Welcome to the NIC School!
Meet your amazing POD Leaders…
Hi first years! Welcome to the Nicholas School. My name is Nicole Abib, and I am a second year MEM studying Water Resource Management. My studies focus on the use of geospatial analysis and modelling to examine issues of water quality and quantity, and my master's project is on developing a better system for informing ecological flows from dams. I am involved in the Duke Water Network and the Student Association of Wetland Scientists. During the summer I have been interning at The Nature Conservancy in Nags Head, North Carolina, looking at obstructions to fish passage on the Roanoke River floodplain. In my free time, you can usually find my dog and I on a hiking trail or in one of the many great dog-friendly restaurants around Durham. I look forward to meeting you all!

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Hey there! I’m a Coastal Environmental Management (CEM) student from Phoenix, AZ. What brought a desert girl to study marine life, you may wonder? You wouldn’t be the first to ask. I’d like to think it’s in my blood since my parents both grew up on the California coast.

For undergrad, I went to Arizona State University (go sun devils!) for Supply Chain Management and Sustainability. After working in warehousing for PepsiCo - Frito Lay for 2 years, I decided to continue my “devilish” education and become a blue devil to pursue an MEM and CBEM Certificate. After graduating, I hope to work with coastal tourism businesses in minimizing their environmental impacts while also raising awareness to their visitors on how to be a greener tourist.

As a 2nd-year CEM, I’m now living in Beaufort, but you will still likely see me back in Durham for Campout, FOREM events, and just to see fellow MEM friends, so feel free to say hi! Till then, welcome to the Nic School family!

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Hi, my name is John Feldmann, I'm a second year EEP (Environmental Economics and Policy) MEM student. I'm looking forward to helping you navigate your first couple weeks and the fall semester. I graduated from undergrad a good while ago, went to grad school for Physics, and then taught high school science and math in New York City for a few years. I'm interested in non-market valuation of the environment and environmental policy analysis. This summer I’m working for NC Conservation Network in Raleigh as their Clean Energy Intern - following the NC General Assembly and the environmental bills they're putting through in the special session. It's been a great experience already (only 3 weeks in) - I'm learning a lot and putting to use what I learned in my courses this past year.

I really enjoyed my first year at Duke - I met so many interesting and passionate people with such a variety of interests and career goals. The academics can be demanding, but if you budget your time well and stay on top of things, it will undoubtedly be a great year. Have a wonderful summer, and I look forward to meeting you in August.

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Hey fam, I’m Syd! I guess this summer I am officially a second year MEM candidate in the Ecosystem Science and Conservation concentration. I was born and raised in Houston, TX and graduated from St. Edward’s University in Austin, TX with a major in Environmental Science and Policy. This summer I was an intern for The Nature Conservancy of North Carolina creating a survey design for their Virtual Reality clips and developing new citizen science techniques for members and volunteers.

One of my biggest interests coming into the Nic School is incorporating technology in the use of conservation of urban wildlife. That being said, I am secretary of the Student Association of Geospatial Analysis club, pursuing my Geospatial Analyst certificate, and an active member of the Nic School’s Conservation Society and Red Wolves clubs. I encourage everyone to partake in as many clubs as they are interested in. Grad school is busy but the clubs get you out of the computer lab for a bit!

I love getting outside every chance I get. In Durham that means field trips in Duke Forest, taking a dip at Turtle Hole, and drinking on a porch somewhere. Durham is known for Duke, the food/beer scene, and triple-A baseball. It’s gonna be a good time! Can’t wait to meet everyone! Hit me up if you have any questions!

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Hello and welcome to the Nic School! I am originally from Falls Church, VA and attended undergrad at the University of Mary Washington. After school, I spent a year working for a conservation corps in Utah. I worked in Zion, Bryce, and Death Valley National Park in addition to BLM and USFS lands. While there, my affinity for our public lands grew and I elected to attend graduate school. I am in the Environmental Economics and Policy concentration, with a strong interest in the development of outdoor recreation and conservation on public lands. During the summer I interned at the National Park Service in the Washington, D.C. office in the Conservation and Outdoor Recreation division.

I am the treasurer for the Nicholas School Naturalists (NicNats) and look forward to planning lots of cool trips around North Carolina this year! I love to spend time outdoors and explore new areas. I also consider myself a foodie – aka I like to cook, eat, and drink good beer. One of my favorite parts about Durham is the growing food scene and breweries. I am an avid sports fan (go IRISH!) and enjoy attending Duke basketball games. Can't wait to meet you all and welcome to Bull City!

