

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

RISE

RESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE
ON THE STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



Dear Friends,

We kicked off our academic year last August with the theme “Learn, Cope, Relate,” based on the findings of a national study of Covid learning loss. This study found that students returning to school will need to re-learn how to learn, develop new coping strategies for dealing with the trauma of the pandemic and learn how to relate to each other



RISE cohort gathers at August Retreat

after two years of remote education. Jorhie and I introduced these concepts to our incoming cohort during a full-day campus retreat held in early August. Learn more about this retreat in the report that follows.

Our first-year cohort arrived eager to learn and relate! We found that despite the very real learning loss and mental health challenges, our students were the most engaged cohort in the past five years. In both introductory seminars NSC 192 (FS22) and NSC 292 (FS23), students demonstrated a palpable yearning for hands-on experiences, new knowledge, and community. Jorhie and I frequently said to each other, “RISE is finally back.” As you will read in this report, our RISE seminars have been a joy to teach. Be sure to take a look at their ecozines as an artifact of high-impact learning.

We couldn’t do this alone, and we attribute some of the success of this year to our peer mentors’ dedication to building such a strong

community. Our students sought support in many forms—drop in advising, workshops, GroupMe, study sessions—from our cadre of six second-year mentors. Mentors helped contribute to the all important sense of belonging especially during the first semester transition for freshmen.

In this edition of the RISE Annual Report, we chose to highlight our new outreach partnership with the MSU Student Parent Resource Center. This partnership epitomizes the tagline “Spartans Will.” Here is a story of Spartans caring for Spartans across international borders using the language of fresh, nutritious food grown at the Student Organic Farm.

Last, we wish to honor all those who helped support our students, faculty and staff during the tragic campus shooting. We experienced an outpouring of love and care following an event never seen before at MSU. Our students who remained in residence during the days following the shooting took to the greenhouse and the third floor kitchen as places of solace and renewal.

Spartan Strong,

Laurie Thorp, PhD
Director, RISE

Jorhie Beadle
Assistant Director, RISE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Welcome letter
- 2 August Retreat
- 3 NSC 192–Environmental Issues Seminar
- 4 New NSC 192 Assessment Approach
- 5 NSC 292–Applications in Environmental Studies
- 7 Donors and Scholarships
- 8 Bailey Greenhouse and Urban Farm
- 9 Community Outreach
- 10 RISE Peer Mentors

RISE AUGUST RETREAT FOR INCOMING FIRST-YEAR COHORT

For the first time in the history of RISE, we decided to bring our incoming cohort to campus prior to the start of fall semester. This was inspired in part by our peer institutions that host some type of summer campus-based orientation and in part by our concern with Covid learning loss, namely interpersonal skills.

Our retreat was designed to jump-start community building among the freshman cohort and to orient students toward a successful transition to college life. Forty out of 50 students from this cohort were able to attend the all-day retreat held at Bailey Hall.

Upon arrival, students were given a soft-cover journal to keep. The journal was used throughout the day for small reflective writing exercises. We continued the use of these journals in our introductory RISE seminar, NSC 192, fall semester.



The agenda for the retreat included:

- **Journal entry about self and identity**
- **Big group community values activity with sticky notes**
- **Small group discuss to discuss ‘what is wellness?’**
- **Lunch together at Brody Dining**
- **Journal reflection on learning during Covid**
- **Campuswide scavenger hunt**

We firmly believe the success of this retreat contributed to the cohesion of the RISE community this year. This fall, we saw less strife among roommates, fewer behavior issues on the floors, highest use of the common areas for group activities in six years, highest use of office hours and drop-ins in six years, more student-initiated projects, and zero students on academic probation. If you are interested in learning more about our retreat design, feel free to reach out.



Students gather at Bailey Hall for community building and orientation

HIGH IMPACT LEARNING IN NSC 192

Throughout the recruitment of this cohort, we observed students frequently reflecting on the challenges of online learning during their high school experience.

