

The Climate Leadership Challenge

Final Update 1/3/09

Scientific data has shown the unequivocal warming of the Earth's climate¹. Symptoms of this change include increased air temperatures, rising sea levels, and wide spread melting of glaciers and polar ice caps. Continued warming, and the potential for irreversible changes, pose severe risks for water availability, food systems, public health, biodiversity, the built environment, and other vital aspects of human wellbeing. The leading cause of this change is clear: exponential increases in greenhouse gas emissions². To adequately address the growing problems of climate change, society must simultaneously work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while preparing for the future impacts of climate change.

Historically, solutions to pressing global issues have emerged from innovative approaches and fresh, inspired perspectives. University of Wisconsin-Madison students are exceptionally suited for solving the climate change challenge. Among research universities, UW-Madison ranks in the top ten with 18 students accepting Fulbright fellowships. As a university, it is second only to Harvard in the number of alumni who are CEO's of Fortune 500 companies and ranks first in the number of students who have worked in the Peace Corps. This famous entrepreneurial spirit and vision for social change make our campus ideal for a competition committed to the issue of climate change. We invite all UW-Madison students to design solutions to reduce global climate change and adapt to climate-related risk.

With generous funding from the Global Stewards Society (John F. & Mary Cooper; Gary & Ellora Cooper; John & Mary K. Noreika; Peter Vogel, Vogel Brothers Building Company; and David Beck-Engel, J.H. Findorff & Son), The Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE), part of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, has established the *Climate Leadership Challenge (CLC)* to inspire UW-Madison students from every department to create innovative solutions to climate change.

Successful projects will either help *mitigate* climate change (e.g. reduce energy use, reduce emissions, promote land use leading to greater carbon sequestration) or help improve society's ability to adapt to climate change impacts (e.g. improving infrastructure, designing risk management strategies, reducing system vulnerability). Because different solutions are appropriate to different regions, submissions should clearly state whether their projects focus on benefiting Wisconsin, the nation, and/or global populations and ecosystems.

To adequately address the climate challenge, the CLC encourages students to familiarize themselves with the scientific aspects of the problem. All real world solutions to climate change should reflect the scientific community's understanding that threats are severe and solutions must adequately address the magnitude of the projected risks.

Ensuring a sustainable future demands a multidisciplinary perspective on solutions, and an effort to connect research and creativity with real-world demands. Physical sciences, biological sciences, social studies, humanities, and the arts each play an important role in designing effective and feasible

¹ For a comprehensive overview of the science of climate change and associated impacts, students are encouraged to review the Fourth Annual Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/assessments-reports.htm>. Additional links to information on climate change and similar competitions is available at the CLC website <http://www.sage.wisc.edu/clc/>.

solutions. We welcome solutions from all disciplines, and especially from teams that bridge disciplines to benefit from multiple perspectives.

Winning projects must present an original product, policy, or program with potential to bring significant change to the state, the nation, and/or world. Student are strongly encouraged to connect with private and public sector organizations related to their CLC project, and include in their submission a clear plan to translate idea into reality.