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Hey everyone! Welcome to the Nicholas School of the Environment! I’m Bhargavi Karumuri and I’m getting my MEM in Ecosystem Sciences and Conservation and a certificate in Community-Based Environmental Management (CBEM). I grew up embracing the mountains, beach, and foothills in San Jose, CA after moving there from India as a 6-month old. I went to Baylor University in Waco, TX and got a B.S. in Ecology. After undergrad, I went back to the Bay Area and worked with the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department as an environmental educator and took classes on field trips to their local San Francisco parks. I loved teaching these children about the importance of connecting with nature, even in a crowded city.

At the Nicholas School, I’m the secretary of Diverse and Inclusive Community for the Environment (DICE). I’m very passionate about environmental justice issues, especially in urban communities and hope to use my CBEM skills in this realm after graduating.

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Laura Landes

Hello to the new class of Nic Schoolers! We're all so excited to get to know you - welcome to Duke and to Durham. I'm Laura Landes, an EEP studying water policy. I'm primarily interested in drinking water and wastewater systems, especially issues of access and equity and how to improve these systems. However, I'm also interested in other water topics - my MP is about the Clean Water Act and I took Water Resources Law last semester and highly recommend it. I'm originally from Virginia and lived in the DC-metro area for most of my life. I love cats and dogs but don't have any with me in Durham, so if you have one I am very jealous! I might befriend you just to hang out your pet. I also like reading as much as I can manage outside of school and my favorite thing to do is travel to new places or to visit family. I'm also a vegetarian and I love to cook and will happily trade recipes for days. Get excited - Durham is a really fun place to live and the Nic community is wonderful. See you soon!

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I’m a student in the Ecosystem Science and Conservation track; I am studying wetland and stream ecosystems and am interested in quantifying ecosystem services to increase conservation efforts. I am a North Carolina native and earned my bachelor’s degree in biology from Davidson College. Before coming to the Nicholas School, I spent three years working in development and event planning with an affordable housing non-profit.

This summer I interned at the Duke Carbon Offsets Initiative within Sustainable Duke. I enjoy gardening, reading, baking, and walking my two large dogs. I have especially enjoyed exploring downtown Durham and the Eno River State Park. I’m glad you’ll be joining the Nic School community!

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I am a 2nd year MEM student in the Environmental Economics and Policy (EEP) concentration. I grew up in Anshan, China, a city suffering from severe air pollution from heavy industries such as steel production and manufacturing. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science from the University of Tokyo’s. I also took energy engineering for a second major, mostly testing solar cell materials/structures in a lab using semiconductors.

At Duke, I was a board member of the Duke Sustainability Board and have maintained a great connection with people at the Duke University Energy Initiative. This past summer, I interned with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in Washington DC, where I worked on an energy efficiency program for multi-family housing across 12 states in the US. My favorite things about Duke is the Blue Devils, the Duke Gardens, and visiting (climbing) the Chapel. My hobbies include running, watching movies, and coding away on Stata. I hope to keep them alive as I pursue a PhD. Degree in Economics.

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My name is Sean Maddex. I am an Energy and Environment student focusing on energy policy. I am particularly interested in renewable integration. For my Master’s Project I will be working with a team of students to look at projects related to rebuilding a more resilient power grid in Puerto Rico. Currently, I am a Staff Editor on the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Forum.

Outside of classes I have spent a lot of time playing and refereeing intramural soccer, which is run through Dukes Athletics Department. We run a team comprised of Nic Schoolers and are always looking to add more people for intramurals and pickup. My other hobbies include baking, hiking, and watching Duke Basketball. I am excited to meet you all when you arrive.

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Hello! I’m Kelsey, and I would tell you where I’m from, but I’ve lived too many places (military nomad). For now, the Carolinas feel like home. I came to Duke after working in environmental consulting, conducting fish population surveys with a mix of lab and fieldwork on the Delaware River. Prior to that I earned my Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science at the University of South Carolina. At Duke, I am concentrating in Water Resources Management and pursuing a Community-based Environmental Management certificate. This coming year, I am also excited to serve as co-President of the Duke Water Network. I am interested in environmental justice issues around water- including safety, affordability, and access- and I look forward to learning the tools I need to be a great advocate at the Nicholas School.

Outside of school, I spend my all too limited free time painting, binging TV series, and playing soccer. On a good day, I can be found at a river, lake, or beach.

