



Founded in 2011, CUREs is housed in Seaver College, reports to Academic Affairs through the Provost, and offers unique opportunities to members of the broader LMU community. With a staff of eight, plus fellows and postdocs, CUREs serves LMU faculty, staff, and students by; developing undergraduate and graduate courses, supporting faculty research and scholarly activity, publishing an international journal and conducting cutting-edge urban ecology research. We collaborate with faculty through fellowships, joint grant making, original research, and outreach programming. We also partner with the Green LMU Initiative, the Campus Sustainability Officer; the School of Education; Loyola Law School; Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, the School of Film and Television, the Academy of Catholic Thought and Imagination, and others to enhance the ongoing efforts of those programs and to help initiate novel projects that meet the goals of The LMU Strategic Plan.

LABT Tree Monitoring Update

The CUREs team recently completed the first round of measurements for a two-year tree survey in Pacoima and surrounding neighborhoods, located in the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles. The LA Beautification Team (LABT), through a CAL FIRE Urban Forestry Grant, is funding the project.

The aim of the survey is to monitor street trees planted to combat climate change concerns in disadvantaged neighborhoods, completing four seasonal data collections over two years to assess the growth of different species to better inform City planning. Street trees help reduce urban heat island effect, perform air filtration services, and reduce traffic noise. Urban green infrastructure can also provide physical and mental health benefits, including reduced asthma risk, lowered reported stress levels, and increased activity rates. Additionally, planting trees sequesters carbon, assisting with global goals to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations.

Over the course of three days, the CUREs research team recently completed the first round of data collection, gathering data on 174 trees, focusing on three species.

Learn more about this project on the [CUREs Blog](#).





July Newsletter

LEAH (Leaders Through Education, Action, and Hope) Urban EcoLab: (Boston, MA)

This past semester CUREs' staff member Maria Curley Auger has been hard at work on the [LEAH curriculum](#), an urban ecology pilot program for under-served after-school sites in Boston, MA. The inquiry-based science curriculum is adapted from the CUREs Urban EcoLab, with the goal of having high school teacher mentors learn the curriculum and in turn teach it to students in Grades 4-6. This high school teacher mentor model requires written curriculum in the form of a script, with all resources created, including lesson plans, vocabulary cards, reference cards, student handouts, role cards, etc. The first LEAH Urban EcoLab pilot program is set to roll out in mid-July at three after-school sites, for the six-weeks of the Summer Program. If successful, the curriculum will be taught in the Fall of 2018 at all 20 after-school sites throughout Boston. Lessons will continually be added to enrich the science education of students, teaching them about urban ecology and their role as agents of change in their communities, in a fun and engaging way, with a mix of indoor and outdoor field activities.

CUREs Urban EcoLab: Curriculum Writing and Summer Institute (Los Angeles, CA)

CUREs' faculty member Dr. Eric Strauss and staff members Lisa Fimiani and Maria Curley Auger, held a two-day Summer Institute on June 19-20, 2018 at the LMU campus, with some three LAUSD teachers! The Summer Institute was the culmination of a year of hard work with these same teachers on two new Urban EcoLab modules: Module 9: Human-Animal Interactions and Module 10: Garden Ecology. The objective of these Modules is to teach students about our relationship with and science behind domestic animals (Module 9) and to guide students in setting up gardens at their school sites (Module 10). Both Modules are aligned to CA NGSS Standards for Grades 4-12. CUREs will be completing these Modules throughout the summer, with the goal of rolling them out to teachers in schools and districts around Los Angeles, in the Fall of 2018. A special thank-you to all the teachers who participated and made these Modules possible. The curriculum will be available, free of charge, on the [CUREs website](#).

Annenberg PetSpace Education Materials

CUREs' staff member Maria Curley Auger continues to work with [Annenberg PetSpace](#) to provide education materials that can be used by students and teachers visiting this amazing one-of-a-kind pet adoption center. Education materials created thus far include content-related activities for grades 4-12, including activity sheets for students participating in the behind-the-scenes tour and conducting animal behavior observations at the dog, cat, and rabbit suites on Floor 2 of the Space. The CUREs-Annenberg PetSpace partnership has been amazing, combining expertise in animal care and adoption with content-related science materials that meet the NGSS Standards.



Environmental Science at LMU: The Living City

CUREs' faculty member, Dr. Pete Auger and staff member Maria Curley Auger, along with support from other CUREs' faculty and staff, led a two-week summer high school immersion course on the LMU Campus, from June 25 to July 7, 2018. This is the third year of the course, which is part of the [Summer Programs](#) initiative in the LMU Admissions Office. Students have a choice of several tracks, including the arts, writing, film and television, and science, among others.

