

AEESP Newsletter

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Need to renew your AEESP membership? Go to "Membership > Renew My AEESP Membership" on the AEESP Website: [AEESP.org](https://www.aeesp.org)

AEESP Newsletter Submissions

Please send news, conference announcements, job postings, letters to the editor, and other contributions to the Newsletter to Kyle Doudrick at kdoudrick@nd.edu. The next Newsletter will appear in October 2026.

President's Letter: Energy Orbitals

By Kara L. Nelson, Ph.D.
University of California, Berkeley



Dear AEESP community,

At the end of each academic year, I find myself in an elevated state, maxed out from the cumulative energy of teaching, qualifying exams, faculty searches, and graduations. This high-energy existence is rewarding but not sustainable!

For me, one of the environmental conditions that coaxes my excited electrons back to their lowest energy orbitals is to spend time in and around pristine bodies of water. I recently enjoyed a weekend on the Cosumnes River, which is one of the few free-flowing (undammed) rivers in California: tracing the flow lines as water parts around a granite rock, seeking an eddy to carry me back upstream, admiring how the natural sorting of pebbles reveals a velocity gradient, contemplating the infinite variety of patterns created by sunlight interacting with waves. I was drawn to environmental engineering and science because we all deserve access to safe and sufficient water. Water is also what I return to for rejuvenation, to relax back to my ground state. I hope this newsletter finds you similarly embracing the rhythms and rituals of summer, whatever form that takes.

It was wonderful to see many of you at our virtual Award Ceremony and Presidential Address on June 23. Congratulations to all our awardees! Thank you to our Awards Committee for your dedication to a thorough review process and to everyone that nominated someone for an award. Our community has much to celebrate.

Looking to the future, we will be in good hands with Prof. Jose Cerrato when he steps into the role of President at our September Board of Directors meeting (September 9-11 at the University of New Mexico). At that meeting we will welcome our three new board members: Pablo Cornejo from Chico State University, CA;

Nicole Fahrenfeld from Rutgers University, NJ; and Jason Ren from Princeton University, NJ. I also want to thank the other current board members for their partnership and support this past year; Vice President Andrew Jackson; Treasurer Lindsay Soh; Secretary Huichun (Judy) Zhang; CTO Randi Brazeau; CIO Belinda Sturm; and Directors Elizabeth Edwards, David Ladner, and Nirupam Aich. Board members serve 3-year terms and give their time entirely as volunteers. I'm deeply grateful to each of them for their dedication and service.

The Members' Resources* section of our website has two new features that I'm pleased to introduce (*[requires membership account login to access](#)). The first is [Student Research Profiles](#) – a new resource to expand access to graduate research opportunities. Students who are looking for an MS or PhD research position can post a profile on the platform, and faculty looking for a graduate student researcher can browse the profiles and reach out to promising students. Please spread the word among students and faculty – you can directly forward my email message from June 19.

The second new feature is AEESP's Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. This updated statement was developed by our DEIA Committee with input from our Board of Directors. It outlines our goals as an organization and the principles we are committed to uphold as individuals and in our programming. [This longer statement](#) expands on that published on our public website at the bottom of the "Overview of AEESP" page. I encourage you to become familiar with it. Also, the DEIA committee is organizing AEESP activities at the 2026 conferences of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE, Nov 7-9 in Boston) and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE, Oct 28-31 in Indianapolis). Please reach out to [Aaron Bivins](#) (chair) and [Itza Mendoza](#) (co-chair) if you plan to attend!

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AEESP Membership Application:

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President's Letter (cont.)

I also want to remind you to take advantage of the [AEESP YouTube channel](#). Nine videos have been added so far in 2026, based on events organized by the Education Committee, Internet Resources Committee, and several of our Communities of Practice (Grantastic, Early Career Faculty Survival Guide, Standing on the Shoulders of Giants). Thank you to everyone that contributed to these activities that are so valuable for our AEESP community.

As you likely have heard, the US scientific and research community is deeply concerned about proposed rules by the Office of Management and Budget that would dramatically change the processes that govern how federal grants are awarded and managed. Given how extensive the proposed changes are, AEESP joined 323 other organizations to request that the comment period be extended from 45 to 90 days. While we are still waiting to hear if the request is granted, I am encouraged by the large number of AEESP members that shared resources to help our members submit individual comments by the original July 13 deadline.

Our response to OMB highlights our ability to act strategically, as individuals and collectively, to address short-term threats – part of the strategic framework I outlined last fall. The other dimension of the framework is to create new opportunities for our community by taking a longer-term vision. Below I share progress on the three strategic focus areas I proposed. Both task forces aim to share findings and resources later this year as well as at the 2027 AEESP conference. Stay tuned!

Public Engagement. After the focus in the fall on communicating with non-academic audiences, our Policy Toolkit Task Force sent a survey to AEESP members in March to request examples and case studies of policy-relevant work and how such work can be described and credited in promotion and tenure reviews. Based on the responses, we have been conducting interviews and gathering additional materials that will be compiled to inspire more members to engage in such work.

Grand Challenges in Environmental Engineering. Our Grand Challenges Task Force has been meeting monthly since January. Through interviews, we have documented the contributions of AEESP to the NASEM report on Grand Challenges and Opportunities in Environmental Engineering for the 21st Century. To understand the alignment of AEESP members' research with the grand challenges, we are assembling a corpus of literature and using content analysis to assess changes over time. We are also analyzing trends in grants funded by NSF. The insights from this data-driven approach will be used to foster dialog and guide future activities to strengthen and grow the AEESP community's education and research activities.

International Connections. In this newsletter, the International Spotlight features the AEESP Community of Practice on Africa and Interested Scholars. I extend my gratitude to Prof. Joseph Wasswa and colleagues for preparing the spotlight and leading the CoPA. Each spotlight article describes an international organization with whom we have a shared purpose; we aim for our members to learn about the work of other organizations and academic communities, which may lead to further ideas for international partnerships either as individuals or through AEESP. Please contact me if you have suggestions for a future Spotlight.

In closing, remember that summer is an opportunity to relax back to your ground state. We need our higher energy orbitals to be empty as we head into fall, with capacity to absorb new ideas, welcome new students, and meet new challenges with creativity. This year has reminded me how much mattering – feeling valued, and

President's Letter (cont.)

knowing that we add value – sustains us through uncertainty and change. Thank you for the countless ways, large and small, that you have shown up for this community this year.

It has been a great honor to serve as your president. A year ago I asked us to create the future we want, together; I am proud of the progress we have made. And I look forward to growing stronger together at the 2027 Conference in Austin, Texas!



Kara L. Nelson, Ph.D.
2025-26 AEESP President

Student Ambassadors “Take Over” AEESP Socials

By Joe Charbonnet, Ph.D., Chair, AEESP Internet Resources Committee, Iowa State University

No, AEESP accounts haven't been hit by benevolent hackers that made our social media feed much cooler. But for the last few months, our socials *have* been “taken over” by Social Media Student Ambassadors [Van Stillson](#) and [Fatima Iqbal](#). They've highlighted their research, everyday graduate school experiences, and even their laboratory fashion choices. If you're a grad student that can Gas Up our Cheugy feeds with your innovative science and unique perspective, [apply to be an Ambassador](#) (cringey use of Gen Z slang not required).

If you're not yet following AEESP on social media, join the hundreds of your colleagues that are on [Bluesky](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#). They're hearing not just about student ambassadors, but also important events and opportunities, professional successes, and informative webinars.

If you're a faculty or professional member interested in contributing to our social media, website, or listserv moderation, we encourage you to [apply to serve on the Internet Resources Committee](#). This is an ideal professional service opportunity that enables you to work with a creative group of peers and even gets you early exposure to many of the opportunities and events that AEESP communicates to our members.

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or Search: “AEESP” on LinkedIn.com



AEESP on Bluesky

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or Search: “AEESP” on bsky.app



Van Stillson
Syracuse
University



Fatima Iqbal
Wayne State
University

AEESP Community of Practice: Standing on the Shoulders (S.o.S.) Giants Conversation with Dr. Sharon Walker

The second S.o.S. Giants conversation featured Dr. Sharon Walker, Distinguished University Professor of Environmental Engineering and Dean Emerita at Drexel University. The conversation was hosted by Dr. Ryan Kingsbury, assistant professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment at Princeton University.

