

MacArthur Foundation selects UF to help develop global master's program

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GAINESVILLE, Fla. --- The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has awarded the University of Florida nearly \$1 million for a new master's program that will train students to assist impoverished populations through sustainable development.

UF is among just 10 universities worldwide chosen to share \$7.6 million in seed money for the creation of master's in development practice programs over the next three years. The programs are designed to provide students with training beyond the typical classroom study of economics and management found in most development studies programs.

"This grant gives the University of Florida tremendous opportunities in two fields in which we already excel: international studies and sustainability," said UF President Bernie Machen. "These are exactly the types of challenges we like to see our university take on, and we welcome the chance to expand our leadership role in sustainability to the global stage."

The program's core curriculum bridges the natural sciences, health sciences, social sciences and management. It combines classroom study with field experiences in agriculture, policy, health, engineering, management, environmental science, education and nutrition.

"The impact of this program will be in terms of the kind of graduates that are produced, people with the interdisciplinary training and skills to tackle real world problems," said Carmen Diana Deere, director of the Center for Latin American Studies, which will administer the program in collaboration with the Center for African Studies.

UF's program will build on the university's expertise in conservation and sustainable development, especially in Latin America, she said. There will be collaborative summer field programs with the University of Botswana and the Autonomous University of the Yucatan.

The new program will draw on the internationally recognized Tropical Conservation and Development program run by the Center for Latin American Studies during the past 20 years, Deere said. The program has perfected an applied and interdisciplinary approach to training

students in sustainable development practices. Originally focused on the Amazon region, the focus has expanded to other tropical regions of Latin America as well as Africa.

Deere believes the program's strength and the collaboration between the two centers and faculty from so many colleges were factors in winning the MacArthur grant. The UF Steering Committee includes representatives from the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, the College of Public Health & Health Professions, the College of Veterinary Medicine, the College of Design, Construction & Planning, the Warrington College of Business Administration and the Levin College of Law.

The MacArthur Foundation's seed grant will be supplemented with funding from various units in the university for a total of about \$1.8 million over four years. The funding will pay for two new faculty positions, one in health and development and the other in development administration, as well as a program coordinator.

Other universities in India, Australia, Ireland, China, Senegal, Botswana and Nigeria as well as Emory University are involved in the program. The global network of master's programs will be coordinated by a secretariat based at the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

"Through our work around the globe, we at MacArthur understand that poverty, population, health, conservation and human rights are all interconnected, requiring sustained and comprehensive interventions," said foundation President Jonathan Fanton. "These new programs are a model for training the next generation of these critically needed professionals."

The universities are expected to produce 250 graduates by 2012, with a total of 750 students enrolled. More than 70 universities in North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Latin America submitted proposals.

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