

Interdisciplinary Environmental Education in the 21st Century: Training for Leadership

April 24, 25 and 26, 2009
Bard Center for Environmental Policy
Bard College

The Bard Center for Environmental Policy will hold a conference, “Interdisciplinary Environmental Education In the 21st Century: Training for Leadership,” sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation, on Friday, April 24- Sunday April 26, 2009, at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Featuring “keynote conversations” with Bard President, Leon Botstein, leading environmental educator, David Orr, and *New York Times* journalist, Andrew C. Revkin, the conference will examine the new challenges facing environmental policy programs in higher education: How can we best educate the generation of leaders who, by 2050, will have to rewire the world with clean energy, house and feed another 3 billion people, and adapt to a rapidly changing climate? Today’s young people must guide the world through unprecedented challenges: as educators, how can we prepare them for the tasks ahead?

Sessions will focus on achieving a true interdisciplinary curriculum, balancing theory versus practice, and implementing instructional tools that utilize examples and practices from both within and outside the U.S. In additional panels addressing cutting-edge approaches to climate change and payment systems for ecosystems services, academics and practitioners will evaluate methods to build connections across disciplinary fields. A closing workshop session on Saturday will engage participants in the integration of interdisciplinary learning into curricula designed to support leadership by environmental studies graduates.

The final day of the conference, Sunday, will be devoted to a strategic evaluation of the two-year educational experiment led by the incoming Director of the Bard Center for Environmental Policy, Dr. Eban Goodstein. In 2008 and 2009, Goodstein organized national teach-in events on global warming, involving over two thousand schools and other institutions across the country. Thousands of faculty members and university staff helped organize these events, and now remain connected to the teach-in network. What have we learned from this initiative? And in what direction should the network head in 2010?

Please join us at Bard for this important conference.

Conference Agenda

Friday, April 24 Bard College

1: 00 pm: Welcome and Introduction, Eban Goodstein, BCEP Director

1:30–3:00 pm: Panel I - Interdisciplinary Graduate Training in Environmental Policy at the Bard Center for Environmental Policy (BCEP), BCEP Faculty, and Pam Sturner of the Aldo Leopold Center at Stanford University on Training for Leadership

The “BCEP Model” is unique in the degree to which subject matter is integrated across disciplines in the core courses taken by the Masters degree candidates. In this panel, the model is presented by a panel of BCEP faculty, with discussion of the challenges and opportunities this presents in the education process. Then Pam Sturner of Stanford’s Aldo Leopold Center will present a model of leadership training for environmental scientists, with implications for the BCEP model.

3:00–4:30 pm: Keynote Conversation on Public Education: Leon Botstein, President of Bard College, and Andrew Revkin, senior staff reporter for the New York Times.

Once tomorrow’s leaders have a strong interdisciplinary education, they will be able to apply systems thinking to the challenges ahead. But they also must be effective public educators—with the ability to bring that knowledge to inform democratic decision-making. Where is the line between public education and advocacy?

4:30 – 6:00 pm: Reception

Saturday, April 25 Bard College

8:30–9:30 am: Panel II: Experiences in Environmental Policy Education from Abroad

Our Luce partners speak on the goals of their graduate programs and the employment opportunities they are training for. Juan Jose Consejo, INSO, Oaxaca, Mexico; Dr. Zarina Patel, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; and Dr. Yijun Ji, Nankai University, Tianjin City, China

9:30- 10:45 am: Panel III: Has Global Warming Opened the Door for Interdisciplinary Dialogue? The National Teach-In Experience

Representatives of colleges participating in the NTI, including Professors Penelope Canan, Jon Isham and Pushpa Ramakrishna, give 5-minute statements about the extent to which global warming as a subject matter, and the teach-in in particular, has fostered ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue on campus. To be followed by a moderated round table discussion.

10:45-11:15 am: Coffee break

11:15-12:45: Panel IV: Payment for Ecosystem Services: A model field experience for training environmental policy makers.

Juan Jose Consejo, of the Institute for Nature and Society in Mexico, Alexander Pfaff, of Duke University, and Lindsey Lusher '07, discuss the concept of "Payment for Ecosystems Services" as a model integrative concept to utilize in training environmental policy graduates. Gautam Sethi, BCEP faculty, moderates.

12:45-2:00 pm: Lunch

2:00-3:15 pm: Breakout Session – Evaluation and critique of BCEP model of graduate training in environmental policy, with application to home institutions.

Breakout groups will discuss the BCEP model of interdisciplinary training in environmental policy, make suggestions for solving some key challenges, and reflect on potential lessons for their home institutions. Group discussion for 45 minutes followed by 30 minutes to report back on summary points.

3:15-3:45 pm: Coffee break

3:45-5:30 pm: Plenary – Keynote Conversation on Higher Education and Sustainability: William H. Schlesinger, President of the Cary Institute for Ecosystem Services and David Orr, Professor of Environmental Studies, Oberlin College. Eban Goodstein as moderator.

What is the Role of Higher Education in building a sustainable future?

Coffee reception for the public to follow.

Sunday, April 26 Bard College

9:00-10:30 am: Keynote on The National Teach-In — Successes, Failures, Next Steps: Eban Goodstein. Discussants: Penelope Canan, Jon Isham, Xarissa Holdaway, and Pushpa Ramakrishna.

A review and analysis of the last two years' experience of the National Teach-In on Global Warming. A proposal for a follow-on 2009-2010 initiative will be discussed. Participants share the strengths and weaknesses of teach-in experience; engage in SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of Goodstein's 2009-2010 proposal.

10:30-11:00 am: Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 am: Break Out

Participants brainstorm alternatives/extensions to the 2009-2010 proposal, explore partnerships, funding ideas, and commitments.

12:30-1:00 pm: Report Back and closure