

**Prairie Project for Graduate Fellows:
Professional Development for Sustainability**

presented by

The Inaugural Cohort of Prairie Project Fellows, 2010-11

Purpose

With its call for a radical paradigm shift in the academy, the University of Florida Prairie Project impressed upon us the immediate need to train graduate students to carry forward the mission of sustainability in teaching, research, and service. As more colleges and universities turn toward sustainability in the curriculum, we owe it to our graduate students to train them to enter the competitive workforce (see the appendix, a job advertisement for “Environmental Humanities/Classics”). The Prairie Project for Graduate Fellows would focus on course development in their disciplines.

Content

During a one day workshop, graduate students will participate in discussions about sustainability, environmental issues, the local Florida/Alachua County ecosystem, and the political, social, economic, philosophical, ethical and artistic dimensions of these issues. Three or four local resource experts will provide information on ecology, public health, environmental justice, and an overview of campus environmental efforts. The presentations, discussions, and workshop materials all highlight connections among environmental dimensions of the region, the campus, and the broader national and international issues of sustainability.

Participants

The one-day retreat would accommodate approximately 20 graduate students from across campus; numbers of fellows would be allocated based on the relative size of the colleges. As Prairie Project Fellows ourselves, we believe that it is best to cast the net broadly, so that the cohort of graduate students represents as many disciplines as possible. Furthermore, diversity in experience is also a desideratum: doctoral candidates, PhD students working toward candidacy, as well as students in Masters degree programs would bring different points of view that reflect their differing stages in their graduate education.

Goals

The goals of the Prairie Project for Graduate Fellows are to:

- support and assist graduate students in professional development
- promote interdisciplinary approaches in research
- demonstrate the benefits of networking across campus
- teach the value of collaboration—the underlying principle of sustainability
- integrate environmental issues with campus stewardship so as to understand that the classroom extends to the entire campus—and beyond
- encourage service learning experiences that extend academic studies of environmental sustainability into the community

Above all, the Prairie Project for Graduate Fellows would give students an opportunity to realize their potential as leaders, not only in the academy, but in the community.

Outcomes

After the one-day workshop, participants will be able to identify:

- resources at UF available through the Office of Sustainability
- ways to integrate issues of sustainability into their teaching
- ways to integrate issues of sustainability into their research
- potential collaborations with scholars from other disciplines in approaching the key issues of sustainability
- unique features of the immediate environment in Alachua County
- resources in the community available for service learning and research projects

Immediate effectiveness of the workshop can be demonstrated by holding a follow up meeting as well as regularly scheduled brown bag lunches at which fellows report on the changes they have implemented in their teaching and research. In the long term, the Prairie Project Graduate Fellows will have an understanding of and experience in collaborating across departments and in the community in ways to integrate sustainability concepts into their curriculum. They will thus be uniquely qualified to meet the demands of a rapidly shifting job market.

Budget

Several fellows of the inaugural Prairie Project are committed to this program and have pledged a portion or all of their stipend toward this graduate program. The Dean of the Library has waived the fee for us to use space in the Library. We believe it is especially important that the graduate fellows receive some stipend, however nominal, to validate the importance of the program. We therefore request funding as follows:

Venue	\$150
Food	\$1000
Honoraria	
two UF faculty presenters @ \$250	\$500
Follow Up Meeting	
space, materials, refreshments	\$500
Stipend	
20 participants @ \$250	\$5000
SUB TOTAL	\$7150
Pledges from faculty fellows	\$2000
Waiver of fee for venue	\$150
TOTAL	\$5000

Thank you for this opportunity to learn and to pay forward the great rewards of the Prairie Project to the next generation.

Appendix

WHITMAN COLLEGE – WALLA WALLA, WA

ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES/CLASSICS: The Program in Environmental Humanities and the Department of Classics at Whitman College invite applications for a definite tenure-track position at the Assistant Professor level beginning August, 2011. The Ph.D. is required by the time of appointment. Applicants should have expertise appropriate for teaching and research in Environmental Studies and Classics. Successful candidates must be able to teach both Latin and Ancient Greek languages at all undergraduate levels. Areas of specialization within classics are open. It is crucial that candidates explain in their letter of application how their areas of expertise can contribute to a program in Environmental Humanities, a component of the Environmental Studies program which examines the intersection of nature and culture. Whitman College's current Environmental Studies program is a hallmark of the institution. With this appointment the program seeks to develop the humanities component of an area already richly served by the social and natural sciences. For a full description of this position see: <http://www.whitman.edu/content/provost/recruitment>. Deadline: November 1, 2010. Send materials to: Dana Burgess, Department of Classics, Whitman College, 345 Boyer Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362. We anticipate providing interview opportunities at the annual American Philological Association meetings in San Antonio, TX. Whitman College is committed to enhancing diversity, and no applicant shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, creed, or disability.