

ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM 2018

“ The Flint water crisis is a story of government failure, intransigence, unpreparedness, delay, inaction, and environmental injustice. ”

◀ March 2016, Flint Water Advisory Task Force, appointed by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, Republican

**SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISTS
28TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**FRESH
WATER,
FRESH
IDEAS**

Hosted by University of
Michigan-Flint
Oct. 3-7, 2018

YOU'VE READ ABOUT IT. MANY OF YOU HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT IT. NOW IMMERSE YOURSELF IN IT. WELCOME TO FLINT.

And welcome to the largest annual gathering of environmental journalists on the planet, a conference that will expand your professional network and update you on the full range of environmental news: climate change, energy, food, water, environmental justice and more. Together, we'll also envision the future of news, and hone the skills journalists need to thrive.

Your visit to the Great Lakes State will fall just a month before the contentious midterm elections. People across Michigan, who played a key role in deciding the 2016 presidential race, are eager to reflect on politics and regulation.

It's been four years since Flint residents found toxic lead in their pipes. The spotlight has faded but the fight for the most basic of human rights — clean water — still resonates in Flint, across the country and around the world. The problem is in the pipes — the story is in the people.

Join us on tours meeting with residents who continue to struggle with tainted water, and others leading the rebuild of Flint. Learn about complex infrastructure challenges — that are no doubt bearing down on your community as well. Get a kayak-level view of the Flint River.

Witness the urban renewal of Detroit — complete with tree farms, wildlife refuges and an award-winning riverfront — and see the lingering pain in Motor City neighborhoods where the comeback has yet to reach. See the bones of the automotive past, and take a peek at the electric, autonomous future.

This is the Third Coast, folks. Our lakes are sentinels for freshwater troubles around the world and come complete with migrating fish, uninhabited islands, surfers, sailors and shipwrecks. Venture just a bit up I-75 and hit the rugged North Country where hunting, logging and blue-ribbon trout streams reign.

Flint opened the floodgates for reporting on tainted water and aging infrastructure throughout the U.S. and brought environmental justice back to the forefront of the national conversation — themes that loom large as the current Administration slashes environmental protections.

SEJ's 28th annual conference, hosted by the University of Michigan-Flint, will explore these issues of regulatory rollbacks, water rights and the continued disproportionate environmental burden shouldered by low-income communities and people of color.

But we're going to have some fun doing it. Flint illustrates the gritty Rust Belt revival with a multicultural food scene, jazz clubs, whiskey bars and a world-class farmer's market.

We've invited Flint native and award-winning filmmaker Michael Moore, a thought leader on democracy, new media and storytelling. We'll hear from top auto executives on the future of cars in the place where such decisions are made, and we've invited Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Environment & Climate Change Catherine McKenna to give a "neighbor to the North" perspective on the most pressing binational climate and energy issues of today.

In a first for SEJ, we'll have a community-journalist hybrid workshop on Wednesday to get at the root of race, justice, pollution and how we can all learn from the water crisis. Don't miss it — this one's sure to fill up.

Stick around for the post-conference tour to the untamed Upper Peninsula, eh? See the convergence of two Great Lakes at the Straits of Mackinac as you cross the Mighty Mac Bridge. Dip your toes in frigid Lake Superior and follow trout streams as they meander through dense forests, where our hardwoods are sure to be aflame in their early autumn colors. Visit the busiest lock system in the world in the "Soo." There are few places in the country as wild and uninhabited as the UP. Come for the solitude and go home with stories.

We're proud of our state, our water, our people — we hope you join us for a conference like no other.

SEJ'S 2018 CONFERENCE CHAIRS:

Emilia Askari, Journalist and Educator, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and Research Assistant, Michigan State University

Brian Bienkowski, Senior Editor, Environmental Health News and The Daily Climate

TOURS IN THE FIELD

Thursday, October 4

Advance registration is required for all Thursday tours. Attendance on each tour is strictly limited, so registering early is important. Departure times vary (see below), but all Thursday tours will return to the Riverfront Conference Center about 5:00 p.m. Planning was still underway at the time of printing, so please visit www.sej.org for more details. For those looking for some exercise, tours 1, 5 and 9 are your best options. Other tours involve moderate exercise. Tours 2 and 7 are best suited for those with limited mobility.

