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Interdisciplinary Intensive

Posted by JOLIEGSASUPENNEDU *on* JULY 22, 2018JULY 27, 2018



I want to go into Medical Illustration after college, a field that is interdisciplinary by definition; combining illustration and graphic design with biology and medicine. As a Penn student, I often found a curriculum studying these two fields a great logistical challenge. PPEH and the On-Water-Intensive, have given me a lot of faith that not only is interdisciplinary work happening, it is immensely important.

For environmental policy, scientists may discover brilliant ways to help us save water or reduce pollutants or regrow natural habitats, but they fight societal attitudes that they may find themselves without the tools to fight or even understand. They may not realize how they are shaped by or are themselves shaping cultural attitudes about the

environment. For example, why is our society so interested in replacing old things with the new all the time, causing us to have so much waste? And how can we change these hyper consumerist attitudes? An anthropologist would be immensely helpful in aiding the scientists here. Furthermore, anthropologists and scientists may want to make a law to mitigate a certain environmental problem, but they would need to communicate with politicians, who make decisions based largely on lobbyists and public opinion, and therefore any law would need public or private sector support. By bringing together scientists, artists, and some community activists, the On-Water-Intensive is the first step in creating interdisciplinary space that I am continuing to occupy for this summer's research.

It is no wonder community members are more turned off from their water after learning about it, after reading about water filtration from the water department's website. It seems cold, over simplified, and unyielding. I am excited to create vibrant, informative products that help people learn about their water without being afraid of it. For this project, I would like to make a calendar, and use the actual date page to promote and connect the community with organizations we worked with during the On-Water-Intensive such as John Heinz, Bartram's Garden, the Independence Seaport Museum, and any others who want to promote events on their annual calendar with us. This way, people from all over Philly can get involved with informative or recreational programs regarding their water and waterways. Everyone on the intensive has been so open and enthusiastic, and I am optimistic that they will help elevate this interdisciplinary project to its full potential.



