

18 Month Report to the UNC Office of the President Grant to Plan a Climate and Society Masters Degree Program

Brief Chronology of Year 1

Following a Best Practices Symposium in Climate Education July 31 and August 1, 2007, the Asheville Graduate Center, with support from Chancellor Ponder, applied for and received a planning grant of \$80,000 from the UNC Office of the President to facilitate the development of a Masters Degree program in Climate Change and Society (CCS) at the Asheville Graduate Center. Lenny Bernstein, Nobel Laureate and author of Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was hired as Project Manager November 30. From December 2007 until early September 2008, development of the CC&S program proceeded under the assumption that it would result in a degree granted jointly by UNC-Asheville and NC State University. Under this assumption, an eighteen-month curriculum leading to an M.S. degree was finalized. This curriculum included either a research project or an internship. Robert Mera, a summer intern hired jointly by AGC and NEMAC, surveyed over 40 industrial, government and non-profit organizations about research, internship, or employment opportunities. Key findings from this survey included internship and job opportunities for prospective students. Industrial organizations wanted knowledge of basic climate science and technology, a working knowledge of climate models, GIS skills, and economics. Government and non-profit organizations also wanted knowledge of basic climate science, GIS skills, and economics; as well as communications skills, social marketing, and an understanding of the political aspects of climate change issues. The consortium of institutions involved in the planning of the CC&S degree included NCSU, ASU, UNCW, UNC Asheville, the National Climatic Data Center, and ORNL.

In August 2008, an *Intent to Plan* narrative was prepared. However, in September, UNC-Asheville's administration recommended that the CC&S program be offered through the Asheville Graduate Center, but that NC State University be the degree granting institution. UNC-Asheville would continue to participate in the CC&S program as part of the consortium that develops and delivers the curriculum. In November, Provosts of UNC-Asheville and NCSU agreed that NC State could serve as the degree granting institution, with the program being completed in twelve months and being structured as a Professional Science Masters Degree. A January meeting was scheduled between UNC Asheville and NCSU.

Grant expenditures from December 2007-December 2008, managed by grant PI (AGC Director) and Steven Birkhoffer (Grant/Endowment Accountant) were \$38,000.00 and included the following:

- project manager salary
- travel & accommodations to Columbia University and Oak Ridge National Labs for research
- travel by working group members to attend meetings at UNC Asheville
- office supplies
- meals for working lunches
- fees for parking
- telephone line for Project Manager

Summary of Planning Grant Work completed December 2007-December 2008

- Hired an individual to coordinate all facets of the planning grant listed in the grant bullets and refined the proposal for the Master's degree in applied climate accessible to students in Asheville and the Southeast;
- Conducted research on future job opportunities related to climate in public and private sectors;
- Determined curriculum that prepares students for future jobs in the climate sector;
- Identified our niche market, primary audience, and how to market to audience, based on best practice and research;
- Identified potential for local, regional, and state internship opportunities;

- Began to identify faculty to teach in the program, bringing together expertise from UNC Asheville, other universities, NCDC, NOAA, USDA-Forest Service, NEMAC, RENCI, etc.;
- Determine financing options for sustainability; and
- Strengthen and expand existing collaborations.

Summary of Activities from January-June, 2009

In January, a new leadership team was put into place by Provost Fernandez. Members of this team include Edward Katz, Associate Provost; Keith Krumpe, Dean of Natural Sciences; Chris Hennon, Assistant Professor of Atmospheric Science; Jim Fox, Director of NEMAC and RENCI at UNC Asheville; and Gerard Voos, UNC Asheville's liaison to NCDC and Director of the Office of Sponsored Scholarship. Project manager, Lenny Bernstein, resigned in January, as the new leadership team was assigned, working groups were terminated. The Asheville Graduate Center Director continued as PI of planning grant, but was no longer involved in planning activities. The new leadership team is responsible for working with NCSU and others to complete the planning grant activities, which are listed in the final section of this report.

No activities were conducted the months of January and February. In March, the new leadership team met with NCSU. In April, the AGC director and Grants Accountant requested a one year extension of the planning grant, which was supported by UNC GA. The basis of this extension included financial challenges faced by the university system and the reorganization of the planning team. The planning grant now stipulates degree implementation August 2010.

In June 2009, the AGC was invited to support research that will align the CC&S curriculum with NCSU PSM structure and the UNC Asheville MLA structure. Grant funds available for completion of planning grant activities as of June 10, 2009 are \$42,000.

Planning Grant Activities to Be Completed July 2009-August 2010

- Develop a business plan to initiate, implement, and sustain a Master's degree program in Climate and Society; and
- Determine model of delivery at UNC Asheville for a Master's degree program in Climate and Society;
- Identify faculty to teach in the program, bringing together expertise from UNC Asheville, other universities, NCDC, NOAA, USDA-Forest Service, NEMAC, RENCI, etc.;
- Identify how to turn research into climate-data application tools that meet the needs of regional and state policy and decision makers;
- Strengthen and expand existing collaborations.