



**JUNE 21 - 23, 2017** | Plus Distance Learning

### **Faculty Biographies**

**Brian Barber** is the Director of Science Programs at the Biodiversity Institute and is a broadly trained evolutionary biologist. He studies a diverse group of species including birds, butterflies, bats, deep-sea anemones, fishes, crabs and mammals. His research uses DNA to determine the relationships of these animals. In turn these relationships are used to ask questions on how historical events such as past climate changes have shaped current diversity. Brian joined the Biodiversity Institute in August of 2013. He is primarily responsible for merging the research done at the BI with their educational programs and initiatives.

**Heather Bender** is the Master Teacher at the University of Wyoming Art Museum. She has extensive experience in museums and education, including classroom teaching, curriculum development, and teacher training that utilize museums as original resources for education benchmark goals. As Master Teacher, Heather works with the University of Wyoming College of Education as well as faculty and teachers statewide to integrate coursework goals and school benchmarks using the museum as a primary resource for a variety of disciplines. She earned a Masters of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction and Teachers of American Indian Children Certificate through the University of Wyoming College of Education in August 2015 and holds a BA in art and history with an education minor from Salisbury University, Maryland.

**Katie Christensen** is the Curator of Education at the University of Wyoming Art Museum where she oversees in-house education and programming, as well as their outreach components of learning across the state. She received a Master of Fine Arts from Bowling Green State University in 2011 and BFA from the University of Wyoming. Katie has worked at the Wyoming Arts Council where she served on PTSB committees and partnerships with Wyoming Department of Education, and was the founding director of Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts. Currently she serves on the Statewide Arts Education Working Group.

**Bethann Garramon Merkle** is an artist, writer, and science communicator who blends visual storytelling and journalism. She is passionate about a) integrating drawing into education, research, and communication efforts, and b) the role stories play in shaping public perspectives of science and ecology topics. On staff with the Wyoming Migration Initiative, she helps researchers enhance broader impacts initiatives, enhance their own communication skills, and create images that convey research results. You can find more information about her at [www.ecologicallytruestory.org](http://www.ecologicallytruestory.org).

**Erica Ramsey** is the Ann Simpson Artmobile Educator at the University of Wyoming Art Museum. She travels the state with the Artmobile sharing museum quality art viewing and making experiences with underserved populations throughout Wyoming. Ramsey has co-curated two Artmobile exhibitions *Art and Architecture: Metaphors in Space*, and *Surrealism: Visions of the Mind*. Possessing a BA in K-12 Special Education from Western Governors University, a BFA in Painting and Drawing, and a BA in Women's Studies from the University of Wyoming, Ramsey is currently a Post-Baccalaureate candidate in the UW Visual Arts program and maintains a personal studio practice. She is a PTSB licensed Special Education Exceptional Generalist with endorsements in Elementary Education and K-12 Art.

**Dorothy Tuthill** is Associate Director of the Biodiversity Institute, charged with developing and delivering programs for students, kindergarten through high school. She is an alumna of the University of Wyoming Department of Botany, with research focused on soil microfungi. After discovering that it is nearly impossible to identify some fungi, she narrowed her field to systematics and identification of species in the genus *Penicillium*. You may know *Penicillium* as the organism responsible for the delicious taste and texture of blue, camembert and brie cheeses, or the producer of penicillin, but most species live in natural environments, where they perform essential but mysterious functions involving decomposition.

**Adrienne Vetter** is an artist currently living in Laramie and working across disciplines from photo-collage to painting to immersive multimedia sculpture installations. She grew up in Riverton, Wyoming and earned an M.F.A. from the University of Michigan School of Art & Design in 2009. Her work has been shown locally throughout Wyoming, nationally in Illinois, Michigan, and Colorado and internationally in Japan. In addition to studio work, Vetter also works as a graphic designer and teaches sculpture courses at Front Range Community College in Fort Collins, Colorado.

**Katie Wagner** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Wyoming in the Department of Botany and with the Biodiversity Institute. She is an evolutionary biologist, and she and her lab use genetic and ecological data as tools to understand the origin of new species and their histories, and the factors influencing biological diversity. Katie began working on biodiversity in African lakes as an undergraduate at Whitman College, and continued this work as a PhD student at Cornell University. She joined the faculty at the University of Wyoming in 2015 and now studies fishes in Wyoming as well as continuing her work in Africa.