi Yalda and Chris Soelle *May 9, 2016*

Millersville University will begin offering a fully online 15-credit Emergency and Disaster Management (EDM) Graduate Certificate in the fall of 2016. Those students who successfully complete the certificate courses will be able to apply the earned 15 credits toward the Master of Science in Emergency Management degree.

The human and financial costs due to natural disasters continue to increase, with the United Nations reporting that during this century alone, such events have affected over 2.7 billion people and caused \$2.5 trillion in economic losses. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has forecasted the US emergency management field will increase by 22 percent between 2008 and 2018.

MU has been pro-active in meeting the demands of this quickly expanding profession, developing one of the first multidisciplinary Master's degrees in the country (MSEM), one of the nation's first undergraduate degrees (Multi-disciplinary Studies Major with a Concentration in Environmental Hazards and Emergency Management) and one of the only dual-degree MSEM-Master of Social Work (MSW) programs in the world. The EDM certificate will complement the existing program offerings by providing students an advanced field credential. Additionally, the graduate certificate is part of a new partnership between MU and the University of Reading in the UK.

CDRE to Host 2nd Annual Integrated Weather Impacts Team

Chris Soelle *March 16, 2016*

The Millersville University Center for Disaster Research and Education (CDRE) will be hosting the 2nd Annual Central Pennsylvania Integrated Weather Impacts Team (IWIT) Meeting and Workshop on June 21, 2016 on the campus of Millersville University.



The IWIT is a group of representatives involved in the preparedness and response to significant hazardous weather events. The team functions as a multi-sector collaboration between the National Weather Service (NWS) and its partners involved in any aspect related to the protection of life and property. It focuses on communicating and interpreting weather risk. An overarching goal of IWIT is to enable all users to better exploit weather forecast information in order to enhance their decision-making capability. IWIT will also serve as a conduit for collective user input and feedback.



The June 21st meeting will allow members to collectively chart the path forward in communicating the impacts of hazardous weather across the Commonwealth. According to a study from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [90% of the disasters](#) that occurred around the world between 1995 and 2015 were weather-related. In 2015, the United States experienced [ten natural disasters](#) that produced damages costing over \$1 billion each. These disasters were responsible for the fatalities of countless people, overwhelming damages to property, and significant economic losses. The efforts of IWIT will help mitigate and prevent future weather-related impacts across Pennsylvania.



The Central PA IWIT is a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) mission to build a Weather-Ready Nation. To learn more about Weather-Ready Nation visit <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/>

Emergency Management Students Attend RES/CON 2016

Sara Schmidt March 23, 2016

In early March, three Master of Science in emergency management (MSEM) students attended [RES/CON 2016](#) in New Orleans, Louisiana. RES/CON is an international conference dedicated to the practice of successful resiliency and disaster management in an evolving global environment. This conference brought together global innovators in the emergency management realm to present their varying experiences with a wide spectrum of disasters. RES/CON

offered a unique, interactive environment where participants were urged to speak up and engage in conversations about resiliency. Each day featured an “Idea Exchange,” a facilitator-led conversation that challenged participants to dig deeper into the challenges cities and businesses face in creating a truly resilient community. The combination of speaker and open dialog sessions contributed to an interactive learning environment for the attendees.

The three attending MSEM students are officers of the [Millersville University student chapter of the International Association of Emergency Managers \(IAEM\)](#). Funding for attending the conference was provided through MU’s Student Senate.

“Being a member of the student chapter of IAEM has been a great experience,” said Mary Kate Hudson, MU IAEM secretary. “I am thankful for this opportunity to learn from professionals in the emergency management field. This conference was a wonderful networking experience that also brought together all of the concepts and topics that have been discussed throughout the MSEM program.”

Several of the sessions at RES/CON focused on growing trends in the field related to recent events. Students attended a presentation from Christian Sommade, from the French High Committee for Civil Defense, titled “Lessons Learned from the Paris Attacks”. Mr. Sommade spoke on the French response to the terrorist attacks, covering lessons learned from first responders and the entire crisis management system, identification of gaps that may exist in communication and technology, the challenges with information sharing in the EU, how social media can be used effectively and how other countries and communities may better prepare themselves for this type of event. Next year’s RES/CON will be held March 7-9, 2017 in New Orleans.

Pictured Right (left to right): MU IAEM Treasurer, Joe Seborowski, MU IAEM President, Sara Schmidt, and MU IAEM Secretary, Mary Kate Hudson



63rd Annual IAEM Conference Review

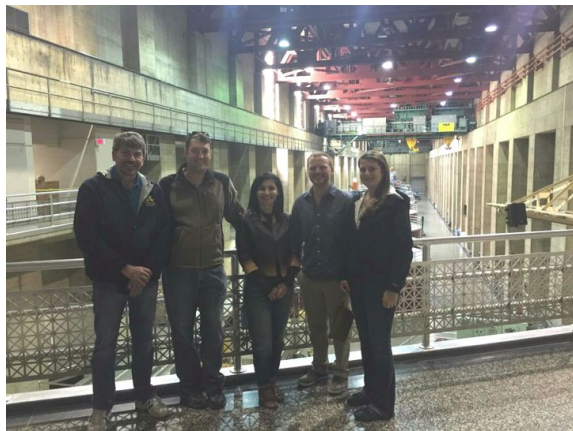
Chris Soelle January 1, 2016

Pictured Right: Dr. Sepi Yalda, Director of the CDRE and Coordinator of MSEM with Dr. Louis Uccellini, Director of the National Weather Service. Dr. Uccellini has been a great ambassador for expanding emergency management into the field of meteorology.

In November 2015, faculty and graduate assistants from the CDRE in addition to several current students and former graduates of the MSEM program attended the 63rd Annual International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. The MSEM program and CDRE participated at the Expo component of the meeting.



Millersville University was honored to receive two awards at the conference. Dr. Duane Hagelgans was awarded the Student Ally of the Year award for his hard work and mentorship of Millersville's emergency management students



and his ongoing dedication to preparedness in the community. Jon Beuerle (EHEM Minor) received the Student of the Year award for his commitment to the growth and advancement of the Millersville University IAEM Student Chapter. In addition, Dr. Hagelgans participated as a panelist in a breakout session regarding the "EMPP: Standardization of the Profession". Sara Schmidt, a graduate assistant with the CDRE, presented her research on the experiences of women during the disaster cycle in comparison to global gender inequality.

Pictured above (left to right): CDRE faculty and fall 2015 graduate assistants pose for a picture inside the Hoover Powerplant while touring the Hoover Dam. Dr. Duane Hagelgans, Jeff Jumper, Dr. Sepi Yalda, Chris Soelle and Sara Schmidt

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