They communicated a desire to move from online modalities enforced during the pandemic to learning opportunities that offered an experiential component. In response to these changing student needs, the RISE first-year seminar course (NSC 192) altered the syllabus to include five intra-curricular, experiential rotations that introduced students to various

environmental challenges. In small groups, students rotated through:

- **Bailey Greenhouse and Urban Farm**
- **Bailey bees**
- **Recycling and upcycling**
- **Campus sustainability**
- **Vermicomposting**

These rotations allowed students to work in small groups, develop system thinking skills, and problem solve. Students also toured MSU Recycling Center and Baker Woodlot.



RISE students harvesting leeks at MSU Student Organic Farm



Students harvest sweet potatoes for Spartan Parent Resource Center at the Student Organic Farm

These highly engaging learning experiences would not be possible without our campus partners. Thanks to Carla Iansiti (Student Life & Engagement), Laura Young (Office of Sustainability), Katie Deska (Recycling Center), Ana Heck (MSU Extension) and Lucy Breda & Sean Ward (undergraduate learning assistants) for their commitment to high-impact learning opportunities.

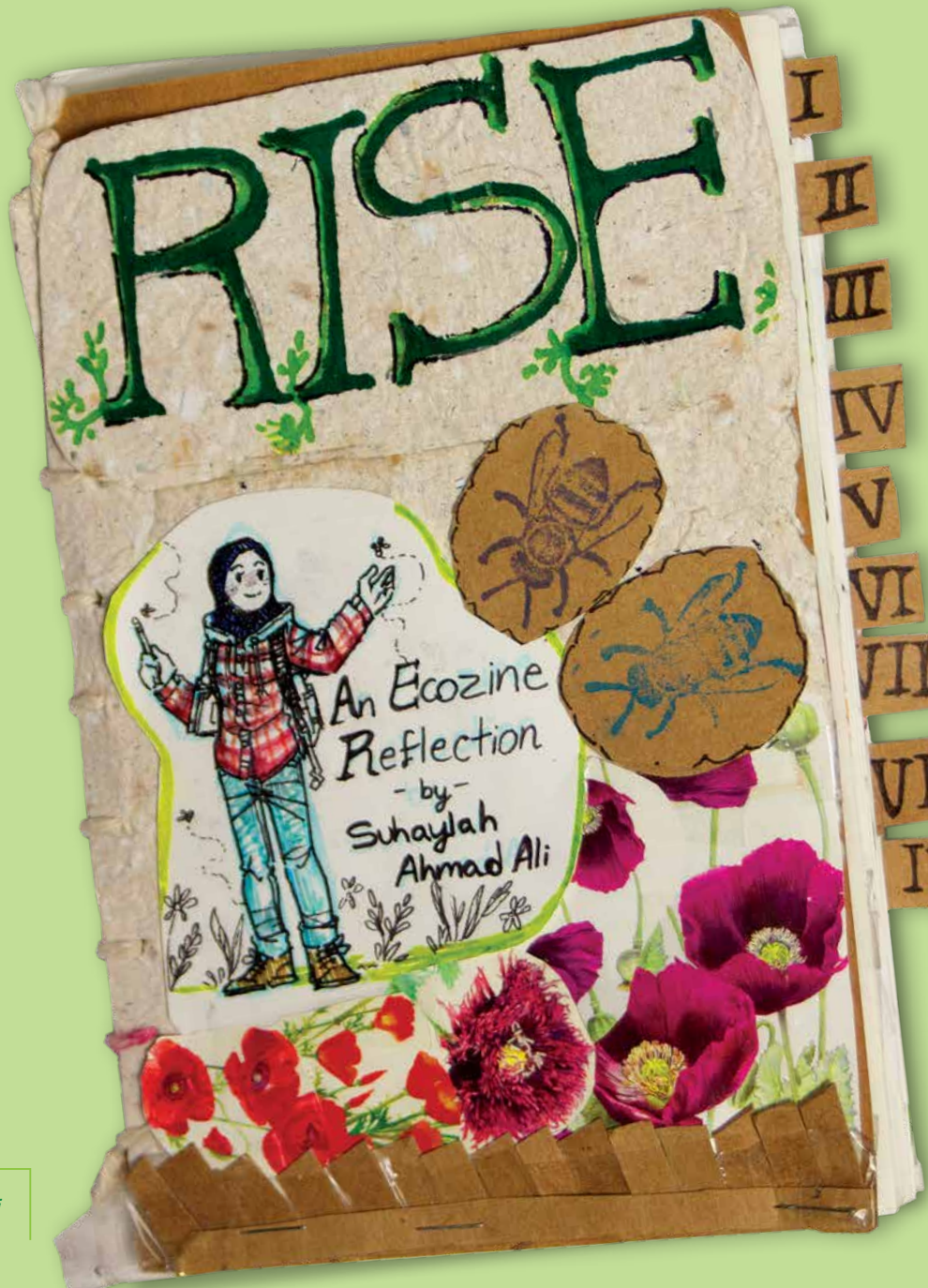
NEW ASSESSMENT APPROACH FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

