

**Associated Colleges of the South Environmental Initiative (ACSEI)
Cooperative Model for Sustainable Development
Report to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
2007-2008**

Overview

In this final year of funding for our grant received in March, 2005 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, it is with genuine pleasure that we report on projects made possible by the Foundation, which has been vital in helping ACS maintain, expand, accelerate, and sustain its environmental initiative.

Our goals for these three years were to advance a two-pronged approach: to build our program leadership, and to continue moving in new environmental directions. We also hoped to find ways to sustain some of our programs once funding had ended. Specifically, in building leadership we wanted to continue supporting Faculty Fellows and Student Environmental Interns on each campus as well as directors of the three inter-institutional alliances. To continue moving in new directions, our goal was to accomplish the following five tasks: 1) to foster environmental course development with special attention to mathematics, social science, humanities, international, and technology offerings; 2) to recruit community partners to increase environmental justice and service learning efforts at home and abroad; 3) to create/support new student teaching assistantships; 4) to continue our successful student internship program; and 5) to host productive environmental conferences and workshops that would encourage exchange of information and collaboration, leading to sustainability of environmental programs on ACS campuses. Over the three years of funding from the Foundation, we were successful in accomplishing every goal.

We would like to thank The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its wonderful support of ACS environmental programs, bringing people together to help us establish networks between and among our institutions, their faculty staff, and students, and the people of their surrounding communities. We could never have accomplished so much without this support.

Building Leadership

With the help of funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation from 2005 to 2008, ACS accomplished much on its 16 campuses, with potential ramifications across the region and around the globe. As part of a continuing program, our Faculty Fellows and Student Environmental Interns have kept environmental consciousness high at their own institutions while reaching out to members of their surrounding communities on issues of local concern. In addition, at home, in the region, and internationally, our alliance directors and their inter-institutional teams have continued to encourage student, faculty and staff in a wide range of environmental courses and activities. For a list of individual projects supported between 2005 and 2008, please see the Appendix.

A. Faculty Fellows

All of our member institutions benefitted from Faculty Fellows this year, for a total of 20 faculty assisting the ACSEI in 2007-2008. In the past three years, with Foundation funding, ACS institutions employed a total of 59 Fellows (19 in '05-'06, 20 in '06-'07, and 20 in '07-'08).

The Faculty Fellow is the glue that holds the Environmental Initiative together. He or she is the information disseminator, the motivator, the idea person, the liaison between and among campuses, the Environmental Interns' supervisor, and the environmental cheerleader. In large part, it was current and past Fellows who encouraged nine of our campus presidents to sign the American Colleges and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment (at Birmingham-Southern College, Centre College, Davidson College, Furman University, Rhodes College, Sewanee: University of the South, Trinity University, University of Richmond, and Washington & Lee University). Moreover, Fellows helped organize, and participated in, our Strategic Planning workshop at Davidson, which resulted in an agreement by the academic deans to sustain key environmental programs (see "E.

Environmental Conferences and Workshops," below). Since 2005, Faculty Fellows have helped develop new environmental studies minors and majors at Rhodes, Davidson, and Birmingham-Southern; they built partnerships between and among students and community groups; and they supported green campus planning initiatives, to name only a few activities.

B. Student Environmental Interns

There were Student Environmental Interns in 2007-2008, for a total of 34 students working for the environment. Over the three years of Mellon Foundation funding on all ACS campuses, ACS institutions employed a total of 99 Student Environmental Interns (34 in '05-'06, 31 in '06-'07, and 34 in '07-'08).

A big challenge to the progress of any student-focused program is that every four years, students graduate. This means that campuses occasionally lose momentum on wonderful student-led projects and activities, which die for lack of leadership when students move on. The periodic loss of student leadership is a challenge to our efforts to create sustainable environmental programs on our campuses. The Student Environmental Intern program began to address this issue by providing positions for students who wished to lead their campus efforts; those students in turn recruited and trained new students each year to take these positions.