1. THE LAST GOOD COUNTRY: LUSH FORESTS AND "HOLY WATERS" (5:00 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)

"It's great northern air. Absolutely the best trout fishing in the country. No exaggeration. Fine country." Ernest Hemingway was describing the woodlands and waterways near the tip of Michigan's mitten, the setting for some of his short fiction. The Pigeon River State Forest retains something of the beauty and wildness that inspired the budding author, despite logging that scarred the landscape. A century later, a restored elk herd is a symbol of the forest's renewal. We'll take a post-dawn hike in search of the bugling beasts. We'll learn of efforts to combat diseases that threaten Michigan's deer and hear the remarkable story of the Kirtland's warbler, a songbird rescued from near-extinction. Resource managers will discuss the challenge of satisfying the forest's varied recreationists. Another destination is a fish hatchery that has turned the Au Sable River, revered by anglers as "holy waters," into a battleground over private aquaculture.
Total drive time: 6 hours.

2. CRUISIN' GROUND ZERO: THE WESTERN LAKE ERIE SHORELINE (6:30 a.m. departure, \$50 fee, includes lunch and boat ride)

Western Lake Erie and its mammoth Maumee River watershed are Ground Zero for Great Lakes research — by far the warmest, shallowest and most dynamic part of the world's biggest lake system. There's a unique convergence of human and wildlife impacts, such as shipping, automobile manufacturing, tourism, fishing, birding and big agriculture. This region is a major driver for anything from sewage regulations to climate change policies, as well as research into ag runoff, atmospheric fallout from coal-fired power plants, PCBs, toxic algae and invasive species. It's the Great Lakes region's biggest area for fish spawning, as well as a birder's paradise. We'll ply the shoreline for hours aboard a large vessel out of Toledo and hear from leading experts.
Total drive time: 3.5 hours.

3. CANADA'S CHEMICAL VALLEY: FROM TOXIC TO GREEN? (7:00 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)

Canadians struck oil in 1858, near Sarnia, Ontario, and have excelled in petrochemicals and refining ever since. Though the Chemical Valley has shed companies over the past 20 years, Sarnia still has one of Canada's densest concentrations of petrochemical operations and infrastructure. The flip side of this prosperity is the cumulative effect of emissions from multiple toxic pollutants. We'll hear about health impacts on a tour with members of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation and lunch with a panel of health experts. The afternoon will focus on one future vision, the rapidly emerging green chemistry industry, with presentations from Bioindustrial Innovation Canada and BioAmber, and possibly, local plant tours. *Total drive time: 4 hours.*

4. THE SHAPE OF WATER... AND MILK AND BEER! (7:30 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)

Participants learn of innovative solutions to the environmental challenges of producing clean water and milk and beer. See a Michigan State University experimental farm turn manure into electricity and compost that exports phosphorous from sensitive watersheds. Then it's on to the challenges of urban stormwater in Grand Rapids with a tour that includes lunch and beverages at Founders, the largest craft brewery in Michigan, which has partnered with the city in a unique solution to handling its waste. Then we visit the countryside where SwissLane Farms shows how a dairy with 2,200 cows is a national leader in sustainability.
Total drive time: 3.5 hours.

5. SAIL THE SAGINAW RIVER AND SAGINAW BAY (8:00 a.m. departure, \$50 fee, includes lunch and boat ride)

The toxic legacy of Michigan's 100-year manufacturing past lingers in the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay. The waterways are the subject of past and present pollution and remediation of dioxins, PCBs, DDT, PBBs, chlordane and heavy metals. The tour will begin with a visit to the Saginaw Bay Visitor Center for an overview of the natural features, history and remediation of one of the largest freshwater wetlands systems in the world. We will continue on the Schooner Appledore with a catered lunch aboard, for a tour afloat of five miles of the river and into the bay, where Channel Island, a confined disposal facility for contaminated dredging spoils, can be seen. *Total drive time: 2 hours.*

