



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INITIATIVE

Highlights, 2009

A. EPI Profile

EPI is an interdisciplinary program, one of several Public Policy initiatives funded by the Office of Academic Affairs since 1999. It has more than 50 members from 8 colleges and the Glenn School, typically about 20 associate members (graduate students and post-docs), and about 40 affiliate members (nationally and internationally recognized collaborators, distinguished visitors, etc.). EPI programs include seed grants for research, working groups to prepare proposals in response to specific interdisciplinary RFPs, conferences that bring together the academic and policy communities to discuss environmental policy issues, distinguished visiting speakers, workshops, dissertation proposal grants, and travel grants for graduate students to present papers to professional meetings.

EPI's basic purpose is catalytic – to encourage and support environmental policy research, teaching, and outreach at Ohio State; and to build collaborative networks across the Ohio State community, and linking the Ohio State environmental policy community with practitioners in government, NGOs, and the private sector, and with the global research community.

EPI seed grants and working groups have yielded several major extra-mural research grants. EPI has collaborated with on-campus programs such as CCERI, CIRIT, the Center for Resilience, the Center for Mapping, and Women in Development, as well as with a broad range of OSU departments, colleges, and schools; and with government agencies, NGOs, and business organizations. EPI can point to tangible successes (e.g., a NSF Biocomplexity grant, \$1,400,000, 2004-2008), and intangible successes (e.g., EPI's catalytic efforts, along with those of several other cross-cutting programs, were crucial in establishing the credibility of the Carbon, Water, and Climate TIE proposal, which was highest-ranked and funded at \$11.5 million by OAA).

B. Activities

Seed Grants

No new seed grants have been initiated in 2009. No seed grants are presently active.

Working Groups

In 2009 EPI contributed to a proof of concept RFA titled: **Sustainable Agroecosystem Science on Diversified Farms Producing for Local Food Systems**. This working group and subsequent proposal was created to lay the foundation for robust long term agroecosystem research, extension and education about a fundamentally different structure for agriculture in densely populated regions of the US – a structure that supports sustainable production, processing and distribution of high quality and healthy foods for local populations and communities. A multi-disciplinary team of research and extension scientists at Ohio State in partnership with a unique group of farmer-educators primarily located on demonstration farms aimed to create a long term network of research and education farms that could be used to build a new and strong agroecosystem science of local food systems.

In 2009, EPI continued to work and provide support on an NSF grant dealing with coupled human and natural systems. This multi-disciplinary project involves experts from engineering, statistics and AED economics to study the life-cycle impacts of transportation fuels. This group meets on a weekly basis, year round and EPI attends and contributes frequently to these meetings. EPI specifically contributed work on the project's stated preference survey work, from the design and development stages in late 2008/ early 2009, through implementation (March 2009) and is currently contributing to the analysis. A publication is currently being worked on as a tangible output of EPI's efforts.

Distinguished Visiting Speakers

Friday, January 29th, 2009.

“The Economics of Climate Change: A Post-Stern Perspective”

Geoffrey Heal

Paul Garrett Professor of Public Policy and Business Responsibility

Professor of Finance & Economics

Columbia Business School

Columbia University

Dr. Heal presented an overview of what has been learned as a result of the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change. He spoke about the increased exploration of the model and the parameter space, as well as how the Stern Review has catalyzed a fundamental rethinking of the economic case for action on climate change. He also highlighted the need to understand better how climate change affects natural capital - the natural environment and the ecosystems comprising it - and how this in turn affects human welfare.

Workshops

May 29th, 2009. 2008 grant recipients presented on the progress of their research to a university audience of 24.

Abiye Alamina (Public Policy and Management, Advisor: Andrew Keeler)

“A Comparative Political Economy Evaluation of Environmental Policy”

Kevin Grove (Geography, Advisor: Matthew Coleman)

“Effects of Catastrophe Insurance Programs on Disaster Management Policies and Practices in Jamaica”

Kora Dabrowska (Environmental Science, Advisor: Fred Hitzhusen)

“Hedonic Modeling of Anaerobic Digestion in the U.S.”

Summer dissertation proposal grants

In 2009, EPI funded 2 Ph.D. students for 3 months during the writing of their dissertation proposals in environmental policy:

Mike Betz (Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics)

Advisor: David Kraybill

Topic: *Soil and Water Conservation in Ugandan Agriculture*

Scott Stuckman (Environmental Science)

Advisor: Jialin Lin

Topic: *Future Freshwater Shortages in North America and Implications for Policymaking*

Graduate student travel grants

EPI member Joshua Wiener was awarded a travel grant to present his paper “*Climate Change Policy Making in the States: Existing v. Emerging Technologies*” at the 2009 annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, March 19-21 in Vancouver, Canada.