Among many other, ACS Student Interns undertook projects such as the following: Earth Day/ Week/ Month celebrations; environmental films, speakers and panels from both on-campus and off; and participation in Recyclemania, a nationwide intercollegiate competition to see which institution can recycle the most waste per capita (www.recyclemania.org). Students, together with staff and faculty, also continued to establish and run recycling programs; held recycled trash displays; engaged in inter-dorm recycling competitions; and conducted waste audits. They formed alliances with non-environmental campus groups to host "green" programs; hosted Focus the Nation global warming teach-ins as part of a nationwide movement; attended national conferences to learn more about global warming; hosted Mountaintop Removal education events; held Green Fests, Green Balls, contra dances and concerts for the environment; held an annual Eco-Cup contest and festival; worked with campus food services to bring in local foods; assisted coffee shops with fair trade coffee promotions; assisted communities and campuses with organic gardens; engaged in vermiculture projects; set up composting systems; investigated and maintained biodiesel facilities; introduced re-usable or biodegradable dishware instead of styrofoam in the cafeterias; performed clean ups of their communities as well as of local lakes, creeks, rivers, and beaches; worked on invasive species eradication; and promoted the use of double-sided printing on campus.

Working together, students, staff, and faculty wrote articles for campus newspapers; established Sustainability Houses and green dorms; initiated/continued Environmental Residents programs; worked with facilities managers to get sustainable features in residence halls and classroom buildings; worked with presidents and deans to craft sustainability wording in strategic plans and mission statements; designed environmental websites/newsletters that herald activities and provide calendars of events; created informational brochures and signage about sustainable practices and enviro facts; held tire pressure check events; replaced incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents; collected batteries, print cartridges, computers and other electronic items for recycling; investigated the possibility of purchasing, and/or purchased, "green" power; held fundraisers for solar panel installations; and created permanent environmental work study positions.

C. Alliance Leadership

Three faculty from three different institutions directed our alliances in 2007-2008, working with their team members to award funds that supported a wide variety of projects. Between 2005 and 2008, Foundation funding made it possible for ACS to support a total of 10 alliance directors and co-directors (4 in '05-'06, 3 in '06-'07, and 3 in '07-'08).

The three alliances, each comprised of 8-11 faculty and staff from as many campuses, elicited numerous project ideas and grant applications from faculty, staff and students throughout the consortium. Reviewing mini-grants and sometimes offering suggestions for revision to strengthen proposals, environmental alliance teams worked in the following areas. To strengthen environmental curriculum, the Curriculum and Faculty Development Alliance (CFD) helped ACSEI expand environmental course offerings and stimulated faculty development related to the environment. To encourage student engagement, the Student Development and Engagement Alliance

(SDE) helped the consortium develop student leadership via teaching assistantships and external and internal internships. To form more and better campus-community partnerships, the Campus-Community Partnerships Alliance (CCP) supported proactive community projects and activities, including service learning. (For a look at the most recent alliance requests for proposals, please see our website at http://www.colleges.org/enviro/proposals/CFD_RFP_0708.pdf, http://www.colleges.org/enviro/proposals/SDE_RFP_0708.pdf, and http://www.colleges.org/enviro/proposals/CCP_%20RFP_0708.pdf.)

New Environmental Directions

With support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, ACS continued to expand the Environmental Initiative in 2007-2008, maintaining programs such as the alliances described above. These programs accelerated our effectiveness and addressed perceived needs at our institutions and beyond. Via minigrants made possible by Mellon, we have focused on encouraging faculty to develop courses in the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the sciences, over the past three years. We also encouraged creation and enrichment of international courses and technology-related courses. With regard to students, we encouraged leadership by supporting student teaching assistantships and internal and external internships. And last but not least, we continued to encourage campus-community partnerships of many kind. For a list of all projects supported by our inter-institutional alliances, please see the Appendix. (To see pdf documents of all successful alliance grant proposals, please go to http://www.colleges.org/enviro/proposals/past_proposals.html.)

A. Course Development

We are happy to report that this year the Curriculum and Faculty Development Alliance awarded a total of seven grants for training, course development, and research. Nine faculty developed more than eight environmental studies courses. Of these eight courses, three were in the humanities, one was a social sciences course, and one was a mathematics course: an English professor incorporated information derived from a newly installed solar panel in her writing course, while another professor created a course dealing with the environment in modern Chinese literature and film. A third humanities professor created a “green” topics in Shakespeare course. In addition, one social sciences professor was awarded funds to learn more about teaching political science in a foreign country. In mathematics, two professors were supported to team-teach a course that used environmental modeling in applied calculus. Finally, a geosciences professor created a course on climate change, a biology professor focused a herpetology field course on environmental issues, and a chemistry professor used a newly installed solar panel to teach the properties of p- and n-type semi-conductors, as well as how these materials are used in the construction of solar panels. Other courses that will use the solar panel include Physics, Environment and Society, and Mathematics.

