

Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices Sustainability Planning Grants: 2009-2010

Grant Recipients and Abstracts

www.pdx.edu/sustainability/sustainability-planning-grants-rfp-2009-2010

About the Sustainability Planning Grant RFP

In November 2009, the Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices at Portland State University issued a “request for proposals” that would identify and articulate an integrated approach through which the University might address core sustainability problems and opportunities.

Eleven grant proposals were selected in early February 2010, each receiving ~\$10,000. These near-term projects are to be completed by June 2010, culminating with a synthesis publication that identifies directions for future University support and investment. This planning RFP set the stage for a more comprehensive proposal process in spring 2010, incorporating results and recommendation from these planning grants to develop a core portfolio of multi-year, integrated funding opportunities.

As PSU moves toward a deeper integration of sustainability scholarship, the University has identified nodes of excellence. Broadly defined, these core areas illustrate emerging hubs of sustainability scholarship, research, and partnerships at Portland State:

- **Urban and civic ecology**, including ecodistricts, ecosystem services, sustainable governance, and urban-rural continua;
- **Sustainable urban infrastructure**, including transportation, energy, water management, and social infrastructure;
- **Green building**, including all facets of green construction, supply chain, materials, and methods;
- **Green business practices**, including leadership, management, green accounting, and establishment of green business clusters.

This is the third in a series of RFPs supporting sustainability teaching, research, and partnerships. Funding for the grants has been made possible by a ten-year, \$25 million challenge grant from the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, awarded to PSU in September 2008.

2009-2010 Sustainability Planning Grant Projects— Abstracts

Project: PSU's Sustainability Certificate—Strategic Plan and Road Map to Long-Term Success

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Jennifer Allen, Randy Bluffstone, Darrell Brown, Barbara Dudley, Veronica Dujon, David Ervin, Elise Granek, Mary King, Loren Lutzenhiser, Alan Yeakley.

Abstract: This proposal seeks support to develop a strategic plan for PSU's Graduate Certificate in Sustainability. This plan will address several challenges the Certificate faces, including how to meet the growing demand for the program, either by expanding course offerings sections or through other means; how to develop a strong financial model to support the team teaching approach which is a hallmark of the program; how to ensure a coordinated and adaptive approach to curricular development and delivery over time; and how best to approach any hiring needs and other support strategies to meet these demands.

Project: Integrated Sustainable Watershed Management Across Complex River Basins

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Heejun Chang, Darrell Brown, Veronica Dujon, David Ervin, David Jay, Martin Lafrenz, Hamid Moradkhani, Connie Ozawa, Yangdong Pan, Vivek Shandas, Alan Yeakley

Abstract: Many large river basins worldwide are facing multiple challenges for sustainable water resource management in a changing climate with ongoing land development and regulations. Based on the UNESCO-International Hydrological Programme (IHP) theme, we plan to host a workshop in Portland that will 1) demonstrate our synergistic work on integrated water resource management in the Willamette River basin and 2) exchange our ideas with other basins in North America and around the world. The outcomes of the workshop include a synthesis paper discussing various aspects of integrated watershed management in a changing environment and a draft proposal for an external grant.

Project: Planning Social Infrastructure: Sustainable Cities

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Veronica Dujon, Sociology ; Eileen Brennan, Kristen Magis

Abstract: Building on the accomplishments of the Social Sustainability Network, the funded current capacity-building project, Network members propose to engage in an extensive planning process with community partners. We will collect reports and databases on sustainability, social infrastructure and equity produced from major community studies of Portland conducted by partner organizations including those in collaboration with PSU. Together we will generate a report that synthesizes those Portland reports, identifies emergent themes regarding Portland's urban social infrastructure, designates key social sustainability indicators and begins the work of establishing long term community/PSU research partnerships to promote healthy urban social infrastructure

Project: Developing Genuine Metrics for Business Sustainability

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Dave Ervin, Darrel Brown, Jim Thayer

Abstract: Sustainable business initiatives are proliferating due to pressures from green markets, investors, pollution regulations, energy prices, and other resource constraints. However, the metrics and measures used to evaluate the performance of these business sustainability initiatives remain largely ad hoc. We have developed a theoretically defensible protocol to assess the environmental, economic and selected social impacts of a firm's sustainability program. We propose to test this prototype 'Genuine Metrics' tool on one or more Oregon companies to discover its strengths and limitations. With the findings, we will propose an integrated program of research to refine and distribute an open-source version.