We also added a new form of assessment to NSC 192—the EcoZine. At the conclusion of the semester, students presented zines that were uniquely artistic and deeply reflective of their first semester experience. We observed students using RISE resources and space to complete these zines in community, which was an unintended effect of this assessment.



The EcoZine brought together everything we have learned over the semester. We became innovative, creative and critical thinkers about our environments and the world around us. It was a success because it allowed us to really reflect.

McKenzie Melosh, *Animal Science*



EcoZine designed by Suhaylah Ahmad Ali

NSC 292 RISE SEMINAR: APPLICATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

This year, our second-year seminar was offered to all environmental studies minor students and RISE students. The theme of this 2-credit course was **resilience at the individual, community and ecological scale.**

Designed loosely after the Okinagan Charter Framework for Wellbeing, our course guided students through the literatures of resilience combined with weekly content on a wide range of practices for resilience.

Students were introduced to wellness practices that included:

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Yoga
- Bread Baking and Mindful eating
- Forest Bathing
- Minimalism
- Meditation
- Reflective writing

This highly interactive course placed an emphasis on ways of learning and being that encouraged the co-construction of knowledge and community. Students were asked to walk and talk about readings, facilitate class openings, practice breathing techniques together, write five-minute

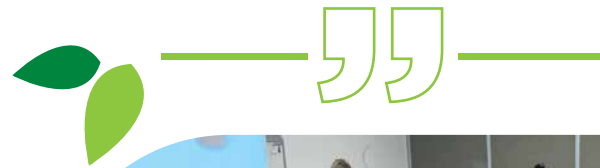
journal entries, and sit in meditation to name just a few of the wellness practices introduced.

We are pleased to announce that additional funding from the College of Natural Science has been approved for spring semester 2024 to provide an undergraduate learning assistant for this course.



This class has helped me develop a lifelong toolkit. Now when I am feeling overwhelmed and anxious, I have strong, science-based methods to help ground me. By taking care of myself I can better take care of my community and environment.


Emma Johnston, *Environmental Studies & Sustainability*



NSC 292 class visits Broad Art Museum



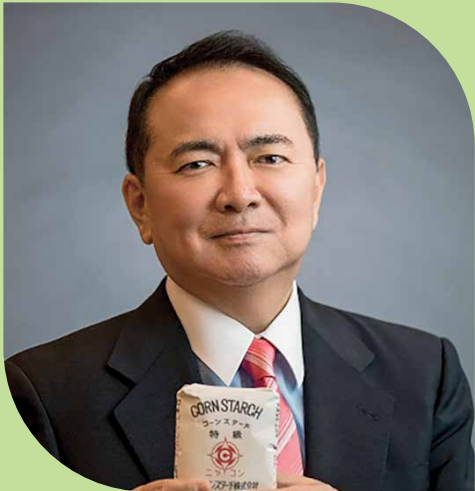
Students create Ikebana arrangements



*Suhaylah Ahmad Ali
shares a loaf of fresh
baked bread as part of
“Contemplative Practices
for Resilience” course*



RISE SCHOLARSHIPS GROW



Soichiro Kurachi, *President and CEO of Japan Corn Starch* kicked off the academic year by growing his endowment by \$50,000. We continue to support RISE Emerging Leaders with President Kurachi’s generous gift.

- THIS YEAR’S RECIPIENTS ARE:
- **Olivia Northrup**, *packaging*
- **Evan Hackstock**, *food science*
- **Zarifa Anwar**, *entomology*
- **Emma Johnston**, *environmental studies and sustainability*

Drs. Maulik and Navdeep Dhanda *RISE Student Scholarship*. This year, we awarded our first recipient \$1,000 from this endowment. Dr. Dhanda is a former RISE student who came to MSU from his home state of Gujarat, India. Maulik and Dr. Thorp formed a special bond during his undergraduate studies around environmental stewardship and the power of community engagement to transform the undergraduate experience.