The CUREs environmental science course immerses students in learning about the human-animal intersect in urban centers like Los Angeles. Topics for this year's course include Urban Ecology, Animal Behavior, Noise Pollution, Urban Birds (like crows, mockingbirds, and hummingbirds!), Water Treatment, the Human-Animal Bond, Social Science and more. Labs include painting hummingbird decoys (to be used in behavioral experiments), conducting bird surveys, tours of and discussion at local sites including Ballona Discovery Park (BDP), the Ballona Freshwater Marsh (part of the Ballona watershed), and off-campus visits to the Wallis Annenberg PetSpace (a one-of-a-kind pet adoption center) and Hyperion (a water treatment facility). The hope is that students learn the broad picture of challenges urban centers face with growing populations and how citizens can help make communities more resilient, reinforcing the goal of providing resources not only for humans but also for the plants and animals with whom we co-exist.





AnniFURsary at Wallis Annenberg PetSpace

Celebrating their one-year anniversary, the [Wallis Annenberg PetSpace](#) welcomed thousands of visitors on Sunday, June 24th to a day of joy and happiness around our furry friends. Face-painting, demonstrations, tours and free raffles - folks of all ages had fun, and best of all, some of the animals got adopted!



Lisa Fimiani, with CUREs, pitched in to help and met up with so many LMU alums and students. They're everywhere!



Swimmer Medicinal Garden Grand Opening

On Saturday, June 9th a dream was made manifest at Ballona Discovery Park with the installation of signs describing the medicinal properties of native American plants. Mike Swimmer, Board Member of the Friends of Ballona Wetlands, first dedicated the Swimmer Medicinal Plant Garden in 2011 to his late brother David, who practiced medicine in Santa Barbara at a clinic David helped start to treat the poor. While trained in Western medicine, David found that the native plants used by the Cahuilla, Chumash, and Tongva were more effective in treating his patients. It was Mike's goal to get signage up along side the plants to teach and inform visitors to the Garden and the Park about the importance of native plants.





Swimmer Medicinal Garden Grand Opening (continued)

The event was celebrated by Mike and his family and members of the three project partners of Ballona Discovery Park: Friends of Ballona Wetlands, Loyola Marymount University and Playa Vista Brookfield Residential. The event was hosted by the Center for Urban Resilience on behalf of the project partners.

Robert Dorame, Chairman of the Gabrielino Tongva Indians, and his family band of musicians and singers, graced the open amphitheater with original music to celebrate the event.

The Park and the Swimmer Garden are actively being used by the Friends and CUREs to conduct both formal and informal educational studies, as students walk the watershed walk to learn about the times, tides and transformations of the Ballona Wetlands, the last remaining wetland in LA County.

CUREs is very grateful to Mike and the Swimmer family for providing the funding to make this happen. Future generations will benefit from the knowledge provided in the Swimmer Medicinal Plant Garden.

Eric Strauss, Director of the Park and Founder of the Center for Urban Resilience said in front of a crowd of over 50 people at the grand re-opening that the plants are an incredible living laboratory for the study of medicinal plants and clear symbol of the importance of not forgetting history, especially the Ballona Wetlands history. The new signage gives educators everywhere the opportunity to learn more about the amazing heritage of the West and the ecology that helped a burgeoning community of people thrive in California.

The Park is open to the public from dawn until dusk in the community of Playa Vista.





Restorative Justice Events

July 17: LMU CUREs RJ Project to serve on a panel at U. of San Diego's [Visioning Contemporary Catholic Higher Education](#)

August 9 and 13: We will be offering the Restorative Justice Practices Level 1 Training: Cultivating a Supportive and Healthy School Environment on the LMU Main Campus. This one-day training allows participants to use interactive discussions and small group exercises to learn methodologies that they can introduce to their school community immediately.

For more information please contact:
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Madrona Marsh Event

Kelley Dawdy will be giving a talk on **July 12** on beneficial insects in gardens and how to attract them. It will be held at the Madrona Marsh Nature Center (3201 Plaza Del Amo, Torrance, CA). For more details call 310.782.3989.

Local Audubon Winner

Cameron Tescher, a local Ballona birder, was selected as one of the Top 100 Youth Photographers for Audubon's annual contest. Walking along a trail near home, Tescher noticed this female Anna's Hummingbird feeding from a creekside flower. Tescher aligned shot to highlight the bird's green back and the plant's vibrant colors against the muted background. With a high shutter speed, Tescher brought the hummer and the flower into sharp focus and clearly conveyed just how tiny the bird is.



Additional Upcoming Community Events

- **July 17:** [Restorative Justice and Catholic Social Thought - ASACCU Visioning Social Change for Catholic Education Conference](#)
- **July 31:** [Deadline to submit to the GNG Green Earth Film Festival](#)
- **September 6:** Global Climate Action Summit LMU Teach-In (details to come)
- **October 19-21:** GNG Green Earth Film Festival at LMU

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