

Students enjoy animal science class

The course, in its second year, offers hands-on experience

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Students in the animal science class take a break during a field trip to Traders Point Creamery.
Photo courtesy of Hannah Sauce

Close your eyes and imagine a beautiful scene. There's a barn not too far from you and in it are the animals we once mimicked as children. Think of dewy mornings and waking up to milk your cow, brush your horse's mane and feed the hens. All these things are teachable, and you don't have to live on a farm to learn them. Pike students can take a course called animal science, in which these experiences are made real.

Science teacher Hannah Sauce teaches the course and in the first semester of this class, students focus on farm animals and partake in various activities.

Ms. Sauce acquired her bachelor's degree in animal science. She was first hired as a biology teacher but started this course because the science department wanted to offer agriculture as a career pathway. Ms. Sauce created a course description, it was approved, and she then had the opportunity to teach what she always wanted.

"We all are going to encounter animals in our life at some point, and this class will teach you how to care for those animals and make sure that when you are interacting with them, even if it's for food, that those animals have the best possible life up until the time that they're no longer living," Ms. Sauce said. "A lot of students at Pike don't have a lot of hands-on experience with animals either because of their socio-economic class or because their parents won't let them have pets or whatever the reason, and I think this class gives them a chance to see that in a space that is outside of home, anybody can enjoy it."

This is the second year the class has been available. Ms. Sauce hopes to secure chickens (who would live in a coop) to add to their class pets. The class already cares for Pharaoh the ball python, Toothless the axolotl, Gertrude the red ear slider and several freshwater fish.

Course prerequisites are biology as well as integrated chemistry and physics (ICP). The class counts as a third-year credit for science, so the class is mostly comprised of juniors and seniors. Sophomores can take the class as long as they have two years of science. (Everyone has to take three years of science; options are earth science, environmental science and animal science.)

Anybody that loves life science and animals would enjoy this class, Ms. Sauce said. Or, you'd enjoy it if you are interested in veterinary medicine, she said.

Students in the class say they enjoy everything they've seen and done so far. Many agreed that a fun project was their ice cream lab. They first learned about the dairy industry and dairy cows, and then were able to milk a cow and make their own ice cream during a field trip to Traders Point Creamery, a local organic dairy farm where cows are grass-fed.

Junior Ken Tatum has a strong love for animals, and said this class helped them realize they could have a future working with animals. They said they really like their class snake, Pharaoh, and particularly like watching him eat. Tatum said the class gives you a better understanding of animals and their needs, and what actually goes into taking care of them. It shows you the inside of the industry and how animals are treated, Tatum said.

Senior Christian Ramirez-Funez said he is taking the class just for fun, while junior Asaisha Allison joined the class because it's the only course involving animals. Allison says she finds it pretty interesting and sees a future working with animals. She says she's gained agricultural knowledge of animals and learned more than she thought.