- THIS YEAR’S RECIPIENT IS:
- **Zander Collins**, *horticulture*



Barbara and Don Sawyer-Koch *Endowed Environmental Leader Scholarship* was awarded to two RISE first-year students who exemplify the type of leaders Barbara and Don wished to support. Long time friends of RISE, Barb and Don visited RISE on many occasions to see what was growing in the greenhouse, pick up a worm bin or taste freshly made bagels in the third floor kitchen. We miss Barbara and Don very much but their legacy lives on.

- THIS YEAR’S RECIPIENTS ARE:
- **Suhaylah Aliahmad**, *zoology class of 2026* and
- **Chante Hardaway**, *horticulture class of 2026*. Both
- will receive \$2000/semester over the next 3 years.



BAILEY GREENHOUSE AND URBAN FARM PROVIDES A PLACE TO PRACTICE SUSTAINABILITY AND BUILD COMMUNITY

In a post-pandemic landscape, our cohort expressed an eagerness to move off their screens and engage in hands-on learning. Bailey Greenhouse and Urban Farm (BGUF) provided a space for students to do this. The greenhouse created opportunities for students to learn about defining environmental challenges ranging from soil health to food justice by getting their hands dirty. Bailey Greenhouse continues to be essential in supporting experiential learning, which is core to the RISE experience.



Students in the greenhouse

- **GREENteam MEMBERS:** Chante Hardaway (horticulture), Allison Voneida (horticulture), Emma Johnston (environmental studies & sustainability), Adam Grove (microbiology), Zander Collins (horticulture)

New this year, every RISE student participated in a Bailey Greenhouse rotation as part of their NSC 192 experience (see page 3), which amplified the impact of our small farm space. In small groups, students learned about sustainable food systems through seeding, harvesting and delivering food to Brody Dining Hall. During fall semester, volunteering in the greenhouse became part of the Friday afternoon routine for much of our cohort and resulted in the most well-attended volunteer days since before the pandemic. The greenhouse also became a place of refuge in the wake of the campus shooting. In the week that followed, students gravitated to the greenhouse to ground themselves and be in community with each other.

TOURS

In addition to supporting RISE students, Bailey Greenhouse and Urban Farm was used as a site to model small footprint campus farms and sustainability initiatives for campus partners and visitors. We hosted several tours this year including:

- 4-H Exploration Days
- Agriculture Food and Natural Resources Education Fall Conference
- Albion College Sustainability Team
- Tokyo University
- Tollgate Farm
- Intercultural Aid Training
- AFNRE Challenge 24



RISE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Friday afternoons in September and October became a much anticipated time for sharing the abundance of the MSU Student Organic Farm (SOF). RISE and the SOF formed a new partnership with the MSU Student Parent Resource Center to provide fresh organic produce with our food insecure international families.



The partnership with RISE and Student Organic Farm provided our families with fresh produce. This has been a beautiful way to build community.

Kim Steed-Page, *Director of Spartan Parent Resource Center*



Students share food that was donated and harvested from the Student Organic Farm with the Spartan Parent Resource Center families

We know that good food is a language of care that spans boundaries. **Here our RISE students distributed over 500 lbs. of freshly harvested produce to 50 families from more than 15 countries.** Our food distribution was provided in a culturally sensitive market style system where families were able to choose and bag the produce of their liking. Our team would mingle with the families cooking at babies, sharing fresh slices of turnips and tasting freshly made Pakoras.

Our team decided to raise funds to provide a protein for the big Thanksgiving distribution. RISE students collected \$700 to purchase a variety of proteins for our families. We hand painted canvas bags for the event to carry the fresh chicken, eggs, beef and tofu home for their family celebrations. Our goal is to expand this partnership in 2023-24 to provide fresh produce starting in August.

Countries: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Azerbaijan, India, China.

Veggies: spinach, onions, peppers, garlic, squash, carrots, leeks, turnips.