Since 2005, with Mellon encouragement, CFD has supported a total of 27 such grants: 18 grants for environmental humanities and social sciences courses, one for a mathematics course, one grant for developing a technology-assisted course, two grants for technology training courses, and five for traditional science courses.

B. Student Teaching and Research Assistantships

The Student Development and Engagement Alliance awarded one student research assistantship this year, for a student to assist a professor gathering data for the college to meet its obligations to the American Colleges and Universities Presidents Climate Commitment. No teaching assistantships were awarded in 2007-2008. However, since 2005, SDE awarded minigrants to support a total of three teaching assistantships and six research assistantships.

C. Model Internships

In 2007-2008, SDE supported eight student internships, for projects such as creating an archive for a local wildlife refuge, working with the National Wildlife Federation, coordinating attendance at the national Powershift 2007 conference, working as a compost instructor at a low-income neighborhood park, working on organic farms/gardens, and educating children about a local watershed.

Student internships with non-profits and other off-campus organizations provide valuable experiences that help students prepare for careers as good environmental citizens after graduation. Yet, when our institutions, non-profits, and even some for-profit companies cannot pay interns for their work, internship opportunities can be lost to students who must secure living accommodations and other expenses, especially while working far from home. With funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the SDE Alliance supported a total of 17 off-campus and on-campus student internships between 2005 and 2008. These environment-related positions gave our students an opportunity to earn valuable real-world experience while working for environmental causes.

D. Environmental Justice, Community Partnerships and Service Learning

The Campus-Community Partnerships Alliance continued its effective work in 2007-2008, awarding four grants to three faculty and two students, encouraging partnerships that address crucial environmental issues through applied research, community service, and other activities. One faculty member and a student were supported to bring herpetological curriculum to elementary classrooms, and one professor was supported for creation of a Peace and Friendship Garden in partnership with a local high school. Another professor was supported for planning and coordination work to create community service partnerships establishing a Global Forest Project in Ghana. Finally, a student was awarded support to buy materials for her internship work, teaching children about a local watershed.

The CCP increased environmental justice and service learning efforts at home and abroad by awarding a total of 14 minigrants for a variety of campus-community partnerships between 2005 and 2008. Such outreach efforts bring environmental progress not only to the members of our 16 institutions, but to local, regional and international communities as well.

E. Environmental Conferences and Workshops

In response to the fact that this grant for the ACS Environmental Initiative was scheduled to end this year, ACS faculty expressed the need to meet and strategize together about ways they might make our various leadership positions and other environmental programs sustainable on-going activities on every campus. To facilitate such an exchange, ACSEI held a "Key Players Strategic Planning Workshop" at Davidson College in February 2008.

The major goal of the workshop was to give faculty an opportunity to seek the academic deans' support to continue three key ACSEI programs in the absence of external funding: Faculty Fellows, Student Interns, and Environmental Conferences. The key players also asked deans to institutionalize a fourth program, a Sustainability Committee for each campus. The deans were enthusiastically supportive of these recommendations.

Other successful goals of the workshop included sharing information with key players about the Presidents Climate Commitment; and exchanging information with University of Georgia professors Ron Carroll and Bob Shulstad about ways in which ACSEI and UGA might collaborate. Carroll, at the Odum School of Ecology, is Director of the Graduate Program and co-Director of the River Basin Center for the University of Georgia. Shulstad, at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, is Associate Dean for Research and Associate Director of UGA's agricultural experiment stations. (To see the agenda, please go to http://www.colleges.org/enviro/workshops/2008/davidson_agenda.pdf. For a look at participants' very positive evaluations of the workshop, please go to http://www.colleges.org/enviro/workshops/2008/Davidson_compiled_evals.pdf.)

Conferences and workshops encourage faculty and students to share what they do, and motivate both to go back to their home campuses with ideas for further development, thereby increasing networking and visibility of projects, and generating ideas for activities on campuses. Since 2005, Mellon Foundation funding has supported three ACSEI conferences: a Student Leadership conference at Furman University, a Faculty Fellow-Student Environmental Intern conference at Rollins College, and the Key Players workshop at Davidson. (For a look at details about each of these conferences, please see our website at <http://www.colleges.org/enviro/workshops/index.html>.)

