REQUEST FOR UCLA ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE SENIOR PRACTICUM GROUP PROJECT PROPOSALS 2010–2011

The UCLA Institute of the Environment seeks Environmental Science Senior Practicum Group Project proposals for the 2010–2011 academic year. The Group Project is a culminating research experience for students pursuing a B.S. in Environmental Science major. The projects are undertaken between October 2010 and June 2011 by teams of 7–8 seniors under the supervision of a faculty member. Proposals are due by 5 P.M. on June 15, 2010.

Group Project Objectives
The goals of the Group Project are to provide students with training and experience in multidisciplinary environmental problem solving, in preparation for professional careers; and to provide a mechanism for students to learn important management skills, such as working as a team, developing leadership skills, managing time and financial resources, organizing, and negotiating.

Examples of past group projects can be found at: http://www.environment.ucla.edu/academics/article.asp?parentID=2666.

Desirable Group Project Attributes
Students are expected to collaborate with outside clients that have a problem that can be successfully addressed and solved by the group project. The project requires: an environment in which the students can learn to operate as an independent professional team; a spirit of trust and collaboration by all parties; client involvement appropriate to allow students to develop their own ideas and approaches; and healthy and professional communications and rapport amongst all parties.

Appropriate topics address current environmental problems, which require significant analysis to provide a recommendation to the “end customer,” which might be a private firm, a government agency, a non-governmental organization, or a combination of interested parties.

Projects should involve quantitative analysis and scientific investigation in order to reach a policy and/or management recommendation. It is important to keep the scope realistic: projects should be manageable for a group of 7–8 seniors, spending about 25% of their time during the three academic quarters (9 months), and with a very limited budget. Projects that require a completion date well before June 2011 cannot be accommodated.

Although it is useful to have some external funding for the project, either for supplies, sampling and analysis, or other requirements, this is only one of several factors in project selection. If the proposal clearly requires substantial resources, however, a commitment from an identified client is necessary.

All proposers are strongly encouraged to contact the Senior Practicum Coordinator, Dr. Travis Longcore (longcore@ucla.edu) as a first step in proposal development. The Proposal Selection Committee will evaluate the proposals and will determine those that have a higher probability of success based on the criteria indicated below.
Proposal Format
Proposals for projects are due by 5:00 P.M. June 1, 2010 and are limited to three pages (excluding references). Proposals must follow this format and should include all of the following:

1. Title, describing the environmental science question to be solved.

2. Client Name

3. UCLA Faculty Sponsor (if applicable). It is not necessary to have a faculty sponsor, but if a faculty member assisted in proposal preparation, please list their name here.

4. Proposed Project
   A. Problem Statement: What is the context for this work?
   B. Project Objectives: What research questions need to be answered by this project?
   C. Project Significance: Why is this work important? Who is the target audience/client?
   D. Background information: Where is the project location (if applicable)? In general, how did the problem evolve? What has been done to date, if known?
   F. Stakeholders, other than the client: What other people/groups would benefit from or be interested in the results of this work?
   G. Possible approaches and available data: This should be concise. One of the tasks for the group project participants is to decide how best to meet the project objectives and develop their approach. If data sets are available, it is useful to identify them here.
   H. Deliverables: What types of recommendations do you expect to have as an outcome from the project? Are there specific products that you expect to have at the end of the project, other than the final written report and oral presentation?
   I. References: List appropriate scientific literature, working papers, websites, etc…

5. Contact information of the proposer(s): Including name, job title, email and phone number; please identify the main contact person.

6. A commitment by the client to provide data and other information required for a successful project with no stipulation for a non-disclosure agreement or restriction to publication of the report. Clients must also commit to providing a guest speaker, if requested, to introduce the topic.

7. Anticipated financial needs and sources of support. What resources would be available to the team to ensure the project’s success?

A letter of commitment from identified clients is necessary if funding is a requirement for a successful project. The letter of support does not count towards the 3-page limit. Indicate expectations with respect to financial needs, and any support commitments that exist or are very likely. This letter should be addressed to Dr. Cully Nordby, Academic Director, UCLA Institute of the Environment and describe the financial needs of the project and the committed sources of financial support.
Project Selection Criteria
Approximately 10 Group Projects will be undertaken during 2010–2011. Criteria used to select projects include:

- Extent to which project represents a real environmental problem that requires a solution from the group project.
- Extent to which the project has clear environmental science, policy or management questions.
- Extent to which the project matches expertise and capabilities of staff and faculty currently available to advise projects.
- Extent to which the expected financial needs of the project are met.
- Extent to which scope of project is feasible, given student experience and time availability.
- Extent to which logistics are practical.

Selection Process
All submissions will be reviewed by the curriculum committee of the Institute of the Environment. Final selection will be made by August 1, 2010. Clients will then be informed of the projects that have been accepted for the 2010–2011 academic year.

Project Timeline
After proposal preparation and selection, group projects are conducted in three quarters (Spring, Fall, and Winter) spanning the senior year of the students.

Fall 2010
Students select project area and write a thorough literature review of the topic, focused on the question posed by the client. This work is done individually.
Clients must commit to providing a guest speaker, if requested, to introduce the topic.

Winter 2011
Students write proposals in response to client question.
Students present proposals to class, clients are welcome to attend.
Any administrative permissions for research are secured.
Data collection starts.

Spring 2012
Data collection continues
Students present preliminary results.
Students prepare draft report for advisor comment.
Report is finalized and results presented in public seminar.
Students give additional presentation to clients if desired.

Additional Information
Further information about the environmental science major, the senior practicum and projects from previous years can be found at http://www.environment.ucla.edu/academics/article.asp?parentID=2666.

Questions regarding Group Project goals or proposal preparation can be addressed to Dr. Travis Longcore (longcore@ucla.edu)

Submit proposals via email by 5:00 P.M. June 15, 2010 to:
Dr. Travis Longcore, longcore@ucla.edu