During the conversation, Dr. Walker described her academic journey as a series of “stepping stones,” with some career steps intentional while others arose from unexpected circumstances. Originally trained as a classical guitarist, she shifted to environmental engineering after participating in an outreach program at New Mexico Tech, where a tour to a wastewater treatment plant sparked her interest in applying engineering to protect water and the environment. She highlighted the influence of mentors, including Bill Chavez, who introduced her to engineering, and Menachem Elimelech, who helped shape her as a researcher. These experiences motivated her long-standing commitment to outreach and student mentoring.

Dr. Walker also shared some practical insights on academic life. Rather than describing work-life balance as something one achieves, she framed it as finding equilibrium across different life stages. She noted that parenting helped her become more efficient and intentional with time. Dr. Walker encouraged faculty to be present on campus, make time for informal conversations, attend mixers, and build relationships beyond their own departments. She noted that some of her most meaningful collaborations began through casual conversations.



The conversation also highlighted Dr. Walker’s leadership experience in higher education. Describing herself as a “student of leadership in higher education”, she emphasized the importance of aligning service with one’s passions, supporting students as whole people, setting clear expectations in collaborations, and viewing feedback as a gift. Her reflections offered valuable guidance for scholars at all career stages, especially those considering how to build meaningful, sustainable, and impactful academic careers.

S.o.S. Giants Community of Practice

The Standing on the Shoulders of Giants (S.o.S. Giants) Community of Practice was established within AEESP to create a dedicated space for personal and professional reflection that is distinct from traditional research seminars. The community’s goal is to facilitate conversations that highlight the people behind the science, spotlighting formative experiences, personal values, career challenges, and lessons learned from leaders across the field. S.o.S. Giants is organized by a team of early- and mid-career faculty volunteers and is envisioned as a recurring series open to all AEESP members, with each session featuring an invited “giant” whose experiences can support intergenerational learning and mentorship across the community.

Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Vos80b6GGA>

Date: March 27, 2026

Become Active in AEESP: Committees Seek Member Engagement!

Are you interested in becoming more active within AEESP? The association currently has 13 active committees that need a helping hand! Committees are being filled for the upcoming academic year. Visit [AEESP's Committee webpage](#) for a list of active committees and [apply online](#) or reach out to Committee Chairs for more information on how to become involved.



AEESP Student and Postdoctoral Services Committee News

By Jessica Wilson, Ph.D., Manhattan College, Chair, Student and Postdoctoral Services Committee

The AEESP Student and Postdoctoral Services Committee (SPSC) is pleased to announce that our annual **Academic Job Application Review (AJAR) Program** will open in July!

The AJAR Program connects students and postdoctoral researchers interested in pursuing academic positions with faculty mentors who provide individualized feedback to help strengthen their academic job application materials.

Participants in the program may also be invited to present in the AEESP Future Faculty Seminar Series. This year's seminar series will be held on the following Fridays at 12:00PM:

- November 6
- November 13
- November 20
- December 4

Additional information about the AJAR Program, including application details, will be distributed through the AEESP listserv.

If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Wilson at jessica.wilson@manhattan.edu.



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Reflections on the 2025-2026 AEESP Distinguished Lecture Tour

By David L. Sedlak, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley and 2025-2026 AEESP Distinguished Lecturer



About two decades ago, after an enjoyable dinner with the AEESP lecturer I turned to a junior colleague and quietly asked, "Why would someone do that to himself?" Now, I know. The privilege of being the AEESP distinguished lecturer has been a highlight of my career. The reward has had

nothing to do with frequent flyer miles, or the opportunity to discover the history, beauty and sophistication of a university town that I had never visited. Rather, the payoff of being the distinguished lecturer has been the insight that I gained into our discipline and the people who are the source of its dynamism.

Browsing photos from someone else's travels has never interested me as much as learning how the experience changed their perspective. For readers who enjoy travelogues, I have included a few photos at the end of this essay. For the rest of you, I have done my best to distill what I have learned by considering how the name of our organization perfectly describes us.

A is for Association

The AEESP has changed a lot over its 63-year history. Peering back into its early days, the Association consisted of a bunch of serious guys with crew cuts and thick-framed glasses who understood the importance of water and wastewater treatment. Over the years, the Association changed with the times in terms of hairstyles, eyeglasses and office attire. It also increased the gender and ethnic diversity of our members and extended its mandate to encompass sub-disciplines that are relevant to every aspect of environmental engineering. Furthermore, the Association now puts a much stronger emphasis on excellence in teaching and service as part of its mission, attracting and supporting the efforts of faculty, postdocs and students who are passionate about pedagogy, mentoring and translation of research into practice.

During my tour, I also was struck by the variety of the home institutions of our members. From the impeccably manicured buildings of well-endowed private schools to the bustling hallways of massive public institutions and the intimate quadrangles of our smaller campuses, our members look quite different on a superficial level. Despite differences in the resources, class sizes and locations of our member schools, as well as their varying enthusiasm for NCAA athletics, our Association is, at its heart, a single community. The AEESP serves as a unifying force, allowing us to exchange knowledge and advance a set of shared values.

EE is for Environmental Engineering

I have come to appreciate that the definition of environmental engineering changes over time. Yet the future is tied to the past. As inheritors of the legacy of the sanitation movement, which was born in response to the public health crises of the progressive era, environmental engineers still serve the needs of society through professional practice and education of students who make up the staff of government agencies, utilities, non-profits and private companies. As the academics who train the world's environmental engineers, we bring modern research findings into our teaching and service. We also contribute to the growth of our field by developing innovative, new technical approaches for addressing the most pressing environmental challenges.

Throughout my lectureship, I was impressed by the way in which local and regional issues influence our research as well as the satisfaction that our members derive from being on the cutting edge of environmental engineering. Whether it is the engineers at New York University developing a network of sensors for monitoring flooding during extreme weather events or the team at Auburn that is creating new, low-cost sanitation solutions for rural communities in the "Black Belt", or researchers at the CU Boulder who are developing ways of protecting hospital patients from the spread of airborne pathogens, AEESP members continue to drive the innovation that advances public health and environmental protection.

ES is for Engineering Science

In 1998, our members voted to add a second E to our name to reflect the approach that many members of our Association were bringing to their research and teaching. Although the nuance of this name change is unremarkable to people who went to college in the twenty-first century, older AEESP members recall the empirical correlations and reliance on best professional judgment that were central to the discipline during the pre-engineering science era. By the early 1990s, most of our programs had integrated the laws of physics, chemistry and biology into research and teaching. This was reinforced by the expectations among the most prestigious academic journals, many of which were edited by our members, that science-based explanations were essential to high quality peer-reviewed environmental research.

The 2025-2026 academic year unexpectedly brought back the tension between empiricism and science, as it became apparent that machine learning and artificial intelligence could turn a growing stream of real-time data and advances in computing into solutions to complex problems. Discussions that I had with AEESP members over the course

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Reflections on 2025-2026 DLS Tour (cont.)

of the year revealed a range of attitudes towards these developments, from an enthusiastic embrace of new AI-based tools to strong suspicion that brute-force empiricism could lead to ill-conceived solutions that might pose risks to public health and the environment. Our members also expressed concern about the ways that the widespread availability of chatbots will affect the classroom and our ability to assess what our students have learned. My personal takeaway from these discussions is that this latest computing revolution will require us to embrace new ways of teaching and conducting research, but that it must be done deliberately, without losing sight of the engineering science concepts that underpin the technologies that have made our existing infrastructure and institutions capable of protecting human health and the environment.

P is for Professors

Visiting fifteen campuses provided me with opportunities to connect with longtime friends and to meet faculty members who I would not normally interact with at conferences. In addition to confirming my prior observations that we are an idealistic lot and that most of us have correctly recognized that becoming an environmental engineering professor is not a pathway to wealth and prestige, I encountered a considerable amount of angst about the changes taking place in the United States. Many AEESP members are concerned about changes in the funding model that has supported our research over the past six decades. For junior faculty members who had already endured a global pandemic, there were serious questions about how their contributions would be judged against

that of their predecessors or contemporary peers from disciplines that had been affected less by executive orders that resulted in cancellation of grants and declines in funding opportunities.

