

**Curriculum Development Grant
Associated Colleges of the South Environmental Initiative
2006 Grant Proposal**

“Costa Rica: The Search for Sustainability”

Proposal submitted by:

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I. Introduction

A. Goals

I request a grant to attend the Global Partners Project Faculty Development Seminar entitled “Costa Rica: The Search for Sustainability” which will be held July 24-31, 2006 in Costa Rica. The focus of the seminar is sustainable development, a multi-disciplinary approach, and it will bring together faculty members from a variety of Global Partners institutions and disciplines to examine the tension between conservation and development in one of the world’s “last great places.”

Attending the seminar will assist me in teaching the core course, *Introduction to Environmental Studies*, in our interdisciplinary Environmental Studies minor. The course is currently offered every fall term, but beginning next year, we will teach it every semester. I also assist with coordination of the Environmental Studies minor by recruiting students, bringing guest speakers to campus, and assisting students with summer environmental study programs or job opportunities.

B. Justification

In teaching the *Introduction to Environmental Studies*, I examine environmental policy issues, including water, air, and hazardous waste legislation, energy policies, national and international land conservation approaches, and impacts of global climate change. One of our case studies is on the Amazon rainforest, and I lead the class through a simulation lab exercise with three groups representing timber, agricultural, and eco-tourism interests each defending land use and economic gain for a parcel of land in the Amazon rainforest. It would be beneficial for the course to have first-hand knowledge of the pressures facing threatened rainforests and other tropical ecosystems. We assign readings that address tropical land use policies from the Worldwatch

Institute's State of the World and E.O. Wilson's The Future of Life to McGlothlin and Spray's Global Climate Change. Spending a week in Costa Rica with other faculty members would provide an excellent opportunity to share resources and current research on sustainable development.

I work closely with the students in the Environmental Studies minor, and last year Birmingham-Southern College sent three students to the ACS summer program in Costa Rica. Having personal knowledge of the program and the curriculum will be advantageous in recruiting students to the program. Birmingham-Southern College is developing a new curriculum, an interdisciplinary Urban Environmental Studies major, and we anticipate a significant increase in the number of students involved in environmental programs. Additionally, our new president, Dr. David Pollick, is committed to expanding the leadership studies, service-learning, environmental studies, and international studies programs into a Center for Global Human Dignity and sustainable development will be a critical element of this new program. Through this new endeavor, Birmingham-Southern anticipates that more students will study abroad either during the semester or summer term. Through the leadership studies and environmental studies programs, I work with hundreds of students each year and would like to encourage more of them to participate in international study programs.

I am interested in political and economic issues facing sustainable development including the role of government, corporate interest in eco-tourism, and pressures to develop the coastline of Costa Rica for tourism. Recent articles in the *New York Times* promote luxury resorts and second homes on the coast at relatively economical prices, appealing to aging baby boomers looking for second homes. The conflicts with protection of the country's natural resources are evident. Having spent two years in Africa many years ago, I am fascinated with the role of women in developing countries and their influence in promoting more sustainable agricultural development.

C. Match with listed priorities

1. Courses – *Introduction to Environmental Studies* addresses sustainable development, environmental justice, environmental ethics, and environmental policy and practice.
2. Courses in foreign countries – studying in Costa Rica will increase global awareness for Birmingham-Southern College students
3. Courses that improve an interdisciplinary course – *Introduction to Environmental Studies* is taught by a biologist and myself, an environmental planner.
4. Professors who have not previously received a CFD alliance grant – this is my first grant proposal to CFD alliance.

2. Project Description

- a. Activities – The program will include study at the National Institute for Biological Diversity in San Jose, the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, Finca La Bella communal farm, EcoLodge, and the Santa Elena Reserve.
- b. Timetable – July 24 – 31. 2006
- c. Budget - \$950.

The budget includes all lodging, meals and airfare with supplemental funding from the Global Partners Project.

3. Evaluation and Dissemination

- a. Lectures and labs for *Introduction to Environmental Studies* will be modified based on information learned in the course, discussion with other faculty participants, and suggested readings. I will also take digital photographs for course powerpoint presentations. As the Environmental Studies minor and proposed major expand at Birmingham-Southern College, I will encourage students to participate in environmental study abroad programs.
- b. My syllabus and lab exercises on sustainable development will be posted on the ACS website and shared with other faculty members. I also work closely with the college's Office of International Programs and will promote study abroad programs on environmental topics.

4. Institutional Support

A letter of support will be sent separately from Provost Kathleen Murray.

5. Disclosure Statement

I will be able to participate in the program in Costa Rica and have no conflicts with the dates. Support also received from Global Partners Project for program.

6. Curriculum Vitae

My C.V. will be attached to the email.