CONTINUED

6. GASOLINE, GARBAGE AND GREENERY IN DETROIT**(8:30 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)**

Southwest Detroit has the unfortunate distinction of being the most polluted locale in Michigan. Because the state has no laws regulating the distance between industrial operations and residential areas, a host of heavy industries, including a massive Marathon Petroleum Co. refinery, are clustered in an area where people — mostly African American and poor — are trying to survive. Across town, on Detroit's east side next to a similar residential area, is a controversial facility that burns garbage to produce electricity and steam. Activists have been unsuccessfully trying to shutter it for decades. Along with visiting the areas where the refinery and incinerator are located, the tour also includes a much greener (but still controversial) project that involves the commercial planting of hardwood trees on 1,500 lots previously owned by the city to create what has been described as the world's largest urban farm.

Total drive time: 3 hours.**7. THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY:****VISIT THE TEST TRACKS FOR SELF-DRIVING CARS****(9:00 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)**

This tour provides a special opportunity to see the way the automotive industry is being transformed and be a passenger in self-driving vehicles. We will head to two different laboratories: The American Center for Mobility in Ypsilanti Township, Michigan, the largest test site for self-driving cars in the U.S., and MCity, a 32-acre mock city with 16 acres of city streets, including working traffic lights and stop signs, simulated highway on-ramps and simulated storefronts. Along the way you'll hear from auto experts and critics about our future mobility. **Total drive time: 2.5 hours**

8. RECOVERING THE CITY: DETROIT'S WATERWAYS AND LAND RE-USE**(9:30 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)**

One of the great cities of the Great Lakes, Detroit has a wealth of waterways. Through them, we'll explore how the city is coming to terms with both the industry and austerity of its past. That includes the magnificent renewal of an urban river (which doubles as an international border), debates over public space at Belle Isle, Detroit's 982-square-mile island park (home to the country's oldest aquarium, built 1904), and reckoning with the city's "ghost waters" — long-buried creeks and streams. We'll also look at the complexities of water shut-offs in Detroit, and how urban farmers are experimenting with imaginative green and blue infrastructure.

Total drive time: 3 hours.**9. FLINT: ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE IN CONTEXT****(10:00 a.m. departure, \$40 fee, lunch included)**

You've read the stories about a community so disenfranchised that authorities dismissed complaints about brown, smelly water

flowing from taps. Now spend time in Flint with people who know it best, residents of this once-thriving auto town where a drinking-water crisis left a community with lead poisoning and other health issues and caused at least a dozen deaths leading to criminal charges against powerful state officials. Learn how Flint is faring now that the national spotlight has dimmed. We'll hear about innovative programs that could influence health infrastructure and regulation in communities near you. We'll also visit with community and business leaders, activists and local residents, to see and hear firsthand about ongoing struggles amid efforts to turn adversity into a model of resilience and hope.

Total drive time: 1 hour.

AGENDA

ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM 2018

The 28th Annual Conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists officially begins Wednesday, October 3, at 5:00 p.m., with an opening reception followed by dinner and programs on Flint and the future of the auto industry.

Wednesday, October 3

Before the official kick-off, we offer three all-day workshops below, as well as an afternoon meet-and-greet with fun networking opportunities. See sej.org for more details.

WORKSHOP 1

HEART-TO-HEART WITH FLINT:

RACISM, STEREOTYPES AND NEWS NARRATIVES

We'll bring journalists and Flint residents together, as equals, to explore their own experiences with, and understanding of, racism and stereotypes in the news. This unique opportunity to explore mainstream media's coverage of disenfranchised communities with people who weathered the national spotlight will involve a series of learning activities and conversations guided by experienced trainers. **Pre-registration and \$50 fee required. Breakfast and lunch included.**

WORKSHOP 2

VIDEO PRODUCTION FOR JOURNALISTS

The team from The Video Journalist, Inc. has more than 30 years of experience teaching video production in a newsroom setting. Their class, which follows founder Michael Rosenblum's five-shot method, has been taught to international outlets like *The Guardian* and more local shops like the Newark-based *Star-Ledger*. Instructors will lead this interactive program that aims to equip reporters with a video storytelling mindset that can be executed by anyone with a smartphone. **SEJ members only and space is limited. Pre-registration and \$60 fee required. Breakfast and lunch included.**

