



**THE NELSON INSTITUTE
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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NEW CERTIFICATE PREPARES STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL CHANGE

MADISON – Graduate students intrigued by large-scale environmental challenges like climate change will have a new opportunity this fall at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies will introduce a graduate-level Certificate on Humans and the Global Environment (CHANGE) that prepares students to tackle global environmental problems. The certificate program will be open to any graduate student at UW-Madison, regardless of major.

"Today's global environmental crises demand problem solvers who can benefit from multiple perspectives on sustainable solutions," says CHANGE director Jonathan Patz, an associate professor in the Nelson Institute and the department of population health sciences. "Our students must be fully equipped with the leadership skills and transdisciplinary orientation needed to take on these concerns – CHANGE students will ultimately become change agents!"

A \$3 million grant last year from the National Science Foundation's Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeships (IGERT) program made creation of the CHANGE program possible. Supplemented by \$400,000 from the UW-Madison Graduate School, the IGERT grant also will support two to three new Ph.D. students in the area of sustainability each year for one to two years.

CHANGE interweaves natural and social sciences and the humanities to explore the vulnerabilities and resilience of human communities facing complex environmental hazards. It draws on the university's strengths in fields such as atmospheric and oceanic sciences, conservation biology, environmental studies, geography, history, public health, sociology, and veterinary medicine.

The three-semester CHANGE curriculum will train students in professional communication and knowledge-management skills while exposing them to cutting-edge thinking about how human and non-human environmental systems operate and evolve.

CHANGE is the latest in a series of innovative graduate degree and certificate programs launched by the Nelson Institute since its inception 37 years ago. The institute's leadership in interdisciplinary teaching and learning figured prominently in the latest

edition of *U.S. News & World Reports'* popular annual guide, *America's Best Graduate Schools*. A feature article, "Greening the World," highlighted the emergence of advanced degrees in sustainability science and sustainable development.

The CHANGE program is closely tied to the Nelson Institute's Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, which conducts research and outreach on the same broad theme.

For more information on the CHANGE certificate and other Nelson Institute programs, see www.sage.wisc.edu/igert and www.nelson.wisc.edu/grad/prospective.

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