I also was struck by the situation faced by those of us who have seen the United States as a place that attracts and supports the best and brightest people in the world, irrespective of their national origin. Many of our members have relocated from their home countries to small towns with a less international flavor than the big cities where new arrivals normally congregate. Many of these professors have chosen to make the United States their permanent home because as graduate students and postdocs they experienced an intellectual ecosystem that provided them with opportunities to grow and contribute while living in a country that accepts and embraces immigrants. I am disturbed by the prospect that this might not be the case in the future.

Despite the challenges that we face, I take solace in the ties that bind the AEESP community and its longstanding history of serving society. Spending time with a subset of our community has fortified my will to stand up for the institutions, values and people that make our community special. I do not know where we are heading, but I feel energized by the need to reinforce the mission of the AEESP. My current thinking is consistent with the wisdom about how to persevere in the face of an uncertain future that was shared by the dissident turned national leader Václav Havel, "Hope is not a conviction that something will turn out well, but a certainty that something has meaning regardless of how it turns out."

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AEESP Proudly Announces the 2026-2027 Distinguished Lecturer!

Catherine A. Peters, Ph.D. Princeton University

Lecture 1: Advancing Subsurface Strategies for Decarbonization and Energy Sustainability

Lecture 2: Underground H₂ Generation and storage: An Accelerated Pathway to Energy Decarbonization

Tour dates coming soon!

Check the [AEESP Foundation website](#) for updates!

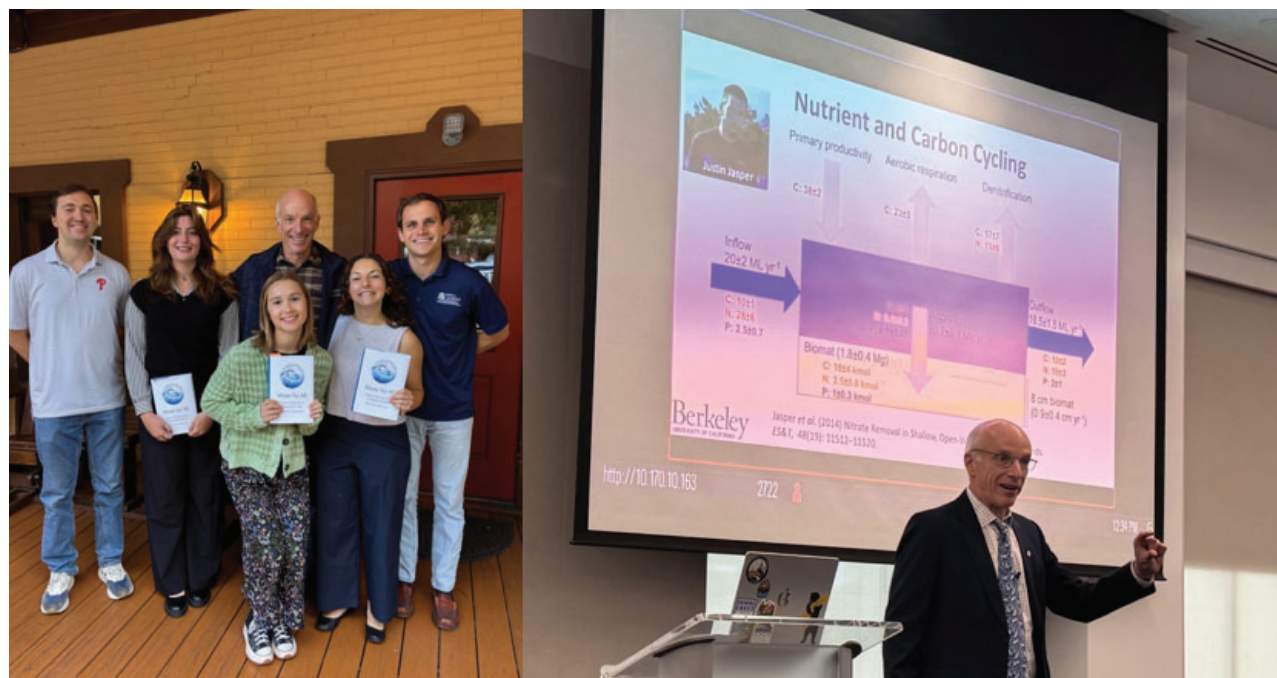


Reflections on 2025-2026 DLS Tour (cont.)

A few photos from the 2025-2026 Distinguished Lecture Tour:



My first stop was at **Howard University**—a campus that I had heard so much about but had not had a chance to visit. The faculty, students, staff and attendees from other DC campuses made this a memorable starting point for my trip. The view from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Monument shows the blue waters of the reflecting pool in 2025.



A Saturday morning coffee with students while discussing “Water for All” was a highlight of my trip to **Clemson University**. I wore a tie for my lecture because the South is a polite and somewhat formal place.

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I kept the tie on at **Wash U** because I felt underdressed without it on such a beautiful campus. I was impressed by the spirit of the other campuses that were willing to make the long drive to participate in the day's events.



At **Notre Dame** I was impressed by the beauty of the central quad as well as South Bend's wastewater treatment plant that I discovered during an early morning run.



Running allowed me to recharge between talks. I struggled to catch my breath in the hills above Boulder (**University of Colorado-Boulder**) and was awestruck by the riparian zone on the Rio Grande near the **University of New Mexico**.



One of the highlights of my trip to **Penn State** was the tour of the irrigated forest and farm that receives the effluent of the campus wastewater treatment plant. After percolating into the ground, this water becomes part of the drinking water supply, making this one of the most under-the-radar potable reuse projects in the world. Happy Valley indeed.

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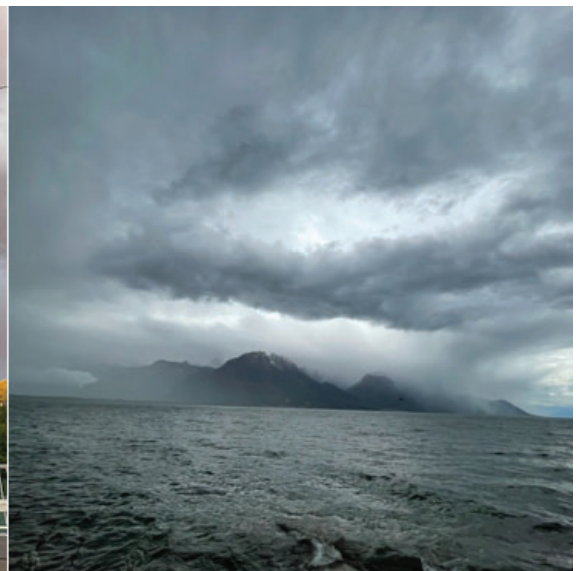
Having grown up in New York, my lecture in The City (**New York University**) was a homecoming that provided an excuse to visit the cultural sites that make the place so special.



No trip to the **University at Buffalo** would be complete without Niagara Falls and the hydro plants on the U.S. and Canadian sides.



The people in Waterloo were fantastic (**University of Waterloo**). The wildlife was grumpy.



Switzerland was a wet and wonderful end of the tour (**Eawag / ETH Zürich**). It was also clean and well organized. The trains were on time. My hosts were wonderful. AEESP funds were not used to purchase chocolate. Really.

AEESP Provides Lectures at Two Events in June

AEESP Thanks Professor Graham Gagnon for Serving as This Year's AEESP Lecturer at AWWA-ACE26!

AEESP would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to Dr. Graham Gagnon, Professor and Director of the Centre for Water Resources Studies at Dalhousie University, for serving as AEESP Lecturer at this year's American Water Works Association Annual Conference and Exposition (AWWA-ACE). Dr. Gagnon's presentation was "*Collaborative Innovation in Drinking Water: Research Partnerships from Atlantic Canada that Advance Global Priorities*", and was presented on Monday, June 22 in Washington, DC.



The lecture was moderated by Dr. Kenan Ozekin, Chief Research Officer at the Water Research Foundation.

AEESP greatly thanks Sustaining Member **Hazen** for sponsoring Dr. Gagnon's lecture. AEESP also thanks Dr. Ozekin for moderating the session and Sustaining Member **AWWA** for hosting it.



AEESP Thanks Professor David Allen for Serving as This Year's AEESP Lecturer at A&WMA-ACE 26!

