



Pacific Institute
for Climate Solutions
Knowledge. Insight. Action.

MEDIA RELEASE
October 29, 2015

New leader takes the helm at BC climate change institute

A renowned scientist who is an international leader in investigating the causes of environmental change is the new executive director of the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS).

Dr. Sybil Seitzinger takes over the PICS leadership effective Nov. 1, 2015, succeeding the current executive director and leading climate scientist, Dr. Tom Pedersen, whose term is ending after six years. Dr. Seitzinger has also been appointed a professor in the University of Victoria (UVic) School of Environmental Studies.

PICS is a knowledge network created in 2008 through an endowment from the BC government. The institute brings together leading researchers from BC and around the world to study climate change impacts, and advise on mitigation and adaptation measures. It is hosted and led by UVic in collaboration with Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Northern British Columbia.

Seitzinger joins PICS from her position as executive director of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) based in Stockholm, Sweden. Prior to that, she was director of the Rutgers/NOAA Cooperative Marine Education and Research Program and visiting professor at Rutgers University in the US. She served as president of the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography from 2006 to 2010.

Seitzinger's proven leadership in globally coordinated environmental research will be invaluable for advancing PICS' critical climate solutions agenda for BC and beyond, says Dr. David Castle, UVic's vice-president research and chair of the search committee.

"Bringing together experts across a range of disciplines and institutions to collectively work on climate change solutions is a core mandate of PICS," he says. "I'm delighted that Sybil will be building on the excellent work carried out so far by the institute and is bringing her international experience to further enhance its outreach and influence."

Seitzinger's work at the IGBP involved facilitating and integrating the work of scientists and researchers across Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe on global environmental change. As a pioneering scientist, her work at Rutgers centred on land-atmosphere-ocean biogeochemistry, with a focus on changes in the global nitrogen cycle and how humans are affecting it.

Seitzinger holds a PhD in biological oceanography from the University of Rhode Island, is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has been awarded an honorary PhD from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She is highly cited, with more than 130 peer-reviewed publications to her credit.

Seitzinger says climate change is already affecting British Columbia, the nation and the world, with signs of degradation and change visible in BC forestry, water resources and rising sea levels.

“As executive director of PICS I’ll continue to advance the institute’s mandate to develop informed solution options for climate change mitigation and adaptation for BC,” she says. “I also look forward to developing more partnerships and linkages between PICS and other world climate change institutes who are tackling similar issues, as we face this critical global challenge together.”

For more information on PICS visit pics.uvic.ca/.

Editors’ note: A photograph of Dr. Seitzinger is available upon request.

Media contact: Robyn Meyer, PICS senior communications officer: +1 250-588-4053 or rmeyer@uvic.ca