Project: Portland and the Columbia River Basin in 2060—System Trajectory and Alternative Futures Analysis

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: David A. Jay, Jennifer Allen, William Lang, Chris Mooers, Hamid Moradkhani, Craig Shinn, Mark Sytsma, Lisa Zurk

Abstract: Climate change and population growth heighten the need to better manage complex human-river interfaces, and the Columbia River Basin (CRB) has a history of alterations that limits future options. This proposal builds toward a Miller project (spring 2010) that will define CRB system institutional and climate trajectories on a centennial time-scale, improve scientific understanding, promote innovative management, and analyze alternative economic, transportation, water management and energy futures. It will suggest CRB management options to deal with the impacts of climate change, population growth, invasive species, and an evolving energy economy. This initiative will grow PSU's excellence and reputation. Through it, Portland will play a leading role in sustainable water management.

Project: Urban Human Flourishing—A Plan for Integrating the Humanities into PSU's Emerging Nodes of Sustainability Inquiry

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Leerom Medovoi, Avram Hiller

Abstract: Building upon the ongoing work of the "Humanities Sustainability Research Project" at the Portland Center for Public Humanities (PCPH), we propose to plan the emerging role of the Humanities in PSU's ongoing sustainability research, education, and leadership. We will develop a vision plan for implementing a humanities component in PSU's sustainability initiatives, focused on the study of human flourishing in an urban environment, and on the use of humanities methods to evaluate and achieve the university's sustainability goals. We seek to enhance the quality of interdisciplinary research, teaching, and outreach in sustainability, as well as increase PSU's opportunities to receive external funding.

Project: Establishing an Integrative “Policy Research and Practice Network for Sustainable Development”

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Doug Morgan, Marcus Ingle, Craig Shinn, Jennifer Allen

Abstract: This planning grant develops an Action Plan for an integrative Policy Research and Practice Network for Sustainable Development. The Action Plan will institutionalize PSU’s Miller and related funded work by linking the sustainable development activities underway both inside and outside the university to a shared research agenda that addresses the core problems and opportunities of multiple partners – the business community seeking assistance with investment decisions, elected officials needing policy guidance, practitioners needing “best practices” information and scholars seeking to make contributions to a common set of strategic research questions advancing PSU’s larger sustainable development agenda locally, nationally and globally.

Project: Green School of the Future

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Sergio Palleroni, Judith Heerwagen, Peter Dusicka, Judith González, Corey Griffin, Janet Hammer, Huafen Hu, Margarete Leite, Loren Lutzenhiser , David Sailor, Jeff Schnabel, Graig Spolek , James Woods .

Abstract: The planning grant will focus on developing a multi-stage effort to create and test new approaches to sustainable schools. At the heart of this effort is a strong belief that school design and operations needs an essential refocus. Schools should no longer be conceived as containers for learning that disconnect children from their communities and the environment. The Green School of the Future is envisioned as an essential component of the community and one that uses the building and its grounds to teach concepts of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Project: The Eco-District Engagement Program

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Vivek Shandas, W. Barry Messer, Ethan Seltzer, Connie Ozawa, Jennifer Allen, Kevin Kecskes, Amy Spring, Fletcher Beaudoin, Naomi Cole

Abstract: This sustainability planning proposal focuses on developing a method for engaging stakeholders in the Portland State University (PSU) EcoDistrict. The University District is one of Portland’s five pilot EcoDistricts, which aims to build resilient neighborhoods that are resource efficient and reuse energy, water, and waste. We aim to identify the limitations and opportunities for advancing district-scale sustainability by exploring the conditions in and expectations of natural resource management by those most affected by EcoDistricts strategies. The product of this effort will be a long-term University EcoDistrict development plan for assessing and advancing district-scale conservation efforts.

Project: Immigration and Social Sustainability

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Alex Stepick, Jack Corbett, Mary King, Veronica Dujon, Dan Van Lehman

Abstract: The Portland metropolitan area constitutes a living laboratory to address the impact of immigration on sustainability of Portland's urban and civic ecology. This project builds upon an emerging interdisciplinary group of PSU faculty with expertise in social sustainability and immigration. This group will generate at least \$500,000 in research proposals by September 1, 2010, develop an immigration curriculum, produce a book prospectus on the current State of Oregon's institutional response to new immigrants, and form an Oregon Migration Network that will generate policy and program relevant knowledge for state and local governments responding to the rapid increase in immigration.

Project: Columbia Basin Economic Sustainability

Principal Investigator & Co-PI: Ron Tammen, Greg Wolf, Steve Greenwood, Roy Sampsel

Abstract: The Columbia River is a primary economic engine in the Pacific Northwest, and our economic sustainability is threatened by increasingly competing uses for Columbia River water, projected population increases in the basin, and global climate change. Reconciling these competing uses is essential to our economic sustainability, but our existing governance structures have thus far proven unsuccessful at that task. A more collaborative, multi-state governance structure is needed. The National Policy Consensus Center will interview stakeholders from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana to assess the potential for such a collaborative governance structure, and recommend next steps for implementation.