



U.S. TIGER UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

A Center of Excellence in
Tiger Conservation



LSU



A bronze statue of a man, likely a historical figure, is shown in profile, seated at a desk. The statue is dark and detailed, capturing the texture of his clothing and the features of his face. The background is a soft-focus scene of autumn trees with yellow and orange leaves, suggesting an outdoor setting. A semi-transparent dark blue box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

Capitalizing on the power
of land-grant universities
for the Global Tiger
Recovery Program



Four land-grant universities in the United States are working collaboratively with the Global Tiger Initiative Council to accelerate tiger conservation.

Each of these universities has the tiger as its mascot and symbol of school pride and loyalty. The universities are:

- + Auburn University
- + Clemson University
- + Louisiana State University
- + University of Missouri

Together, these four land-grant universities have more than 600 years of experience supporting agriculture and protecting natural resources. They enroll more than 115,000 students and employ 6,400 faculty and extension agents. Collectively, their annual budgets exceed \$6 billion.

The Land-Grant Mission: A history of success

The historical mission of land-grant universities was established in 1862, as part of the Morrill Act: to focus on the teaching of practical agriculture, science, military science and engineering. It is no surprise that, compared to other institutions, land-grant universities average more extensive research and doctoral experience in:

- + Conservation, wildlife biology, management and conservation
- + Landscape, population and ecosystem ecology
- + Forestry, agriculture and park management
- + Veterinary, animal, plant and aquatic sciences
- + Human social and behavioral sciences

With a focus on solving problems and delivering solutions related to natural resource management, land-grant institutions have an outstanding record in defining and achieving conservation goals, and helping people and communities sustainably manage natural resources.

Consider this: research by land-grant universities has been instrumental in the conservation efforts of virtually all of North America's significant ecosystems and landscapes, including the Everglades, Longleaf Pine forests, and greater Yellowstone ecosystem. It also played a critical role in protecting species such as the California condor, grizzly bear, timber wolf, peregrine falcon and bald eagle.



Challenges to Tiger Conversation

In March 2017, the Global Tiger Initiative Council met in India with academic leaders from Auburn University and Clemson University. Also present were the principal Indian ministries and institutes involved in tiger conservation (MoEFCC, Wildlife Institute of India, and Forest Research Institute), and chief wardens of signature tiger parks (Kanha Tiger Reserve and Jim Corbett National Park).

After interviewing dozens of individuals, the team from Auburn and Clemson made the following conclusions:

- + There are many challenges to overcome before successful tiger conservation can be sustained and expanded. A key requirement will be interdisciplinary research, including in biological and social sciences.
- + The single greatest challenge to tiger conservation is resolving conflicts between park management and the surrounding communities.
- + Another barrier is that results of internationally sponsored research projects have not been translated into successful management practices.
- + Communication practices endemic to the United States, such as extension services, have yet to fully evolve in tiger range countries.
- + The potential for universities to support tiger conservation remains relatively untapped.
- + One powerful step forward may be to increase the number of land-grant trained tiger conservation professionals in tiger range countries. Many Indian park and forest officials are capable and qualified for Ph.D. studies. They know the research questions that need to be answered and how to translate those answers into real results. They are a source of expertise who – when trained in translational research — can accelerate the success of tiger conservation. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has enthusiastically endorsed their participation in our proposed program.





Our Mission

Our mission is to partner with the Global Tiger Initiative Council to support the Global Tiger Recovery Program. We encourage capitalizing on the collective power of land-grant universities to provide research, education, technology transfer and capacity building in tiger range countries.

Our Vision

Our vision is to raise awareness of the challenges faced by tigers in the wild and provide practical solutions through a collaborative network of passionate professionals and concerned citizens. The four partner universities will employ the following strategies to meet this vision:

Strategic Objectives

Training and Capacity Building: Empower the next generation of environmental leaders in range countries and enhance the preparedness of current policy makers and conservation managers

Research: Conduct scientific research that supports evidenced-based decision making

Technology Transfer: Apply cutting-edge technologies to support inventory and monitoring, big data analytics, visualization, data/knowledge sharing and other applications at an affordable cost

Outreach and Alignment: Facilitate dialogue that seeks to align the objectives of industry, government, legislative bodies, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations in support of endangered tiger conservation

Contact Us

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A Center of Excellence in Tiger Conservation

Organizational Structure

The U.S. Tiger University Consortium will serve as the Center of Excellence in Tiger Conservation (CoE). It is worth emphasizing that the CoE is not a place, but a network based on a shared principle. Each partner university will have a lead faculty administrator. The lead faculty administrator will be charged with recruiting and supporting his or her university's engagement in the consortium. This individual will receive support from the CoE in the form of salary and research incentives.

The CoE will be headquartered at Clemson University, with allied offices on the campuses of each partner university. The CoE will serve as the United States home of the Global Tiger Initiative Council. The CoE as a whole will have an institutional director and staff to serve both the CoE and Global Tiger Initiative Council.

The CoE will also establish affiliations with institutions in range countries, widening the international network, facilitating working relationships, and building trust among partners.

The CoE will be governed by a council of provosts, with representatives from each of the four partner universities. The Council will also consist of the four principal faculty administrators, the CEO of the Global Tiger Initiative Council, and four tiger conservation professionals who are yet to be determined.



All activities of the U.S. Tiger University Consortium will be coordinated through the Center for Excellence on Tiger Conservation (CoE). To incentivize innovation and active participation, the CoE will administer research grant programs to:

- + Support Ph.D. student thesis research projects
- + Organize annual meetings to exchange research results
- + Review and report on CoE's progress
- + Manage partnerships among the universities, Global Tiger Initiative Council, Global Tiger Forum and Global Tiger Forum's partners

At the end of the five-year period, we will evaluate this model and modify as needed to sustain momentum and expand to additional countries.

Financing, Implementation and 5-year Timeline

We propose funding this initiative through two concurrent phases over a 5-year period:

Phase one: Each of the four universities will provide start-up funding to initiate the Ph.D. program. These funds will allow each university to begin operations and to accept two Ph.D. students from Indian tiger reserves or ministries/institutes responsible for tiger conservation. There will be a total of eight students in first cohort. The universities will provide stipends for these Ph.D. students during their 2.5 years of study in the United States, as well as the cost of some travel and summer faculty support.

Phase two: The Global Tiger Initiative Council will actively assist Clemson University with raising \$6 million in private giving, including:

- + \$3 million to support eight Ph.D. research projects
- + \$3 million to support operations of the Global Tiger Initiative Council and CoE

Help Us Save Tigers

We can't sit back as the few tigers left dwindle down to the point of extinction. We must take a stand together to protect our beloved tiger mascots. Your gifts will support research and outreach, engagement activities that inform and enhance tiger conservation, student scholarships and faculty research, and the adaption of emerging technologies for use by wildlife professionals in tiger range countries.