Sustaining Programs After Funding Ends - Some Reflections

Issues of environmental degradation and sustainable development are more urgent today than they were in 2005. ACS believes that global environmental issues should be addressed by all responsible citizens, and colleges and universities should be the environment's first line of defense: academic institutions are a repository of humanity's accumulated scientific, social, philosophical, and practical knowledge; therefore academic communities are well best qualified to make educated judgments about the implications of environmental degradation, and the ways in which to address these implications. Academic institutions also stand as highly visible models of good citizenship for the world to visit and understand.

Environmental projects have the potential to create systemic change within institutions -- to affect every level of our institutions, from their individual students, faculty, and staff; to their courses, majors and minors; the faculty they hire; their institutional research topics; the investments they make; their career planning centers, internships, and service programs; the food they purchase and the implements used to serve and eat them with; what kind of paper, inks, and other products they purchase; the manner in which they dispose of trash and recyclables; how much energy and water they consume; the security and maintenance fleet vehicles they employ and the fuels used to power them; the design of each campus for pedestrian versus vehicle traffic; new buildings, and the repair and maintenance of old ones; landscaping choices in plants, fertilizers, and pesticides; and much more.

For these reasons, ACS institutions have demonstrated that the environment has a very high priority for them. The solid network of students, faculty, and staff have participated in and executed research, courses, projects and activities that encompass a wide variety of ongoing environmental issues. Environmental programs supported by the Foundation have been invaluable to the ACS mission. They have helped the consortium to maintain a high level of interest in, and activities about, the environment on each campus. Consequently, the ACS is pleased with the commitment from the member campuses to institutionalize the Environmental Fellows, Interns, and Conferences, as well as creating a Sustainability Committee on each ACS campus.

Conclusion

The past three years have been very productive for ACS Environmental Programs. Hundreds of ACS faculty, students, staff, and members of the surrounding communities have participated in the many projects and activities ACSEI sponsored or supported. Each of these programs has the potential to profoundly impact people's lives, transforming them into lifelong environmental citizens. Through ACS programming supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, our institutions have initiated change within themselves and externally, partnering with agencies and individuals in the region, as well as in the nation and around the globe. We hope to continue to establish these synergistic networks, working together to disseminate conservation and sustainability education, collaborating between and among states and around the world, and moving the entire southern region towards a sustainable future. The consortium thanks The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its support of this important work, and look forward to the possibility of continuing the partnership in a wide variety of environmental projects.

APPENDIX: Alliance Projects Supported, 2005-2008

Curriculum & Faculty Development Alliance, 2007-2008		
Chia-ju Chang	WLU	The Environment in Modern Chinese Literature and Film
Mike Gunter	Rollins	Costa Rica Seminar
David Marsh	WLU	Field Herpetology goes Environmental
Rachel Dunwell, Christopher Seaton	Rhodes	Adding a Major Environmental Modeling Component to the Applied Calculus Class
Jeanne Hamming and Joshua Lawrence	Centenary	Developing Multidisciplinary Curricula through Green Energy Initiative
Kathleen Surpless	Trinity	Climate Change: The Planet Earth Experiment
Scott Newstok	Rhodes	Green Shakespeare
Student Development & Engagement Alliance, 2007-2008		
Michelle Wells	Spelman	Intern for NWF highschool outreach
Bryan Barnhill	BSC	Intern for Composting Project
Leah Jones and Kimberly Griffin	Southwestern	Shared Internship for Powershift 2007 Conference
Mary Beth Garriott and JP Brantley	Centre	CKWR Archive Internship
Laura Behrendt	Centre	Hawaiian WWOOF Internship: Sustainability and Organic Environments
Kim Hall	Centre	VERV and CREEC Internship
Preston Miles	Centre	Presidents Climate Commitment Intern
James Wilkins	Furman	2 Organic Garden Internships
Campus-Community Partnerships Alliance, 2007-2008		
Peggy McKay and Dr. Michael Dorcas	Davidson	Herpetological Curriculum for Elementary Classrooms
Penelope Wong	Centre	Creation of a Peace and Friendship Garden at Danville High School
Cynthia Hewitt	Morehouse	Morehouse Pan African Global Experience Service Learning
Preston Miles, Kim Hall	Centre	VERV and CREEC Internship project materials

