Building a new Generation of Sustainable Development Practitioners: The Masters in Development Practice at the University of Florida and the Global MDP Network

Challenges of Sustainable Development


- How are we doing?
  - Almost 40% of the global population lives on less than US$2 per day
  - Approx. 25,000 children die every day due to poverty, hunger or disease
  - Of 44,837 species that have been assessed, 38% are classified as threatened on the IUCN Red List (http://www.iucnredlist.org/)
  - Global emissions of GHG projected to grow 37% by 2030, resulting in global warming that will increase heat waves, droughts, storms and floods (OECD 2008)

The staggering magnitude of these figures is an appalling testimony to our past development efforts and reflects a global crisis which has far deeper implications to global sustainability and our life on earth than the recent global economic crisis.
The Millenium Development Goals

- Halve the number of people living in extreme poverty (less than $1 per day)
- Ensure that all children receive primary schooling
- Promote gender equality
- Reduce child mortality by 2/3 and maternal mortality rate by 3/4

- Stop and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Reduce loss of biodiversity through sustainable development
- Establish a global partnership to promote ‘good governance,’ debt relief and action programs to address needs of the least developed and most vulnerable countries (UNDP no date)

In September, 2000, some 189 nations met and adopted the MDGs.....

How to respond to this challenges?

- Key to ending poverty is to focus on the “poorest of the poor” and to provide them with the capacity to reach the lowest rung of “the ladder of development.” (Sachs 2005, pg. 244).

“A major obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the lack of a cadre of generalist professionals trained across fields of public health, agronomy, engineering, economics and environmental science that can recognize these interrelated challenges and know how to address them, drawing from specialist expertise as needed.” (ICESDP 2008, pg. 1)
Assessment of Existing Development Programs

There is a need for a new type of “generalist practitioner” who has the capacity to “navigate across the intellectual and institutional silos of specialized disciplines to develop integrated policy solutions that are scientifically, politically and contextually grounded.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Coverage of Development Knowledge Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s of Public Administration</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s of Development Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s of Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s of Business and Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master’s of Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Doctor (MD)</td>
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[Source: ICESDP , pg. 16]

New Masters in Sustainable Development Practice (MDP)

- The MacArthur Foundation committed $12M in seed grant funding
- Plan was to create a network of +10 programs across the globe that would offer an MDP degree based on the ICESDP integrated model
- 140 universities submitted letters of intent, with 70 proposals ultimately received
- 10 universities in Africa, N. America, Europe, Asia and Australia funded
- Columbia U serves as the Secretariat
Objectives of MDP Network

- To educate innovative professionals with analytical training and disciplinary breadth and management skills to address the complex development challenges of the 21st century.
- To train practitioners who effectively bridge scholarship and practice with strong competencies in the social sciences, natural sciences, health sciences and the skills to implement, manage and assess development programs.
- To produce highly skilled development practitioners to work with governments and non-state actors to address crucial contemporary development challenges.

Global Network of MDPs

Map of MDP networks across various universities and institutions.
University of Florida

- Fourth-largest university in the US – began in 1853
- Enrollment approaching 50,000 students annually
- 16 colleges and more than 150 research centers and institutes

Integrated Framework of UF-MDP
Collaborative Adaptive Management Approach

UF-MDP Curriculum

**ORIENTATION:**
Familiarize students with this curriculum, its philosophy, its sequence and its academic tools; Cohort-building activities; Introduce performance management system related to competency training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 1 (Fall) 12 Credits</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Natural/ Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Integrated Skills and SD Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Classroom: Development Theory and Practice</td>
<td>Ecology and Development</td>
<td>Health and Development I</td>
<td>Communication and Leadership Skills</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 2 (Spring) 12 Credits</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Natural/ Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Integrated Skills and SD Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundations of Economic Analysis for Sustainable Development OR Economics of Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Natural Resource Management and Innovation Systems</td>
<td>Health and Development II</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Practice Seminar/Workshop</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMER Practicum 6 Credits</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Natural/ Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Integrated Skills and SD Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field School or Internships in Africa, or Latin America: Includes field skills, project design and evaluation; field project Assessment, Analysis, Write-up, and Presentation (through individual advisor).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 3 (Fall) 12 Credits</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Natural/ Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Integrated Skills and SD Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Elective Courses (6 credits)</td>
<td>Politics, State, Development Administration and Governance</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Team Project</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER 4 (Spring) 12 Credits</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Natural/ Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Health Sciences</th>
<th>Integrated Skills and SD Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Elective Courses (9 credits)</td>
<td>Management and Entrepreneurship</td>
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## Summer Field School

The summer field program is designed to:

- **Socialize** and train students to address development problems at multiple levels.
- Teach students how to **interact** with government officials, NGOs and donors.
- **Work with** district councils, communities and the private sector in a **hands-on** manner.
- To develop appropriate **relationships**, to **negotiate** priorities with stakeholders.
- **Collect, manage and analyze** macro-level data and policy about the sector/region.
- Understanding of **contemporary issues** in sector planning, infrastructure, property rights, distributional equity, community development, biodiversity conservation and climate change.
- **Work actively with stakeholders** to assess the sector, develop policy, and implement priorities.
- Over several years we will be able to study and track development practices and SD indicators longitudinally.

### Elective Courses and Certificates

In their second year, there is space for MDP students to take elective courses that will lead to a graduate certificate in one of a dozen existing fields of specialization. Examples include:

- African Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Tropical Conservation and Development
- Environmental Health
- Epidemiology
- Public Health Management and Policy
- Urban Planning and Sustainability
- Gender and Development
- Interdisciplinary Concentration in Geographic Information Systems
- Climate and Climate Change

Students who complete the requirements receive a formal certificate in addition to the MDP.
Collaboration across 7 colleges, 6+ Centers and multiple departments

Executive Committee
Program Coordinator
MDP Steering Committee
MDP Curriculum Committee
Teaching Faculty
University of Botswana

Further Information

http://www.africa.ufl.edu/mdp/index.html ...... UF MDP Program