On Monday, June 22, Dr. David Allen, Professor in the McKetta Department of Chemical Engineering at UT-Austin, provided the AEESP/A&WMA Joint Lecture at this year's Air & Waste Management Association's Annual Conference & Exposition in Austin, TX. Dr. Allen's presentation was "*Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Energy Supply Chains*".

The lecture was moderated by Dr. Chih Chao, A&WMA Technical Council Chair and Principal at Cantech Environmental Services.

AEESP expresses our gratitude to Dr. Allen for providing this year's lecture at A&WMA ACE 2026, Dr. Chao for moderating the session, and the **Air & Waste Management Association** for hosting it.



Did You Know?

Nominations for 2027 AEESP Awards and Fellows will open early this year to account for next year's Conference in May. Nominations for both categories will open on or about October 15, 2026 and close on or about January 15 and February 28 respectively. AEESP will release an announcement via the Listserv when nominations open, so please be on the lookout beginning in October.



2026 AEESP Award Recipients

By Amy Stuart, Ph.D., AEESP Awards Committee Chair, University of South Florida



Dear AEESP members:

It has been my honor to oversee the award nominations and review process for AEESP and the joint AEESP/AEES awards for the 2026 award cycle. Over seventy nominations for eighteen types of faculty and student awards were reviewed. I would like to thank all nominators and letter writers who put extensive

effort into preparing nominations showcasing exceptional contributions to the field. I would also like to acknowledge the thorough and thoughtful work of the committee members to review nominations. The award selection process is time-consuming hard work and the commitment of members to serve in this capacity is appreciated. Awards committee members this cycle included Ian Bradley, Shankar Chellam, Ellison Carter, David Cwiertyny, Ramesh Goel, Katy Graham, Kerry Hamilton, Ray Hozalski, Antarpreet Jutla, Ramani Kandiah, Devrim Kaya, Detlef Knappe, Chan Lan Chun, Zoe Li, Weiwei Mo, Amy Pruden, Lauren Redfern, Jason Ren, Samendra Sherchan, Amy Stuart, Aleksandra Szczuka, and Haoran Wei. A special 'thank you' goes to Ellison Carter, Chair of the Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Awards Subcommittee and Ian Bradley, Chair of the Master's Awards Subcommittee. Finally, I would like to thank Brian Schorr for his dedicated support of the committee's work. I am grateful to work with such dedicated colleagues to select awardees who represent the best of our society. If you are interested in joining us in serving on the Awards Committee, please reach out to me for more information.

Notifications for the 2027 nomination award cycle will be sent this autumn via the AEESP Listserv and the October Newsletter. Due to early Conference dates next year, the Award nomination and review periods will be moved ahead by several weeks, so please check your emails and AEESP's Newsletter and website for when nominations open.

Finally, sincere congratulations to all this year's winners. The awards are very well deserved and, in some cases, way overdue.

Faculty Awards for Education, Research, and Practice:

Steven K. Dentel/AEESP Award for Global Outreach:

Dr. Amy J. Pickering
Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
University of California, Berkeley
(Nominated by
Dr. Alexandria Boehm)

This award is given to Prof. Pickering for her work on transforming the global field of water and sanitation through teaching, technology development, and capacity building.



Perry L. McCarty/AEESP Founders' Award:

Dr. Mark R. Wiesner
Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Duke University
(Nominated by Dr. Nathalie Tufenkji)

Prof. Wiesner is recognized for his visionary scholarship, mentorship, and leadership within AEESP, exemplifying excellence in research, education, and service.

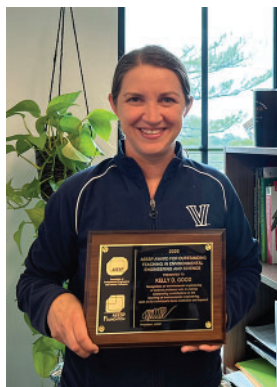


Walter J. Weber, Jr. AEESP Frontier in Research Award:

Dr. Qilin Li, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Rice University
(Nominated by Dr. Pedro Alvarez)

Prof. Li is recognized for her intellectual leadership in hybrid water systems and nanotechnology-enabled treatment, advancing the "One Water" paradigm worldwide.





AEESP Award for Outstanding Teaching in Environmental Engineering and Science:
Dr. Kelly D. Good,
Assistant Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Villanova University
(Nominated by Dr. Virginia Smith)

Prof. Good is recognized for her intellectual rigor, inclusivity, innovation, and a deep commitment to preparing students to address complex, real-world environmental challenges.



AEESP Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Engineering & Science Education Award:
Dr. Andrea Hicks
Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison
(Nominated by Dr. Gregory Harrington)

Prof. Hicks is recognized for her contributions to community-based education on sustainability in environmental engineering.



AEESP/Mary Ann Liebert Award for Publication Excellence in Environmental Engineering Science:
(L-R) Drs. Kevin Orner, Haidar Aldaach, and Mohammed Tamim Zaki

This award is for the most outstanding 2025 paper published in *Environmental Engineering Science*, the official journal of AEESP. In this paper, Drs. Aldaach, Zaki, and Orner present a rigorous and practically relevant framework for improving the prediction of nutrient recovery via struvite precipitation from organic waste digestate. The work advances the state-of-the-art in resource recovery, combining technical depth with clear implications for sustainable environmental engineering practice. The study is significant, original, and well-executed, making a consequential contribution to the field.

Excellence in Environmental Engineering and Science Education (E4) Award:
Dr. Hedy V. Alavi
Teaching Professor
Johns Hopkins University
(Nominated by Dr. Christian Davies-Venn)

Prof. Alavi is recognized as an innovative educator advancing practice-ready environmental engineers through impactful teaching, mentorship, and professional leadership.



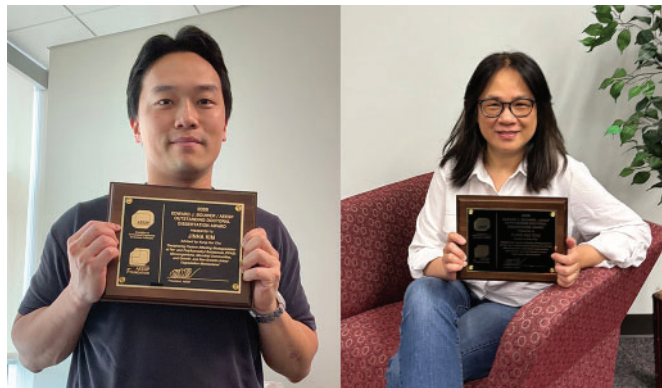
Frederick George Pohland Medal 2026 Recipient:
Dr. Gregory V. Lowry
Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Carnegie Mellon University
(Nominated by Dr. David Dzombak)

Prof. Lowry is being awarded this medal for outstanding contributions in bridging environmental engineering practice communities and academia in environmental nanotechnology and remediation.



Student Awards:

AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Awards:



The Edward J. Bouwer AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award:

Dr. Jinha Kim (left), Texas A&M University
(Advised by Dr. Bella Chu, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Deciphering Factors Affecting Biodegradation of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS): Microorganisms, Microbial Communities, and Growth- and Non-Growth-Linked Degradation Mechanisms."*

Dr. Kim's dissertation represents a substantial and original contribution to environmental biotechnology. He moved beyond descriptive studies to establish a rigorous, mechanistically grounded framework for biodegradation. By integrating microbial ecology and analytical chemistry, this work provides a foundation for precision-driven, predictable PFAS bioremediation.

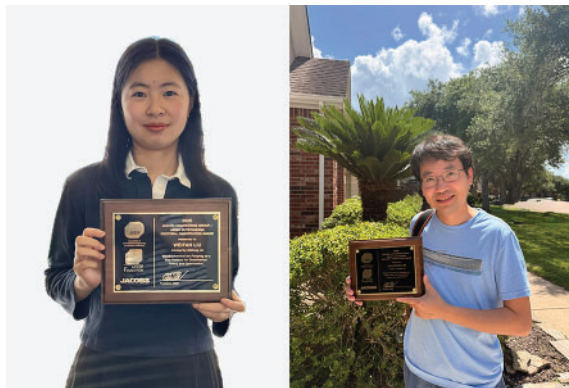


Edward J. Bouwer AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Honorable Mention:

Dr. Zijian (Leo) Wang (left), Cornell University
(Advised by Dr. April Gu, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Single-Cell Ramanome for Large-Scale Microbiome Data Mining towards Biological Discovery and Sustainable Development"*

Dr. Wang produced a large body of original and high-impact research on the fundamentals and novel techniques of Raman single-cell phenotyping that contributes to the advancement in environmental microbiology and biotechnology for complex ecosystems.