WORKSHOP 3

TELLING CLIMATE CHANGE STORIES THAT MATTER: FROM IMPACTS TO SOLUTIONS

Extreme weather. Economic losses. Threats to food and water. Americans are feeling the impact of climate change on their health, safety and wallets, but most don't realize it. You will leave this workshop better able to report locally relevant stories. We will address the hottest topics in climate research, impacts and solutions, as well as audience interest and journalistic challenges. You'll get access to National Science Foundation-funded localized climate reporting resources, including ready-to-use graphics. *Space is limited and admission decisions will be made on a rolling basis, so apply ASAP by emailing alison@climatecommunication.org. Breakfast, lunch and one night of lodging are included.*

OPENING RECEPTION:

WELCOME TO FLINT, AND FUTURE OF AUTOS PLENARY

When journalists flood a place following a disaster, local people often plead: Don't forget us. Come back. Well, thanks for the invitation, Flint. As hundreds of journalists gather to kick off SEJ's conference, we'll celebrate the strength, smarts and sounds of the Vehicle City. Hear what people learned from the water crisis that could help other communities responding to environmental disaster. Invited speakers include Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the pediatrician who helped bring national attention to Flint's lead-poisoned children; Mari Copeny, the youth activist known as Little Miss Flint; and other Flint leaders. Following dinner we'll head to nearby Factory One, GM's original building, now a restored National Historic Site, for a plenary session on our future mobility. The automobile industry is at a major turning point, with self-driving electric cars and ride-sharing hitting the market simultaneously. How can we ensure that the transition is handled sustainably, without simply repeating environmentally harmful ownership models?

Friday, October 5

FRIDAY BREAKFAST: MEET THE CANDIDATES

Share breakfast with SEJ leaders, and bring your questions about the health and future of your group. SEJ members running for election this year will take Q&A from the audience.

OPENING PLENARY: THE FUTURE OF NEWS

So, what's next? Leaders from the world of information technology tell us what to expect as the relationship between people and environmental news continues to evolve. We know how to tell stories. We know how to find information that people want to

hide. We know there are lots of other things we should be doing with our phones, and most of us are getting better at all that. But, what else do we need to know? How can environmental journalists also be innovators, helping to shape the future of news?

LUNCH:

TRACKING TRUMP:

ENVIRONMENTAL ROLLBACKS AND LEGAL CHALLENGES

He did what? Wait, what rule is that? The Trump Administration charged into office promising sweeping environmental rollbacks and has stayed true to its word. From methane to pesticides, the feds have relaxed dozens of protections designed to curb climate change and pollution. Whether you're in the Beltway or reporting from afar, how can reporters best stay on top of the rollbacks and mounting legal challenges? How will red states, blue states and local authorities respond? How do we prepare ourselves to know what changes will have the most lasting impact? And how do we get a handle on the scope of the legal quagmire?

A BOUNTY OF BEAT DINNERS

Flint's remarkable downtown Farmer's Market will be celebrating harvest time and its restaurants will share in the bounty. We'll get you out to the city's finest eateries and local favorites. *Check the SEJ website beginning in September for options. Sign up on-site for the topic and restaurant of your choice.*

Saturday, October 6

ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM AWARDS LUNCHEON

We work hard throughout the year to not only get the stories, but to get them right. Now it's time to shift the spotlight on ourselves. Let's gather and honor the best of the best at SEJ's Annual Awards for Reporting on the Environment. After the ceremony, a panel of winners will take the stage to discuss the stories behind their outstanding work and the challenges of our craft.

MINI-TOUR EXCURSIONS

Sign up on-site beginning Wednesday afternoon for SEJ's popular mini-tours. Options this year may include: Kayaking the Flint River; Urban Ecology; Self-testing for Lead and other Contaminants; Outdoor Photography; GM Brownfields; EPA Air Pollution Research Facility; Green Chemistry; and Climate Change Refugees.

