

Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future TOPICAL LUNCH

Title: “Exploring Opportunities for Knowledge, Learning & Practice – Field Learning Center in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, Southern India”

Date: March 2, 2012

Organizers:

Last Name	First Name	NetID or email	Dept (if known)	College (If known)
Roy	Pratim	pr369@cornell.edu		CALS

Participant RSVP (attending): 20

Last Name	First Name	NetID or email	Dept (if known)	College (If known)
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Regrets:

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Fifer	Eugene	etf26@cornell.edu		
Walter	Michael	mfw2@cornell.edu		

Invited:

Rebecca Stoltzfus

Ronnie Coffman

The topical lunch with the above participants shared each person's expectations, interest and what they wish to bring to this project idea of the Field University.

A number of examples of the current and past experiences were shared:

1. The Cornell-Peru Vicos project was mentioned by Chuck Geisler at the beginning of the topical lunch: http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/vicosperu/vicos-site/introduction_page_1.htm
2. Chris Barrett mentioned the Mpala project at Princeton University as a possible model: <http://www.princeton.edu/eeb/facilities/mpala-1/>. It's been adopted as one of Princeton's Grand Challenges: <http://www.princeton.edu/grandchallenges/development/mpala/>
3. Chris also mentioned the Nicholas School at Duke University. Here is a list of their research centers and programs: <http://www.nicholas.duke.edu/divisions/centers>
4. Chris used this term to describe the project: 'long-term, place-based engagement.'
5. Here's an interesting quote from Sandip Tiwari's research group page: <http://electroscience.ece.cornell.edu/>. I am also interested in the role of science in third world, issues related to poverty and development, and in our place in the natural world as humans, the only species with the capability to change the path of the survival of the fittest. In my 'other life' I spend my time practicing and supporting related activities in India.
6. Here's a description of the Indonesia program that Alice Pell is developing: <http://blog.acsf.cornell.edu/?p=1027>
7. Even though I think you have all the names, here are the folks who were mentioned during the meeting: Sandip Tiwari, Mike Walter (mfw2), Richard Kiely, Anurag Agrawal, Ralph Christy, Alex Travis, Becky Stoltzfus, Drew Harvell.

The follow-up of this topical lunch was to host a working group meeting on 27th March to develop this framework more robustly.

The agenda of the meeting on March 27, 2012:

1. Formulating a phase-wise plan of action (the next 3 years)
 - What will be the content and outline?
 - What is going to be the focus?
 - How will it maintain a certain dynamism of a Field Learning Center - science to the ground and science from the ground and re-structuring accordingly?
 - What are the limiting factors in this program with Cornell and Keystone?
2. Setting up a Steering Group
3. Exploring plans for a trip to India this year by a core group to brainstorm / formulate a holistic framework with our team in India
4. Finding funding for a trip to India
5. Discussing next steps and suggestions for an Advisory Board

The participants of the meeting on 27th March 2012 were:

1. Laurie Damiani
2. Steven Wolf
3. Richard Kiely
4. Alexis Santi
5. Charles Geisler
6. Anurag Agarwal
7. Lesley Yorke
8. Daniel Gold
9. Pratim Roy

A framework for the phased plan for 3 years is emerging:

We have identified four areas: Administration, Field Experiences/Field Station, Courses, and Outputs. How will they grow from year 1 to year 3? In terms of an agreed plan of action:

- Identify primary areas of work: conservation, livelihoods, culture and people, and environmental governance
- Develop semester-long course that precedes trip to field station
- Develop a 3-4 week on-site program at Keystone and surrounding Nilgiri Hills/Western Ghats region
- Plan for assessment and evaluation of program and its products

We must identify a faculty member at Cornell who is familiar with Southern India. Lucinda Ramberg & Andrew Wilford who are anthropologists will be approached if they can bring in some insights. Dan Gold from the South Asia Program mentioned the need to bring in the cultural aspects of south Indian societies.

Service Learning is an important component in the Field Learning Center, discussions on what graduate, undergraduate students would do, how the faculty will be involved in the research. and a cumulative process of knowledge gain and practice sharing will take place. Ideally, in the internationalization of Cornell as an Institution providing world-class global and local opportunities, this idea of the Field Learning Center was ideally suited and an opportunity is seen.