Jacobs Engineering Group/AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award:

Dr. Weifan Liu (left), Rice University
(Advised by Dr. Shihong Lin, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Electrochemical Ion Pumping as a New Platform for Desalination: Theory and Optimization"*

Dr. Liu's dissertation advances the field of electrochemical separation by establishing electrochemical ion pumping as a fundamentally new platform for desalination.



Jacobs Engineering Group/AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award Honorable Mention 1:

Dr. Sarang Bhagwat (left), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (now at UC-Berkeley)
(Advised by Dr. Jeremy Guest, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Linking Process-Level Biorefinery Innovations to Systems-Scale Sustainability"*

Dr. Bhagwat independently designed and executed a large-scale computational experiment involving more than 600,000 Monte Carlo simulations across 32 biorefineries. From this effort, he derived a simple, unifying equation linking microbial fermentation performance to system cost, distilling complex, configuration dependent behavior into broadly predictive insight.



Jacobs Engineering Group/AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award Honorable Mention 2: Dr. Kali Rigby (left), Yale University (now at Argonne National Laboratory) (Advised by Dr. Jaehong Kim, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Stability of Single-Atom Catalysts Under Aqueous Reductive Conditions"*.

Dr. Rigby's dissertation contributed to discerning the stability behavior of single-atom catalysts during thermo- and electrocatalytic reactions relevant to water treatment, specifically hydrodehalogenation and nitrate reduction, in relation to catalytic activity and selectivity.



Paul V. Roberts/AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award: Dr. Mourin Jarin (left), Georgia Tech (Advised by Dr. Xing Xie, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Locally Enhanced Electric Field Treatment with Copper (LEEFT-Cu) for Water Disinfection"*

Dr. Jarin's doctoral research focused on the development and advancement of Locally Enhanced Electric Field Treatment with Copper (LEEFT-Cu) – a novel chlorine-free water disinfection technology with low energy consumption and efficient microbial inactivation. The dissertation is unique in its contribution to advancing LEEFT-Cu as it has both elevated the fundamental understanding of the mechanism of inactivation while broadening the potential impact for commercialization through customer discovery and market research.



Paul V. Roberts/AEESP Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award Honorable Mention: Dr. Mira Chaplin (left), University of Michigan (Advised by Dr. Krista R. Wigginton, right)

Dissertation Title: *"Mechanistic and Regulatory Insights into Virus Reduction in Water and Wastewater Treatment Through Modeling Approaches"*.

Dr. Chaplin's dissertation integrated statistical analyses of existing data with targeted experiments to elucidate virus reduction mechanisms in two key water treatment processes: coagulation / flocculation / sedimentation (CFS) and free chlorine disinfection.

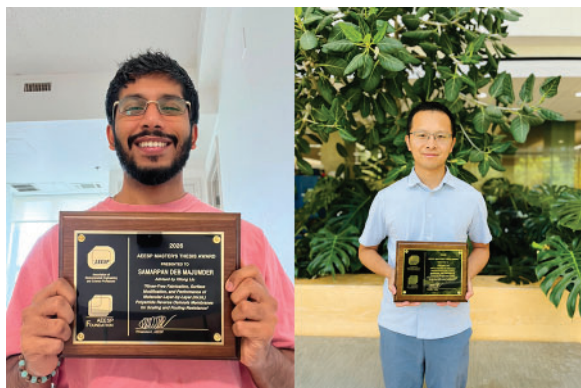
AEESP Master's Thesis Awards:



Biraj Saha (right), North Dakota State University (Advised by Dr. Syeed Md. Iskander, left)

Thesis Title: *"PFAS in Pelagic Sargassum: A Growing Concern for the Mexican Caribbean Coastline"*.

Biraj Saha's thesis represents the first comprehensive investigation of PFAS occurrence, distribution, and bioaccumulation behavior in pelagic Sargassum, a rapidly expanding biomass affecting coastlines across the Atlantic and Caribbean regions. From a scientific and technical standpoint, Biraj demonstrated exceptional independence in experimental design, sample processing, analytical execution, and data interpretation.



**Samarpan Deb Majumder (left),
George Washington University
(Advised by Dr. Xitong Liu, right)**

Thesis Title: "Rinse-Free Fabrication, Surface Modification, and Performance of Molecular-Layer-by-Layer (mLbL) Polyamide Reverse Osmosis Membranes for Scaling and Fouling Resistance".

Mr. Deb Mujumder's thesis made original and substantial intellectual contributions to the development of molecular layer-by-layer (mLbL) polyamide membranes for water treatment. Notably, he conceived and demonstrated a rinse-free mLbL fabrication strategy, identifying intermediate solvent rinsing as a fundamental barrier to scalability. This innovation significantly reduces fabrication time and chemical consumption and enables compatibility with industrial scale manufacturing techniques.



**W. Wesley Eckenfelder
Graduate Research
Award:**

**Dr. Jianan Feng,
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign
(Advised by
Dr. Jeremy S. Guest)**



**Paul F. Boulos
Excellence in
Computational
Hydraulics/Hydrology
Award:**

**Dr. Jeil Oh,
University of Texas
at Austin
(now at Cornell
University)
(Advised by
Dr. Matthew Bartos)**

Distinguished Service Awards:



Dr. Kara L. Nelson
President and Board Member



Dr. Belinda McSwain Sturm
Chief Information Officer
and Board Member



Dr. Huichun (Judy) Zhang
Secretary and Board Member



Dr. Shannon Bartelt-Hunt
AEESP Foundation Chair
and Board Member



Dr. Susan J. Masten
AEESP Foundation Secretary
and Board Member



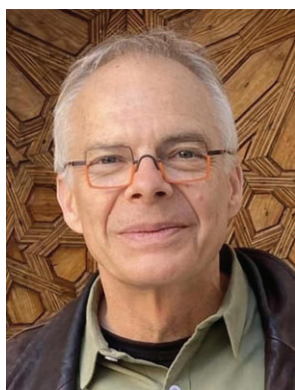
Dr. Osman Karatum
Internet Resources
Committee Chair



Dr. Heileen Hsu-Kim
2025 AEESP Conference Chair



Dr. Leanne M. Gilbertson
2025 AEESP Conference Co-Chair



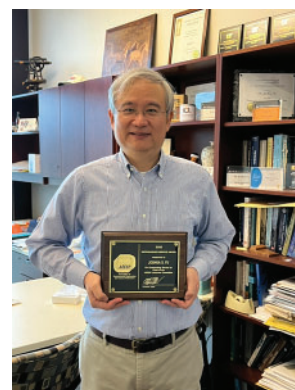
Dr. Mark R. Wiesner
2025 AEESP Conference Co-Chair



Dr. David A. Ladner
Publications Committee Chair



Dr. Lynn E. Katz
Fellows Committee Chair



Dr. Joshua S. Fu
Lecturers Committee Chair



Dr. Karl G. Linden
Sustaining Members Engagement
Committee Chair



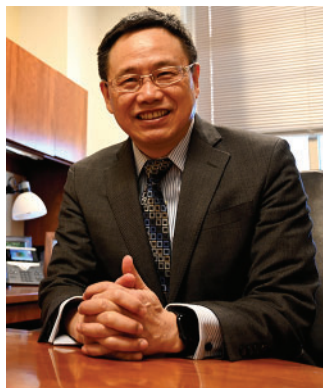
Dr. Jonathan O. Sharp
Conference Site Selection
Committee Chair



Dr. David L. Sedlak
2025-2026 AEESP
Distinguished Lecturer

2026 AEESP Fellows:

AEESP wishes to congratulate the following AEESP Fellows inducted in 2026. This year's inductees will receive their medal, along with 2027 AEESP Fellows during the Research and Education Conference in May 2027.



