Applied Studio/ Workshop Courses on Sustainable Community Design

Western Lands and Communities is requesting proposals from university programs for conducting applied studio / workshop courses focused on advancing community design aspects of sustainability in the Intermountain West. Ideally such courses would produce design concepts or criteria that could be used to advance sustainable development and natural resources management in the western United States. We are particularly interested in work that would be transferable to other communities throughout the Intermountain West.

Topics of Interest to Western Lands and Communities:

- Consideration of urban heat island mitigation and adaptation opportunities through urban design. Perhaps developing streetscape and neighborhood scale design components and criteria. This is a top priority area for an initial partnership.

- Urban hydrology and water management. Integrating water management considerations into community design by holistically considering flood control, wash corridors, effluent reuse and recharge, water conservation, urban cooling and amenity uses of water, ecosystem values, aquifer protection, etc.

- Designing for the urban – open space edges to increase urban amenity value as well as ecosystem benefits of increased open space.

- Linking public health and community design. This could include conceptualizing new approaches to both residential and commercial development in future western cities that could facilitate walkability and reduced resource use.

- Renewable energy generation, in particular solar energy and optimal mixes of distributed, neighborhood and centralized scale systems that could be integrated into new communities and in the retrofitting of existing communities.

- Consideration of the environmental and economic implications of alternative building types (e.g. mechanisms to reduce the carbon footprint of both the built environment and urban transportation systems, incorporation of distributed generation of renewable energy in the built environment, new approaches to integrating private and public space to facilitate high quality urban environments). This could include research relating to the
links between development design and financial performance (eg, the financial cost/benefit of LEED buildings)

- Creation of new prototype individual buildings and development types (aggregations of buildings into neighborhoods, mixed use centers, etc) that could contribute to a library for use in scenario development and urban envisioning tools.

- Development of model local government codes and ordinances, or design criteria that could advance any of the objectives above.

**What the Western Lands and Communities program is offering:**

- Funding to sponsor such projects, though not necessarily to cover the full costs of offering a course
- Contribution of staff time, expertise and community connections, and willingness to serve as a “client” for the courses (we have found that having an external client for such courses provides valuable experience for the students and increases the likelihood of a successful course)
- Willingness to assist in teaching the course
- Assistance in creating timely, relevant and applied opportunities for students

**What is expected from the partnering university:**

- Integration into the curriculum as at least a full semester course
- Providing faculty to teach course
- Willingness to work with local stakeholders
- Commitment to produce final products meeting specifications negotiated with Western Lands & Communities (this can be flexible and ideally would also involve the students once the course is underway)

**Desired characteristics for the course and for university partnerships:**

- An interdisciplinary course at the graduate student level, engaging students from several areas of expertise.
- Provision of a student assistant who, with faculty guidance, can continue after the course to refine and complete final products (our experience is that this is a key for the success of such courses). Western Lands and Communities could provide funding for this student assistant
- The products and lessons learned will be transferable to other areas in the Intermountain West
- Provide creative, relevant and useful work products at a reasonable cost
- Build relationships with young professions within our areas of interest
• Provide community and professional visibility to the Sonoran Institute and our Western Lands and Communities Joint Venture with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
• The university is within the Intermountain West, and ideally within, or near, one of the Sonoran Institute’s Legacy Areas (Sun Corridor in AZ, Western Slope of Colorado, Northern Rockies)
• Potentially serve as a first step to establishing more significant partnerships with the university
• Serve to strengthen community engagement within the university and advance a commitment to producing applied work that is relevant to sustainability challenges facing the intermountain west.
• Though it is certainly not a requirement, findings that could be integrated into a scenario planning and evaluation tool (e.g. Envision Tomorrow or Community Viz) would also be of interest.

To respond or obtain further information:
• To respond to this RFP, please send a maximum 2 page letter (preferably by email) stating your interest and describing your proposed course and related efforts and the type of products you would produce. Letters should be addressed to:
  
  Jim Holway  
  Director, Western Lands and Communities  
  11010 N. Tatum Blvd. Suite D-101  
  Phoenix, AZ  85028  
  jholway@sonoraninstitute.org

• For further information contact either Jim Holway in our Phoenix office, or Randy Carpenter (rcarpenter@sonoraninstitute.org) in our Bozeman, MT office, or Clark Anderson (canndersen@sonoraninstitite.org) in our Glenwood Springs, CO office
• Based on the initial responses received we will follow up with top candidates for additional discussions.
• We may select more than one proposal.
• We are intending to establish this as an ongoing program, so we welcome proposals for subsequent academic years as well as multi-year proposals. We are also seeing to establish long term connections with several universities throughout the intermountain west.
• We will review proposals on an ongoing basis for subsequent academic years, but an initial review will be conducted on August 15, 2010.
About Western Lands and Communities

Western Lands and Communities is a partnership of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Sonoran Institute that works throughout the Intermountain West to shape growth, sustain cities, protect resources and empower communities through applied research, tool development, demonstration projects, and education. Current areas of focus include management of state trust lands, local planning for climate change, impacts of development entitlements, and enhancement of planning support systems for community visioning and planning.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is a private operating foundation whose mission is to improve the quality of public debate and decisions in the areas of land policy and land-related taxation in the United States and around the world. The Lincoln Institute serves as a non-partisan forum for scholars, policymakers, practitioners, citizens and journalists, integrating theory and practice through education, research, demonstration projects, publications and conferences. The major departments of the Institute – Planning and Urban Form, Valuation and Taxation, and International Studies, which includes programs in China and Latin America – all promote discussion of the multidisciplinary forces that shape public policy related to land. The website is www.lincolninst.edu.

The Sonoran Institute inspires and enables community decisions and public policies that respect the land and people of western North America. The Institute provides tools, training, and research information for managing growth and change, and encourages broad participation, civil dialogue, collaboration and big-picture thinking to create practical solutions. The website is www.sonoraninstitute.org.