Curriculum & Faculty Development Alliance, 2006-2007		
Stella Capek	Hendrix	Food, Culture, and Nature Course
Stan Galicki	Millsaps	Permaculture at the Helen Moyers Reserve, in Yucatan
Dan Manheim	Centre	Environmental Literature in the U.S.
Arturo Lindsay	Spelman	Environmental Design and Construction Art in Panama
Andy Gannon & David Kesler	BSC, Rhodes	Roatan Marine Park Water Quality collaborative research
Penelope Wong	Centre	Environmental Modules in 4 Education Courses
Veronica Yockey	Furman	Health and Exercise Science course in Central America
Jim Warren, John Knox	WLU	Revamp, update interdisciplinary course website (Island Biogeography and Species Conservation)
Elizabeth MacNabb	Centre College	Environmental Management, Harvard online course
Student Development & Engagement Alliance, 2006-2007		
Kelly Lyons	Trinity	Intern for Restoration Teaching Garden
Roald Hazelhoff	BSC	Intern for Recycling Project
Molly McCormick	Davidson	Intern, Carolinas Clean Air Coalition
Jaira Harrington	Spelman	Sierra Club internship
Cindy Hauser	Davidson	Air quality research assistant internship
Art Frazier	Spelman	2 Interns for Recycling Project
Stan Galicki, Jenna Feindel	Millsaps	Permaculture feasibility study internship
Roald Hazelhoff and Meghan McDonald	BSC	Freshwater Land Trust Internship
Campus-Community Partnerships Alliance, 2006-2007		
Kelly Lyons	Trinity	Restoration Teaching Garden
Shireen Campbell	Davidson	Introducing the Southeast Greenway --service learning
Andy Gannon & David Kesler	BSC, Rhodes	Roatan Marine Park Water Quality partnership
Cori Anderson, Emmy Corey, Jeanne Jackson	BSC	College Hills compost center

Curriculum & Faculty Development Alliance, 2005-2006		
Agnew, Kelly	Hendrix	Ecology, Elephants and Culture in Sri Lanka
Warren, James & John S. Knox	WLU	Island Biogeography and Species Conservation: Science and Literature
Knoll, Martin	Sewanee	International Comparative Watershed Studies course
Anderson, David	Centre	Flash Media technology training
Maximenko, Andrei	Centre	International Environmental Policy
Jackson, Jeanne	BSC	Introduction to Environmental Studies
Heather Sullivan	Trinity	World Literature and the Environment
Kathleen Greer Rossman	BSC	Sustainable Development & service learning in Ecuador
David Martin <i>et al</i>	Davidson	Environmental Studies intro course and senior seminar course
David Martin <i>et al</i>	Davidson	ES interdisciplinary course & program development planning meetings-- meals
Bernal, Pedro/David Ribble/Travis Perry	Rollins/Trinity/Furman	Collaborative research with FOTIM
Student Development & Engagement Alliance, 2005-2006		
James Coker	Rollins	Student Teaching Assistantship, Costa Rica (awarded summer 2005)
Stephenson, Bruce & Jessica Jarrett	Rollins	ES 289 – Nature in the City
Cappellato, Rosanna, & Adam Bonhert	Rhodes	Biology 105 – Environmental Science
Preston Miles, Rose-Marie Roessler	Centre	Clark's Run Field Internship
Kevin Hobbs (student of Dr. Lucia Dale)	Sewanee	Geological society of America's GeoCorps program @ Denali Nat. Park
Katie Branch (student of Dr. Deborah McGrath)	Sewanee	Oyster work with Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Deborah McGrath/Ken Smith	Sewanee	Assessing costs of exurbanization of forest and farmland
Central Kentucky Wildlife Refuge	Centre	Developing Expanded Information on a Local Environmental Resource
Campus-Community Partnerships Alliance, 2005-2006		
Stephenson, Bruce	Rollins	Native Landscape in Central Park
MacAlpine, Barbara & Bea Caraway	Trinity	Service Learning, 1st year seminar
Stanback, Mark & Krista Heiner	Davidson	Fisher Farm Park cavity nesting project
Hazelhoff, Roald	BSC	Brown Springs Ecoscape signage and ed. materials
Cappellato, Rosanna	Rhodes	Hollywood-Springdale community gate
Central Kentucky Wildlife Refuge	Centre	Linking the Campus and Community through a Local Environmental Resource