Dr. Baolin Deng
University of Missouri



Dr. April Gu
Cornell University



Dr. Qilin Li
Rice University



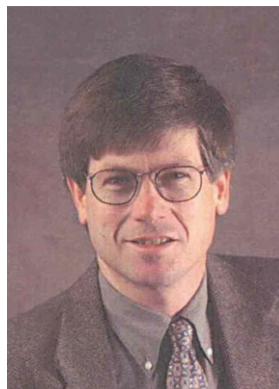
Dr. John W. Sutherland
Purdue University

2026 Lifetime Members:

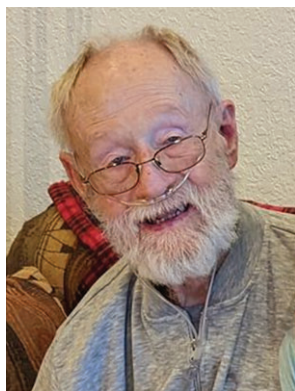
AEESP Wishes to congratulate the following AEESP members on achieving Lifetime Membership Status:



Dr. Cliff Davidson
Syracuse University



Dr. Gary Schafran
Old Dominion University

In Memoriam Dr. Roger A. Minear (ret.), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dr. Roger A. Minear
1939-2026

AEESP mourns the passing of Former President and Lifetime Member Dr. Roger A. Minear. The following message was provided courtesy of Greers Mortuary of Sedona:

Dr. Roger Minear, an esteemed environmental chemist and longtime member of the American Chemical Society, passed away on February 14, 2026, after a short illness. His work helped shape modern understanding of aquatic chemistry and the chemical processes underlying drinking water purification. He served for many years on the faculty of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he was recognized as a dedicated scholar, mentor, and leader in environmental engineering and chemistry. He retired to Sedona, Arizona with his wife Carol in 2001. When not enjoying the red rock views, they frequently traveled. After Carol's passing in 2018, he took up gardening and doting on his granddaughter, Iris.

He is survived by his younger brother Michael Minear and his daughters Meredith and Melinda as well as his two cats, Jay and Pat.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to [Humane Society of Sedona](#).

AEESP Supports Gordon Research Seminar on Aquatic Sciences

June 14-19

Holderness, New Hampshire

The Gordon Research Seminar on Environmental Sciences: Water convened a group of 50 graduate students and postdocs in Holderness, NH for engaged discussions on participants' research and scholarly activities. Student and postdoc oral presentations ranged from biogeochemical cycling to sensing and water data management. Former AEESP President and Board Member Dr. Lee Blaney provided a keynote presentation on filling key gaps in molecular characterizations.

AEESP provided funding to support the registration and travel costs of the seminar's keynote speaker and career panelists. The Gordon Research Conference on Environmental Sciences: Water followed the Gordon Research Seminar.

The following is a brief collection of photos taken during the weeklong event in June.



(Left to Right): Mackenzie Bowden (incoming chair for GRS 2028), Lee Blaney, Lorelay Mendoza (outgoing 2026 GRS chair), Jack King (outgoing 2026 GRS co-chair), and Sanaiya Islam (incoming co-chair for GRS 2028)



Incoming 2028 GRS co-chairs with Lee Blaney



Group photo of participants at GRS and GRC



Dr. Xicheng He attended GRS and presented a poster. His poster was selected as one of the competition winners, and he was invited to give a verbal presentation at the main GRC.

International Spotlight: AEESP Community of Practice on Africa and Interested Scholars

By Prof. Joseph Wasswa, African Scholars COP Chair, State University of New York Polytechnic Institute, Prof. Stephen T. Odonkor, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), and Simon Bbumba, Makerere University, Uganda

Environmental challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, pollution, and sustainable resource management require collaboration across regions and disciplines. To strengthen these connections, AEESP recently established the Community of Practice on Africa (CoPA) and Interested Scholars. The initiative brings together environmental researchers, educators, students, and practitioners from Africa and around the world to promote collaboration, mentorship, professional development, and knowledge exchange. The CoPA aims to create meaningful partnerships that support research, education, and career development. Its goals include expanding international networks, improving understanding of different research and educational systems, and supporting students and early career professionals through mentorship and guidance on graduate education, funding opportunities, and career pathways. The community also serves as a resource for faculty and researchers interested in developing collaborations with African institutions and scholars. Led by a volunteer committee, the CoPA is coordinated by Prof. Joseph Wasswa and Prof. Adeyemi Adeleye from Columbia University, with Prof. Drew Capone from Indiana University and Olanrewaju Eunice Beyioku from Ben Gurion University of The Negev leading programs and events. Prof. Mark Barnett from Auburn University, Kenneth Mensah from Penn State University, Gabson Baguma from UNLV, and Prof. William Tarpeh from Stanford University support outreach and membership activities. Since its first meeting in October 2025, the committee has focused on building a strong foundation through member engagement, communication platforms, surveys, webinars, and educational resources. Upcoming activities will highlight research opportunities, graduate school preparation, mentorship, career development, and collaborations involving African institutions. The long-term vision is to establish an inclusive network that advances environmental science and engineering while fostering equitable partnerships across continents.

Student Perspective: Simon Bbumba

Simon Bbumba, a graduate student in Chemistry at Makerere University in Uganda, studies environmental and physical chemistry with a focus on remediation and machine learning applications. He learned about AEESP through Professor Joseph Wasswa and joined the Community of Practice to connect with researchers, explore current environmental research trends, and build collaborations. One of the most valuable outcomes of his participation was connecting with a PhD student in the United States during a community networking activity. Through this con-

nection, Simon gained access to research opportunities, laboratory openings, and academic guidance that would have been difficult to find independently. He notes that the CoPA provides direct access to information and professional networks that can significantly benefit students seeking international opportunities. Simon also highlights several challenges faced by students across Africa, including limited research funding, insufficient mentorship opportunities, restricted access to collaborations, and limited awareness of scholarship opportunities abroad. He believes the Community of Practice can help address these barriers through regular mentorship programs, seminars, workshops, and student exchange opportunities. Such initiatives would strengthen graduate school preparation, career development, and international collaboration while helping African researchers compete more effectively on a global stage.

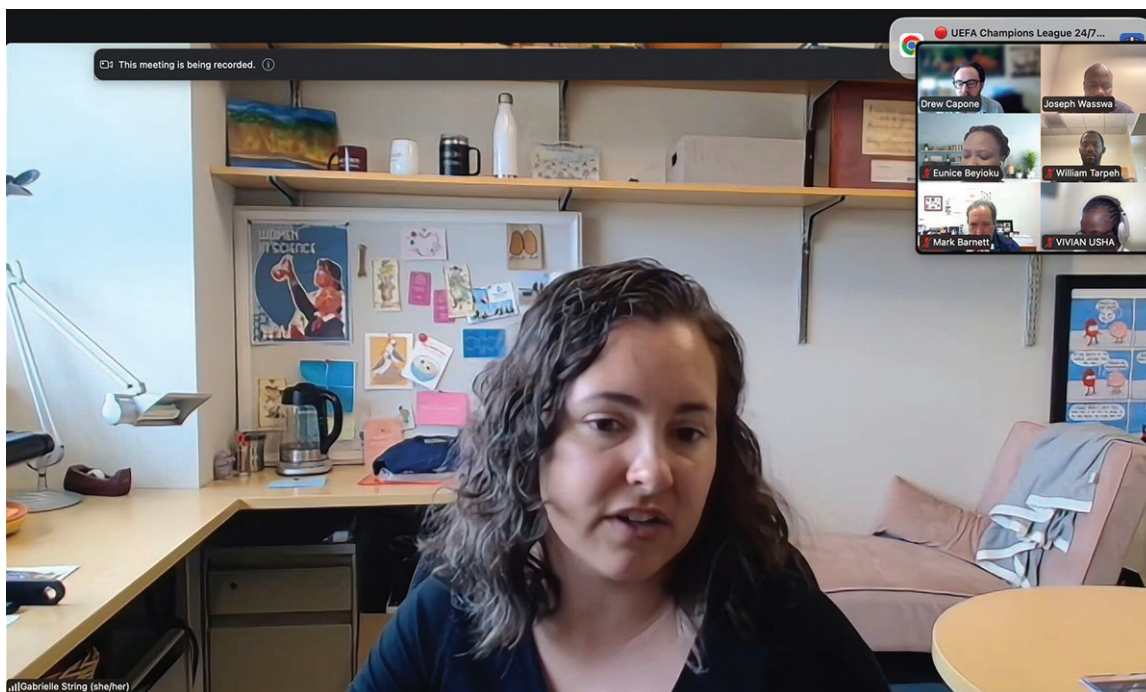
Faculty Perspective: Prof. Stephen T. Odonkor