DINNER AND DANCE PARTY

Bring your dancing shoes. Get ready for blues legend Larry McCray, who will bend strings and give SEJ a heavy dose of Midwestern soul. McCray is an internationally known, award-winning blues guitarist — so forget the deadlines and party with your peers to one of Michigan's best. *Pre-registration and \$35 fee required.*

CONTINUED

Sunday, October 7

BREAKFAST AND BOOKS AND ART

Join us for a full breakfast at SEJ's leisurely and literary Sunday morning sessions. Founded in 1928, the Flint Institute of Arts takes us back to the city's prosperous beginnings and houses more than 8,000 works of art. Attendees can tour this impressive collection bookended by sessions with noted authors and the ever-popular book slam, where you can try your hand at pitching the next great book idea to a panel of editors and agents. *Pre-registration and \$25 fee required.*

SEJ POST-CONFERENCE TOUR: MICHIGAN'S U.P. – BIG WOODS, BIG WATER BY THE INSTITUTE FOR JOURNALISM & NATURAL RESOURCES Sunday, Oct. 7 - Wednesday, Oct. 10

The Great Lakes comprise nearly 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water and touch everything from pristine Canadian forests to urban centers like Chicago, Detroit and Cleveland. The lakes also carry timber, grain, copper and iron to the world. We'll take participants into Michigan's eastern Upper Peninsula and the convergence of the three largest lakes — Superior, Huron and Michigan — to look at a wide range of issues that impact both the Great Lakes and North America. Potential topics include Enbridge's Line 5, wind power, aquatic invasive species, climate impacts on northern forests, logging, shipping, mining infrastructure and legacy pollution. Tour departs following SEJ's Sunday morning program and returns to Flint no later than 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 10. There will be no cost to journalists accepted to participate in the tour. *For more information or to apply, please visit www.ijnr.org.*

SESSIONS

CRAFT

- ◀ Solutions Journalism: Integrating Impact and Instigating Change
- ◀ Investigating Scientific Integrity
- ◀ Environmental Data Visualization
- ◀ What's the Scoop? Lessons from How the Flint Story Broke
- ◀ Environmental Film Screenings
- ◀ Freelance Pitch Slam
- ◀ Social Media: New Ideas, New Tools
- ◀ Freelancers Legal Issues Workshop
- ◀ Keeping Data Safe and Secure
- ◀ How to Freelance and Not Go Broke
- ◀ Journalist Fellowships and Residences

CLIMATE

- ◀ Here Comes the Flood
- ◀ Election 2018: Climate Change Reversal?
- ◀ Blaming Climate Change for Weather Disasters
- ◀ Climate and You: Change Hits Home
- ◀ States, Cities and Corporations Take the Lead on Climate Change

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- ◀ Native American Rights: The State of Environmental Sovereignty
- ◀ How to Tell National Stories about Local Environmental Injustice
- ◀ Diversity Within Environmental Groups: Has Anything Changed?
- ◀ Flint to the World: Water is a Human Right

WATER

- ◀ Great Lakes: Perspective on Toxic Past and Binational Protection
- ◀ Emerging Contaminants: Decoding and Distilling the Latest Water Woes
- ◀ Water Infrastructure: Pipes, Plants and Problems
- ◀ Water Wars or Water Peace?
- ◀ Algae: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

ENERGY

- ◀ Methane: A Climate Menace
- ◀ Offshore Wind Power Catches a Tailwind
- ◀ Cargo Shipping: The Next Frontier in Clean Energy?
- ◀ Youth Rising: Kids Changing the Fossil Fuel Conversation

NATION

- ◀ Role of Religion in Protecting the Planet
- ◀ The War Against Plastics: Who's Winning?
- ◀ From the Skyline to the Streets: Covering the Urban Environment Beat
- ◀ The Trump Administration's (Un) Scientific Method

