



THE CAMPAIGN FOR  
William & Mary

# Ringling Far & Near

NEWS OF PRIVATE SUPPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

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## Thinking and Acting Globally

*The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Boosts Environmental Science and Policy Program*

“Introduction to Environmental Science and Policy” is once again filled to capacity, with more than 90 students enrolled and a waiting list of students eager to grab a seat in the class. Co-taught by faculty from biology, economics, government, philosophy and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the course provides interdisciplinary perspectives on environmental issues, from climate change to the fate of the Chesapeake Bay. It also epitomizes a dramatic change in the College’s Environmental Science and Policy Program — a transformation made possible in part by the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Six years ago, William and Mary’s environmental curriculum consisted of a few classes offered by a handful of separate departments. Today more than two dozen faculty members collaborate on numerous initiatives and have developed a host of new courses. Students are signing up for classes in record numbers and the ranks of majors have grown 70 percent in two years.

“William and Mary’s program stands out from those of our peers because we apply an interdisciplinary approach to environmental issues that prepares students for a broad range of careers,” says John Swaddle, the Robert and Sara Boyd Associate Professor of Biology who was recently named the program’s second director. “The Mellon support — together with major investments from the



Mark Mitchell

**Holly Packard collects sediment samples from Lake Matoaka with geology professor Matthew Evans.**

College, gifts from other donors and the hard work of faculty and students — has made it possible.”

The Mellon Foundation has awarded the program two grants totaling \$600,000 since 2001. The funding allowed the program to hire its first director, Professor of Sociology J. Timmons Roberts, who worked with faculty to redesign the major, add a minor, expand the curriculum and research offerings, and encourage partnerships across

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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## **Mellon Foundation** *continued from page 1*

departments. The grants also helped fund three tenure-track faculty positions, attracting Associate Professor of Economics Robert Hicks, Assistant Professor of Government Maria Ivanova and Assistant Professor of Geology Matthew Evans to the College.

Evans and Ivanova, the most recent hires, were attracted to the collaborative nature of the program. “Academics tend to focus on one area and they can get tunnel vision,” explains Evans, an environmental geochemist. “Participating in this program has broadened my scope — giving me and my students perspective on why we’re doing the work that we’re doing.”

“The program is like a genius child — it is developing really fast,” says Ivanova, an expert on international environmental policy and governance. “And the Mellon funding is helping to raise the profile of environmental science and policy both at William and Mary and beyond.”

Last year, for example, the program and the Roy R. Charles Center hosted the Mellon Environmental Issues Series — four lectures on climate change that featured experts such as Robert Watson, chief scientist and senior advisor for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development at the World Bank, and Dan Reifsnnyder, currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment at the U.S. Department of State. A total of 130 students participated in small, one-credit seminars that ran concurrent to the semester-long series.

Mellon funds also are contributing to undergraduate research projects that have impact far outside Williamsburg, from the evaluation of drinking water in the Dominican Republic to the development of the first-ever database of intergovernmental organizations involved in environmental stewardship. “My students and I came up with the idea to develop an interactive database to serve as a research, teaching and policy tool,” Ivanova notes. “There is little coherent information about organizations active in global environmental issues available and we’ve set out to collect, collate and analyze it.”



Courtesy of Maria Ivanova

***In June 2006, Assistant Professor Maria Ivanova and her research students attended a global environmental governance conference in Washington, D.C., organized by the Austrian Ambassador to the United States, Eva Nowotny. From left to right: Jennifer Roy, Marion Abbott, Sarah Fowkes, Eva Nowotny, Maria Ivanova and Jill Grano.***

Senior Holly Packard is also conducting research that could have global impact. Working with Matthew Evans, she used Mellon funds to study heavy metal concentrations in Williamsburg-area mill ponds. Next year she will take her expertise to West Africa where she will provide environmental education for the Peace Corps. “When they heard about my research during the interview process, they were excited,” Packard says. “They want me to do the same type of work there.”

The work of William and Mary faculty and students illustrates the new way of thinking in environmental education made possible by Mellon funds. As Ivanova puts it: “We’re encouraging students to think globally and act globally, because just thinking globally and acting locally is no longer enough.” ♻️