Prof. Stephen T. Odonkor, Head of the Department of Development Policy at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration and Associate Professor of Public Health and Environmental Management, views the CoP as a timely and important initiative. He emphasizes that environmental challenges increasingly cross-national boundaries and require collaborative solutions grounded in diverse perspectives and expertise. According to Prof. Odonkor, the Community of Practice has the potential to become a vibrant platform for research collaboration, mentorship, teaching, and professional development. He envisions opportunities for joint research projects, collaborative grant proposals, faculty and student exchanges, curriculum development, and coauthored publications addressing environmental challenges across Africa. Such partnerships can strengthen both African and international scholarship by integrating local knowledge with global expertise. He also notes that collaborations can help address persistent challenges, including limited research funding, inadequate infrastructure, restricted access to international networks, and the underrepresentation of African perspectives in global environmental discussions. To maximize impact, he encourages long-term partnerships built on mutual respect, shared leadership, equitable authorship, mentorship, and expanded support for early career researchers. Through these efforts, the Community of Practice can advance environmental scholarship while contributing to sustainable development and environmental justice across Africa and beyond.

AEESP members interested in Africa-related research,

International Spotlight (cont.)

education, mentorship, or collaboration are encouraged to participate in future Community of Practice activities and help build a stronger global environmental research network. You can join our mailing list [here](#). For more information, please contact Prof. Joseph Wasswa (wasswaj@sunypoly.edu) or Prof. Adeyemi Adeleye (asa2296@columbia.edu).



Dr. Gabrielle String speaks during a recent meeting of the African Scholars Community of Practice.



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Spotlight: Environmental Engineering Science, AEESP Journal Mid 2026

Dr. Maryam Salehi (University of Missouri)*, Dr. Boya Xiong (University of Minnesota)*, Dr. Baolin Deng (University of Missouri)*, Dr. Venkataramana Gadhamshetty (South Dakota School of Mines and Technology)*

*Members of the AEESP Publications Committee

The “Spotlight” column draws attention to selected articles in *Environmental Engineering Science* (EES), the official journal of the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors (AEESP). Spotlight articles appear three times per year in the journal as well as in the AEESP newsletter. Through the publication of high-quality peer-reviewed research, the EES journal helps AEESP achieve its mission of developing and disseminating knowledge in environmental engineering and science. In this entry, we shine the spotlight on selected articles from the November 2025 through March 2026 issues of EES. Congratulations to all whose work is highlighted.

Growing concern over microplastic (MP) pollution, driven by its potential risks to human health and environmental safety, underscores the need for accurate quantification across diverse environmental media. Environmental weathering and thermal oxidation, however, can alter the surface chemistry of MPs and thus complicate their identification using surface chemistry-based spectroscopic techniques such as Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy. Conventional FTIR libraries predominantly include spectra of pristine plastics and lack representation of environmentally aged materials; therefore, they may not reliably identify weathered MPs in environmental samples. To address this limitation, Arredondo-Navarro et al. (2025) developed an environmentally relevant spectral library by subjecting seven commercial polymers to controlled thermal oxidation under varying conditions of time and temperature, as well as exposing polypropylene (PP) and low-density polyethylene (LDPE) to 40 days of mechanical abrasion. The resulting library was applied to both environmental and laboratory-generated samples, leading to notable improvements in identification accuracy, with match rates increasing by 7.3% for thermally oxidized MPs and 23.8% for mechanically abraded MPs. This study highlights the importance of incorporating spectra of environmentally weathered plastics into FTIR libraries and similar spectroscopic approaches to improve the reliability of MP identification in environmental samples.

As regulatory scrutiny intensifies regarding the pervasive pollution of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), optimizing removal technologies is urgently needed, such as sorption by granular activated carbon (GAC) that is widely deployed but limited by weak physical interactions and finite pore space. Furthermore, many studies focusing on PFAS in isolation provide limited information about removal in complex, real-world mixtures. To address the knowledge gap, Wang et al. (2025) functionalized commercial GAC with a cationic quaternary ammonium surfactant (CTAC) offering more chemically specific binding, tested in binary PFAS mixture conditions. The researchers found that introducing chemical-specific interactions effectively overcomes reduction in overall pore volume due to surfactant coating. The modified GAC yielded superior

single-solute adsorption through combined electrostatic and hydrophobic mechanisms compared to unmodified ones. Yet, when testing the concurrent adsorption of PFOA and PFNA, PFNA adsorption dropped significantly, highlighting the severe competitive effects in real world mixtures. Ultimately, this work provides the baseline data needed to rationally design chemically targeted adsorbents capable of handling the multi-species PFAS mixtures actually found in water treatment facilities.

Education for sustainable development aims to advance students’ knowledge and skills to critically evaluate complex systems and act responsibly in the face of global uncertainty. However, despite growing international momentum on sustainability education, its implementation remains inconsistent across institutions and regions. Given the central role of engineers in shaping sustainability outcomes, equipping them with systems thinking and ethical reasoning is essential. To address this need, Song et al. (2025) examined the impact of sustainability education on engineering students at two universities in the southeastern United States. A two-year pre- and post-course analysis of 151 students, supported by qualitative open-ended responses, revealed more positive attitudes toward renewable energy, greater willingness to adopt sustainable practices, and influences on career decisions, while suggesting that curriculum improvements could further enhance its knowledge retention. These findings offer actionable guidance for strengthening sustainability education and empowering future engineers to tackle complex global challenges.

References

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/15579018251392009>
- Wang, L., Rajapakshe, D., Ma, Y., Bahureksa, W., Belteton, S., Xing, X., Cappelle, M., and Li, R. (2025). Per- and polyfluoroalkyl carboxylic acids mixture adsorption on surfactant-modified granular activated carbon: Mechanisms and competitive effects. *Environmental Engineering Science* 42(12).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15579018251391977>
- Song, H., McNeal, K.S., Beckingham, L.E., Solomon, J., and Lazar, K. (2026). Evaluating the impact of sustainability and renewable energy education on engineering undergraduates’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. *Environmental Engineering Science* 43(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15579018251397072>

Mark Your Calendars for the Following Upcoming AEESP Events!

AEESP Meet and Greet Reception at WEFTEC

Meet incoming AEESP President José Cerrato, Ph.D.
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
Monday, September 28; 11:30 am CT; Room 352
New Orleans, LA
Organized by AEESP

[Registration to WEFTEC Required](#)



AEESP Master Lecture at WEFTEC

From Ideas to Implementation: Advancing Water Through Collaboration

Jose Jimenez, Ph.D.
Director, Wastewater Process Practice & National Technology Innovation Leader
Brown and Caldwell

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

Monday, September 28; 1:30 pm CT; Room 256

Organized by WEF and AEESP; New Orleans, LA

[Registration to WEFTEC Required](#)



44th Annual Conference of the American Association for Aerosol Research

First Plenary Session: "The Great Smog Caper"

Richard C. Flagan, Ph.D.
McCollum/Corcoran Professor of Chemical and Environmental Engineering

California Institute of Technology

Tuesday, October 27; *Time TBA

Organized by AAAR; Pasadena, CA

[Registration to AAAR Required](#)



**American Association
for Aerosol Research**



American Water Works Association Water Quality Technology Conference

AEESP will once again be presenting its **Emerging Investigator Lecture** at this year's American Water Works Association Water Quality Technology Conference (AWWA-WQTC), **November 15-19** in Memphis, TN. This year's lecturer will be a practitioner in the field. We invite and encourage all AEESP members [planning to attend](#) this year's WQTC to join us for this informative session. We also extend our thanks and appreciation to Sustaining Member Corona Environmental Consulting for its support of this important event, and we thank Sustaining Member AWWA for hosting this year's AEESP *Emerging Investigator* Lecturer.