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Hello! I am an Energy & Environment (EE) student, with a bachelor’s degree in Civil & Environmental Engineering and Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University. I came to Duke immediately following undergrad and have really enjoyed the transition from undergrad to graduate school! This past summer I interned with the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in New York City where I worked on implementing building transparency and benchmarking policies and programs across cities in the US.

This coming year at Duke I am the Marketing Chair for Energy Week at Duke! Energy Week is one of my favorite parts of Duke because it really brings together all students from all of Duke’s schools who are interested in energy. Aside from academics – I love music and I love to nap. I also spend any free weekend I have traveling to new places and meeting old friends! I hope you’re as excited to come to Durham as we are to have you join us! See you soon!

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Hey everyone! Hope you’re getting excited about your first year at the Nicholas School! My name is Yuliya and I am a second year specializing in Water Resource Management (WRM). I’m on the leadership board for the Duke Water Network, which means I’ll definitely be encouraging you to attend our events throughout the year. My favorite part about being at the Nic School is that everyone here loves participating in outdoor activities, whether kayaking, hiking, or just sitting outside around a fire.

Prior to Duke, I attended from The Ohio State University in 2016 and consider myself to be an avid Buckeye fan. Regardless of my loyalties, I love attending Duke’s basketball games and I strongly encourage everyone to participate in the experience!

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I am a second year CEM student, pursuing a GIS certificate. Originally, I am from Memphis, TN and graduated from Emory University in Atlanta, GA in 2014 with a degree in environmental science. After graduation, I lived in the Florida Keys and then the Bahamas working as a SCUBA instructor before moving back to Atlanta to work for the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as a State Coordinator for a citizen science water quality monitoring program. At Duke, I work with the Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab (MGEL) to map migratory corridors of fish species, particularly sharks, and my master’s project will focus on highly migratory fish species within the Gulf of Mexico, building on work from my summer internship with The Nature Conservancy in Texas. After finishing my degree at Duke, I am considering a PhD and would eventually like to work in either the government or an NGO in an applied ecology position.

Outside of Duke, I play rugby for a team in Raleigh and love to go hiking, running, and adventuring. Durham is a fantastic city with tons to offer in the music, arts, and food scenes, so feel free to ask if you have questions about things to do around town! The Nic school is amazing, but I am a big believer in breaking out of the Duke bubble!!

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Hey y’all! My name is Colyer Woolston and I am a 2nd year in the Coastal Environmental Management (CEM) concentration. I am a Wyoming native, although I grew up in Ireland and now hail from Denver, CO, and I graduated from Hamilton College in 2014 with a degree in Environmental Studies. Before attending the Nicholas School of the Environment, I pursued three years’ worth of internships and seasonal jobs ranging from studying horseshoe crabs in Cape Cod marshes to interning in the United States Senate.

At Nic, I am pursuing a course of study with a focus on international marine policy, management, and conservation. I am particularly interested in the collaboration of nations, large international NGOs, and local communities in finding common ground solutions to better manage ecologically important species and habitats. In addition to my coursework, during my first year, I assisted with a literature review of tuna species migrations for the Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab (MGEL), served as the Action Team Coordinator for the Ocean Policy Working Group (OPWG), and worked on a client project for an international development non-profit with a Duke Interdisciplinary Social Innovators (DISI) team. Next year, I will be the Beaufort VP of DukeFish, a chapter of the American Fisheries Society. And this summer, I am interning with NRDC’s Oceans Team in San Francisco where I work on a wide range of projects related to international marine conservation issues.

Next year, as with most CEMs, I will be studying at the Duke Marine Lab in Beaufort, NC so I am excited to spend a few days back in Durham with you guys, and I hope you are too! For being a relatively small city, Durham has an incredible amount to offer, from nearly endless choices of fun bars and a diverse selection of restaurants to awesome swimming holes as well as hiking and running trails. So get excited, and go blue devils!

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My name is Sara Yeh and I’m a 2nd year MEM in the Water Resources Management concentration. Some of my interests in the Nic school surround drinking source water protection and geospatial analysis. During this summer I’ve been working on part of my Master’s Project concerning hydrologic connectivity of stream reaches in the arid US, and how that pertains to Clean Water Act regulatory definitions. I’m also a part of the leadership teams of the Duke Water Network (DWN) and Duke Lutherans.

During my spare time I enjoy modern dance (both the dancing and watching), brewery hopping, and spending time down by the river. I grew up in the triangle and went to undergrad at UNC (gasp!), so if you have any questions about the area I’m your gal! I’m excited to get to know you all!

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Thank you so much to all of our wonderful POD leaders for their willingness to help new students as they become acclimated to life at the NIC School and in Durham!