

May 30, 2014

Letter of Affirmation: Slow Water: Rivers and Community in Asia.

To Whom It May Concern,


In 2011, Bard College proposed the Slow Water project to cross-fertilize ideas and knowledge between the faculty and students in Bard's thriving Asian Studies and Environmental and Urban (EUS) Studies programs, and between these programs and the Bard Graduate Center for Environmental Policy (CEP), with the purpose of enhancing long-term, integrated engagement with issues of Asia and the environment in the Bard curriculum.

The Project was organized around the exploration of intensive research, experiential education, service learning, and student and faculty exchange partnerships in China, Japan, and South Korea. Beginning in April 2012, we pursued the following seven initiatives. Below each is a summary of our key accomplishments.

1. Collaboratively engage our partner institutions in China, Japan and Korea, developing proposals for teaching, internship and research opportunities involving Bard students.
2. Discover how best to structure experiential and service learning in Asia, including piloting internship programs in all three countries.
3. Host a "Slow Water, First Lessons" Conference and Retreat at Bard, including one guest expert from each of our partner sites. The lessons would cover both content (the Asia-Environment nexus) as well as process (how are effective international partnerships structured). Use the opportunity to integrate the program proposals for the different sites, consider regional differences and similarities, and find synergies in our teaching and research partnerships.
4. Develop for fall 2013 an undergraduate, team-taught course envisioned to evolve into a joint core requirement for both Asian Studies and Environmental and Urban Studies.
5. Develop experiential summer courses for undergraduates in southern China and in Japan. Seek to offer the China course in summer 2013.
6. Develop and deliver in early 2013 a graduate, January-term, intensive course on Environmental Policy in Asia, open to select undergraduates.
7. Enable a Bard CEP faculty member to teach regularly in the Kyung-Hee University summer program, "Sustainable Development Towards a Green Planet".

The Slow Water model provided the inspiration for our work: the intellectual core of the project was the idea that rivers define the communities that arise on their banks. We focused broadly on questions of forest management, land use, and their impacts on surface water (rivers and lakes) and communities. This grant enabled an initial exploration of the overall metaphor of slow water in Asia, attempting to understand historical, cultural, ethical, scientific, environmental and economic relationships between people and their water, moving, more or less slowly, from the mountains to the sea.

Sincerely,



Eban Goodstein,
Director and Faculty, Bard MBA in Sustainability
Director, Bard Center for Environmental Policy