GLOBE

- ▶ Covering the Sixth Extinction
- ▶ Reporting Beyond Our Borders: Funding and Navigating International Trips
- ▶ Gender Equality and the Environment: From the Field to the Newsroom
- ▶ Don't Forget the Fish: Stocks Suffer in the Seas
- ▶ Zero Waste: The Story of Stuff

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Find registration details here:
bit.ly/SEJ2018RegistrationInfo

Direct registration questions to Robin Smith, rsmith@sej.org or (517) 290-4891. Please call after 6:00 p.m. and before 10:00 p.m. ET on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET on Saturday or Sunday. If you need immediate help during regular working hours, contact Chris Bruggers, cbruggs@sej.org or (502) 641-1844.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Get the Earlybird Discount! Register by **Aug. 1**.

SEJ Members: \$220 (After Aug. 1: \$240)	Single Day: \$110 (After Aug. 1: \$125)
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Students: \$90

General Admission: \$1200 (After Aug. 1: \$1400)	Single Day: \$600 (After Aug. 1: \$700)
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Government/Large Non-profit: \$790 (After Aug. 1: \$850)	Single day: \$330 (After Aug. 1: \$380)
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University/Small Non-profit: \$590 (After Aug. 1: \$650)	Single day: \$260 (After Aug. 1: \$310)
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Exhibitors: \$600

IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

Aug. 1: Deadline to register at the early discount rate

Sept. 4: Deadline to cancel conference registration with refund less \$50 processing fee. Substitutions can be made after this time. To cancel registration, call (517) 290-4891 or email rsmith@sej.org

Sept. 10: Deadline to book rooms at the Holiday Inn Express

Sept. 19: Deadline to book rooms at the Holiday Inn Gateway Center, Residence Inn and Courtyard by Marriott

GETTING THERE...

BISHOP INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (FNT), FLINT
www.bishopairport.org

SERVICE: Airlines include Allegiant, American, United and Delta. Nonstops available from Atlanta, Chicago, Minneapolis, Ft. Myers, Tampa and Orlando.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION:

Complimentary shuttles to SEJ host hotels

DETROIT METROPOLITAN AIRPORT (DTW)
www.metroairport.com

SERVICE: Flights from multiple domestic and international carriers. Hub for Delta and Spirit airlines. Two terminals.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION:

Detroit Metropolitan Airport is approximately 80 miles from Flint. See bit.ly/Detroit2Flint for details.

STAYING THERE...

SEJ has reserved five lodging options with room blocks this year. Three are hotels out near the Flint airport, one is a hotel near our conference center and the last is inexpensive dorm-style lodging that is part of the conference center. SEJ will provide regular shuttle service between these hotels and the conference center.

Please see www.sej.org/sej-annual-conferences/lodging-travel for details.

Society of Environmental Journalists
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“ We are America’s Great Lakes people, her freshwater people, not an oceanic but a continental people. Whenever I swim in an ocean, I feel as though I am swimming in chicken soup. ”

◀ Kurt Vonnegut



SEJ is a lively educational community of more than 1,300 journalists, educators and students in the U.S., Canada and 43 other countries. Founded in 1990, SEJ’s purpose is to advance public understanding of environment-related issues by strengthening coverage on all media platforms. SEJ serves to engage, educate

and empower journalists through member-led conferences, tours and training events, publications, awards, Freedom of Information WatchDog, story grants from the Fund for Environmental Journalism, and a diverse, welcoming network of colleagues.

Please visit www.sej.org to learn more, contribute and get involved.



Part of the world-renowned University of Michigan, the University of Michigan-Flint is a regional comprehensive university located in the heart of Flint. Producing more than 45,000 graduates since 1956, UM-Flint offers a vibrant and diverse learning community consistently recognized for its academic distinction, unique program offerings and superb

value. Named one of the “Best in the Midwest” by the Princeton Review for 16 consecutive years, UM-Flint offers more than 120 undergraduate and 30 graduate programs, including its new Bachelor of Science in Green Chemistry — the first multidisciplinary degree program of its kind in the U.S. With a 13:1 faculty-student ratio and flexible, personalized coursework enhanced by hands-on, engaged learning opportunities, UM-Flint students graduate ready to lead and succeed in all situations.