

from the director | jim detjen

Write on...

Assistant director, new students invigorate MSU's Knight Center



Jim Detjen is a professor and director of the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism at Michigan State University. He is the founding president of the Society of Environmental Journalists and was president of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists from 1994 to 2000.

Joining the staff of the Knight Center this semester is **Dave Poulson**, a veteran environmental journalist who will become the center's assistant director and environmental journalist in residence.

Dave is a graduate of Michigan State University's journalism school where he minored in environmental science. He worked for 19 years as a reporter and editor at the *Lansing State Journal*, *Port Huron Times Herald*, *USA Today* and since 1991 as the environmental writer for *Booth Newspapers*.

Dave has won a variety of awards for his enterprise and investigative reporting about the environment. He served as the associate chair of the Society of Environmental Journalists' national conference in 2000 and developed and taught a "Reporting on Sprawl and the Environment" course at MSU in 2001.

the Rock' could learn to climb during the day, write about it at mealtimes and analyze the works of Jon Krakauer and Jack London around the campfire.

"A Michigan canoe trip can offer a similar 'Write on the River' experience. The Knight Center can hone the skills students need to write for publications like *Outside Magazine*, the type of adventure writing that excites many of them about the craft. Best of all, such courses are attractive tools for recruiting new students."

Dave is also interested in developing more Knight Center workshops for environmental journalists, such as the one being planned for Latin American journalists in Mexico City early in 2004, and in training scientists how to communicate with the public. I greatly look forward to working with him.

and served a year in the U.S. Peace Corps teaching environmental education to fishermen in the Philippines. She has a passion for travel and has also visited Tanzania, Israel, Australia and New Zealand.

■ **Alex Nixon** received a double degree in English and biology from St. Lawrence University in upstate New York. He earned the rank of Eagle Scout in Boy Scouts and is an avid outdoorsman. He spent two and a half years working for the Institute of Ecosystems Studies in Millbrook, N.Y., where he worked as a research assistant for two ecologists who were studying the Hudson River.

■ **Rebecca Parker** earned a bachelor's degree in marine science and biology from Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina. She played volleyball, softball and basketball on varsity teams in high school and became a certified scuba diver. She served as editor in chief of her college newspaper and has conducted research on sea turtles in South Carolina and sponges in Discovery Bay, Jamaica.

■ **Corbin Sullivan** earned a double degree in journalism and zoology from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He was the valedictorian of his high school class and earned the Eagle Scout badge, Boy Scout's highest honor. He played in the UW-Madison marching band and competed in triathlons for the university's team. He worked as my teaching assistant in computer-assisted reporting during the fall semester and in January became the new editor of *EJ*.

■ **Karessa Weir** earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from MSU in 1995 and since then has worked at newspapers and magazines in Michigan, Maryland and Washington, D.C. As a reporter, she has covered the White House and Congress but she discovered her real passion was in writing about environmental issues affecting the Chesapeake Bay. This led her back to the Knight Center to pursue a master's degree in environmental journalism.



"Most of us become journalists to do cool stuff. Let's give students a chance to do the same."

Dave Poulson,
assistant director of the Knight Center
for Environmental Journalism

"I'm extremely excited to be here," Dave said, after being selected for this new position from a pool of 29 applicants. "Journalism is an important career and environmental journalism is particularly so. I look forward to helping the Knight Center continue to grow and develop."

Dave comes to his new job, brimming with innovative ideas. Here is one, taken from his application letter: "Most of us become journalists to do cool stuff. Let's give students a chance to do the same. The Knight Center could partner with a local rock-climbing school and take students to Rattlesnake Point near Toronto. Students taking 'Write on

Dave is not the only new face around the Knight Center. Our program is expanding and we've attracted some outstanding new students. Let me briefly tell you about a few of our new master's degree students. Like Dave and me, they share a passion for nature, environmental and science writing and outdoor adventures.

■ **Debbie Munson** earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn. She earned 14 letters in high school sports in Howard Lake, Minn., where she also developed a passion for fishing, hiking and the outdoors. She has trained environmental volunteers in Minnesota