THE RISE MENTOR PROGRAM RETURNS TO SUPPORT FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

In a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2022), peer mentor programs were cited as an increasingly necessary part of higher education infrastructure because students often turn first to their peers for mental and emotional health support (Center for Collegiate Mental Health, 2021). This report, in tandem with anecdotal data from previous cohorts, encouraged us to re-introduce the RISE mentor program.

RISE MENTORS:

- **Cat Mauer** (environmental engineering)
- **Evan Wahmhoff** (fisheries & wildlife)
- **Tess Bradley** (environmental studies & sustainability)
- **Pheobe Zagrobelny** (packaging)
- **Savannah Morisot** (communications)
- **Ben Bridges** (biosystems engineering)
- **Allison Voneida** (horticulture)
- **Hope Thome** (environmental studies & sustainability)
- **Ben Adams** (biosystems engineering)



Mentors held weekly office hours to support first year students

Our team of nine mentors supported our first-year students in a multitude of ways. During move-in week, the team offered **campus navigation support, D2L tutorials and community building workshops.** Throughout the semester they also hosted **office hours and tutoring sessions** that were routinely well attended. Additionally, mentors offered **individualized informal support** to members of our cohort that struggled to acclimate to campus. Our RISE mentors were crucial to supporting the social and academic success of our cohort and modeling the RISE core values.

The RISE mentor program will be returning for our 2023 incoming cohort.

Mentors organize cooking workshop during move-in to welcome students

by bees

bees are incredibly busy creatures. Their job of pollinating is vital for many plants. It reminded me of a documentary that I watched about how bees are being imported for commercial farms in order to pollinate products such as almonds. With a dramatic increase in alien species, native bees' population is in decline. After learning about the process of removing queens from old hives while to start new hives while working w/ the bees, I wonder if a possible solution to the decline of native bee populations would be to send queens out to extract queens and start new colonies in addition to the ones already existing. After removing the queen, the remaining bees would choose a new queen by feeding a royal jelly and instead have two new queens from one... which competes on a larger scale to improve nature?

WAGGLE-DANCE TO COMMUNICATE!??

Queen

Drone

Worker

EFFICIENT

It pushes smoke into hive releases pheromones which calms them for beekeeper to carry out hive work.

It prevents them from communicating with other bees.

Bailey greenhouse

In a house that gardeners a ton but it wasn't until this rotation that I realized the importance of organic and that organic has an us great as the positive impact planet. The use of natural fertilizers keep us around us feeling healthy. Healthy soil is one that an entire built upon. If soil is dead, biodiversity will suffer tremendously. Organic and sustainable farming is how we keep our soil, and us, alive.

20 WAYS TO DRAW A TREE

Lilly Culbert

Kirah Finer

Chante Hardaway

Olivia Westing

Jordan Jacques W (ur fav resort tree) coconut!!!

ADDY Snelling

Jayden

Hip Balm

Joel Bulko

Poppi Mathman

Sam

Hellenbeck

Vermicomposting

The trickiest aspect of managing a vermicompost bin is simply that, managing the most important part is making sure the worms stay healthy. To do this, we wanted to ensure that there would be proper airflow in our bin, enough food waste to feed the worms, and the right food wastes. We don't want to feed the worms anything that their bodies can't handle.

SOIL

Before this rotation, I had never done vermicomposting before. My friends did, and I have a bin set up, and probably this does vermicomposting to this day. This set up was very similar to ours. Through attending this rotation, I learned how to set up and manage my own vermicompost bin. I learned that 50-70% of the bin will consist bedding consisting of leaves or paper. This will be placed at the bottom of the bin. 20-25% will be soil and worms added to the top of the bedding and 2-5% food waste.

Setting the bin up is the easy part, but after every few days, the bin should be checked for moisture content, and more food waste should be added whenever it gets low. I think it would be so fun to start one of these on my own. The best part would be getting to use the soil in the end.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

RISE

RESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE ON THE STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Residential Initiative on the Study of the Environment
 C 204 Bailey Hall | 988 South Brody Road
 East Lansing, MI 48825
rise.natsci.msu | (517) 432-4944

RISE is graciously supported by the Colleges of Natural Science, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Engineering, Eli Broad College of Business, Social Science, and Communication Art and Science.