Dr. Lutgarde Raskin Joins Yale University



Dr. Lutgarde (“Lut”) Raskin has joined Yale Engineering as a professor in the Department of Chemical & Environmental Engineering. Raskin comes to Yale from the University of Michigan, where she served as the Vernon L. Snoeyink Distinguished University Professor of Environmental Engineering and the Altarum/ERIM Russell O’Neal Professor of Engineering and started as a professor of Environmental Engineering in 2005. Prior to that, she was a faculty member at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for 12 years.

A pioneer in molecular microbial ecology applied to engineered water systems, Dr. Raskin’s research focuses on anaerobic bioprocesses for resource recovery from waste streams and microbial aspects of urban water systems to assist drinking water utilities. Her research group studies the microbiome of the engineered water cycle, including drinking water treatment, biofiltration, disinfection, building plumbing, and technologies that enable recovery of water, energy, and useful chemicals from waste streams. She was elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 2021 and is an Elected Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, the International Water Association, the Water Environment Federation, and the AEESP, for which she served on the Board of Directors from 2016-2019. She also served as the 2018-2019 AEESP Distinguished Lecturer and received the 2007 AEESP Frontier Award in Research. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by her alma mater KU Leuven, Belgium, in 2025.

Dr. Raskin has advised 33 PhD students, 90 Master’s students, and 22 postdoctoral researchers, many of whom now hold academic and leadership positions worldwide. In recognition of her excellence in mentoring, she received the University of Michigan Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award.

Dr. Manisha Choudhary Joins Kansas State University

Dr. Manisha Choudhary will join the Carl and Melinda Helwig Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at Kansas State University as an Assistant Professor in August 2026. Prior to joining K-State, she was a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Maine and previously completed postdoctoral work at Temple University. Her research focuses on emerging contaminant detection and



treatment, with emphasis on PFAS remediation, non-thermal plasma processes, graphene-enabled adsorbents, and circular regeneration of spent adsorbents. She received her Ph.D. and M.S. in Chemical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. She was selected as a Purdue Trailblazers in Engineering Fellow and received the 40 Under 40 Rising Stars recognition

from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists (AAEES). At K-State, her group will develop chemical-free sustainable treatment technologies for water, wastewater, and agricultural systems.

Dr. Belinda Sturm Joins Virginia Tech



Dr. Belinda Sturm was named head of the Charles E. Via, Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech, effective July 2026. Prior to joining Virginia Tech, she served as the Ross McKinney Endowed Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Kansas and directed the Kansas National Science Foundation Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Sturm brings two decades of experience in research leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration, and faculty mentorship. As director of EPSCoR, she oversaw strategic planning, external partnerships, and stakeholder engagement while working closely with the National Science Foundation and state and federal leaders to advance research initiatives. Her research focuses on environmental engineering solutions that improve public health and environmental sustainability. Dr. Sturm earned her Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Notre Dame and her Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health in environmental science and engineering from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Kayla Kurtz to join University of New Hampshire



Dr. Kayla Kurtz will join the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of New Hampshire starting Fall 2026. Kurtz joins the faculty as an Assistant Professor of One Water Engineering following a postdoctoral position at the University of Rhode Island. Kurtz's research has spanned freshwater to salt-water systems, including topics on emerging contaminants and

plastic pollution, biofouling on water quality sensors, and climate change adaptation for drinking water systems. Kurtz brings industry experience and 18 years of volunteer work with Engineers Without Borders-USA. Kurtz completed her Ph.D. and M.S. degrees at the University of Rhode Island and her B.S. degree at the University of New Hampshire. She will contribute to research and teaching efforts in environmental engineering and support interdisciplinary initiatives at UNH. We are excited to welcome her to the faculty!

Dr. Alexander Michalek Joins the University of Minnesota



Dr. Alexander Michalek will join the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Geo- Engineering at the University of Minnesota in September 2026 as an assistant professor. He will also be affiliated with the Saint Anthony Falls Laboratory, a globally renowned center for pioneering research in experimental and computational fluid mechanics, hydrology, and earth-surface dynamics on the banks of the Mississippi River. Michalek

holds a Master of Science in water resource engineering from The University of Kansas and completed his Ph.D. at Princeton University in 2026. At UMN he will continue research in the area of environmental systems and risk modeling, focusing at the intersection of hydrology, climate science, and human-environmental interactions. He works across water resources and environmental disciplines to translate computational modeling into actionable risk information for communities and decision-makers. As a scientist, he is experienced in physical, numerical, and statistical modeling. He is passionate about performing spatial and temporal climate and hydrologic analysis to understand anthropogenic and environmental pressures on systems and communicating data to the public through informatics.

Save the Date and Join Us in Austin, TX Next Year!

AEESP Research & Education
CONFERENCE
May 18-20, 2027 • Austin, TX

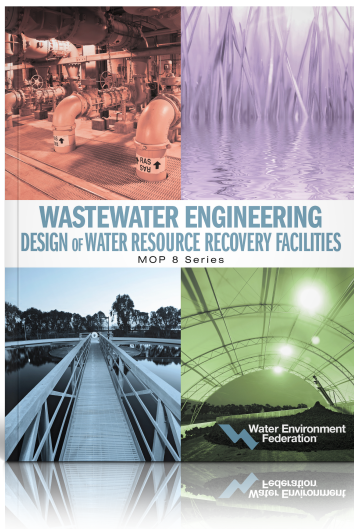
The Texas Two-Step
Partnering for Impact Through Industry and Community





Wastewater Engineering: Design of Water Resource Recovery Facilities (MOP 8 Series) is a new textbook from the wastewater experts at the Water Environment Federation (WEF). *Wastewater Engineering* has its roots in WEF's *Design of Water Resource Recovery Facilities* (MOP 8), a long-time fixture on the design engineer's shelf.

Written by a team of professors and industry experts and put through a rigorous review, *Wastewater Engineering* provides vital WRRF design and modeling information for senior-level and graduate students in engineering. Its scope of coverage and classroom-friendly features make it an excellent tool for students and for young professionals transitioning from academia to practice.



Key Features

- Learning objectives for each chapter
- Example problems with solutions to show students application of the covered content
- End-of-chapter practice problems, with solution key available for instructors
- Supporting material to assist in learning, such as key terms and a notation table

Download the first chapter of *Wastewater Engineering: Design of Water Resource Recovery Facilities* and a sample syllabus at <https://l.feathr.co/WEF28>

Exam copies available to instructors. If you're interested in using *Wastewater Engineering* in your course or have any questions about its contents, [please reach out](#).

Learn more at www.wef.org/WastewaterEngineering.

AEESP Membership

Membership in AEESP offers important benefits to educators, researchers, students, professionals, corporations and organizations engaged in the environmental engineering and science profession. All who are eligible for membership are welcome to join the Association and to participate in the full range of benefits and opportunities. Membership categories and fees are described below, with complete definitions provided in the AEESP Bylaws. Applying online is easy! We welcome your participation!

Regular and Student Membership

Regular Membership in AEESP is open to persons of full-time faculty or instructional rank (instructors, lecturers, assistant, associate, full professors) in environmental engineering or environmental science at academic institutions that offer baccalaureate, diploma, or graduate degrees in environmental engineering, environmental science or related fields.

Rank	Annual Fee
Full Professors	\$130
Associate Professors	\$100
Assistant Professors	\$65
Affiliate Members	\$75
Students and Post-docs	\$20

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Affiliate Membership is open to individuals who are not eligible for regular membership including:

- Individuals primarily employed outside academia who also hold academic appointments in an environmental engineering or related academic program (e.g. adjunct faculty).
- Individuals primarily employed outside academia who have made contributions to education in environmental engineering or related fields.
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Sustaining Membership is open to individuals and organizations whose concern for education in environmental engineering and related fields stimulates them to assist in strengthening university programs devoted to this area. Sustaining members are often those who employ or interact closely with graduates of environmental engineering and science programs such as consultants, utilities, research foundations, professional organizations, publishers and equipment manufacturers. The financial support provided by Sustaining Members allows AEESP to carry out a variety of special programs that benefit all members of the profession. Sustaining Members have access to all AEESP publications and are invited to all AEESP events. Organizations or individuals desiring more information on Sustaining Membership should write to the Secretary, the President, or the Business Office.

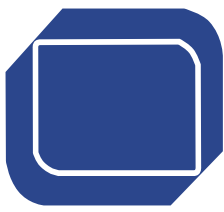
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More information can also be obtained from the AEESP Business Office:

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