



To: AASHE STARS Steering Committee

From: Jacquelyn S. Fetrow, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: February 10, 2016

RE: Climate Change Faculty Learning Community

The Respond, Educate, Mitigate, Adapt and Prevent (REMAP) Faculty Learning Community (FLC) at the University of Richmond has made outstanding contributions to understanding climate change and I write to endorse REMAP's transformative work for AASHE STARS innovation credit.

At the University of Richmond, faculty leadership of curricular, academic, scholarly, and creative endeavors is strongly encouraged and supported. To provide opportunities for faculty from across disciplines to come together to share and develop ideas, the Office of the Provost supports Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs; <https://provost.richmond.edu/faculty-resources/development/faculty-learning-communities/index.html>). Participating faculty come from across the University of Richmond's five schools (School of Arts and Sciences, Robins School of Business, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, School of Professional and Continuing Studies, and the Richmond School of Law).

Each FLC encourages cross-program, cross-department, and cross-school interdisciplinary engagement with projects that are germane to the institution's mission and the greater good of the University, the City of Richmond, the nation, and the world. Each FLC cohort engages in collaborative year-long projects that reflect the breadth and depth of UR faculty and staff commitment to both producing and expanding the frontiers of knowledge and education for the common good.

Topics for the FLCs are selected through a competitive process with an emphasis placed on issues of great pertinence to a 21st century solutions. Global climate change poses an existential threat to human populations with profound moral, ethical and practical implications. If we are to identify appropriate and sustainable solutions to climate change, we must respond in a multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary manner. The Climate Change REMAP FLC was selected as one of twelve high impact FLCs because of the curriculum emphasis on the exploration of the power of

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liberal education in its application to combat global climate change. This FLC is built upon five imperatives: respond, educate, mitigate, adapt and prevent (REMAP).

There is broad agreement that climate disruption is being caused by the unprecedented scale and rate of atmospheric CO₂ pollution. We also know that the safety and security of humans is under threat, and that climate change will exacerbate already severe global social inequities. Thus, faculty from the five schools at the University of Richmond took up the Provost's call to create a FLC devoted to the topic. The purpose of this FLC was to explore ways to mobilize the power of liberal education to combat global climate change, and was built on five actions: Respond, Educate, Mitigate, Adapt, and Prevent (REMAP). The goals identified by the REMAP working group were:

1. Better equip students, faculty and staff with tools necessary to understand and contribute to ongoing conversations about climate change. This involved the creation of a pedagogical action plan - informed by voices from all regions of campus – articulating structures, programs, and opportunities tailored to a meaningful climate change-focused education at the University of Richmond. The plan included recommendations for substantial modification of the general education curriculum.
2. Chart a leadership role for liberal arts colleges and universities in the 21st century related to climate change. The REMAP group discussed the feasibility of creating a center devoted to climate change topics that positions the University of Richmond to lead national conversations on this topic.
3. Explicitly link education on the topic of climate disruption to the university mission statement (to prepare “students to live lives of purpose, thoughtful inquiry and responsible leadership in a global and pluralistic society,”). The REMAP group identified cross-school efforts to reach this goal including:
 - A branding effort (“UR Climate Engaged”)
 - A climate-related film festival run through student government
 - A high-profile annual seminar series on sustainability and climate change
 - Targeted hires of climate scientists who would help diversify our faculty
 - A symposium on the social justice-consequences of climate change

The REMAP group exemplifies the University of Richmond's commitment to engaging the community (undergraduates, staff, faculty, and members of the community) in serious dialogue about climate change and issues of sustainability. I strongly endorse REMAP's transformative work for AASHE STARS innovation credit.