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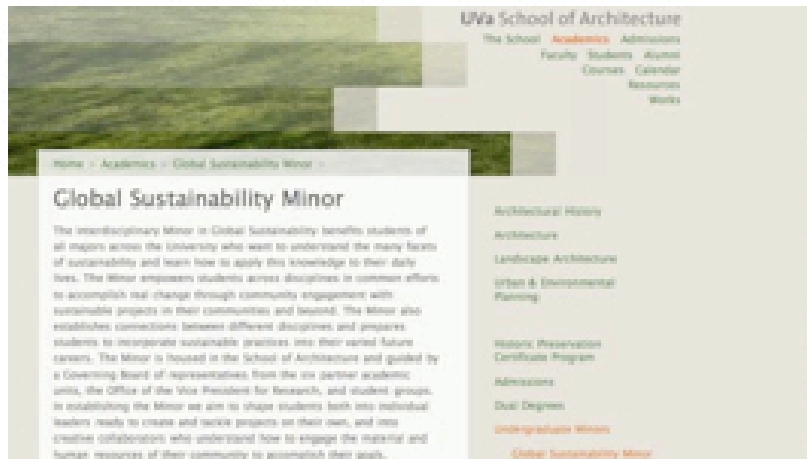
Global sustainability minor makes major waves at UVA

The university's first interdisciplinary minor to enable students to keep Virginia beautiful.

By: Sheffield Hale , MNN State Reports

Fri, Mar 11, 2011 at 05:10 PM

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In December 2009 Carla Jones, then a fourth-year Urban and Environmental Planning major, assembled a team of student leaders to discuss the idea of a sustainability minor. In her initial e-mail, she

explained the gap that the minor would fill: "I am writing you all today because of some of the comments I have heard over the years from students about the sustainability coursework here at the university. Some of the comments include wanting to be able to see all of sustainability courses that are being offered, majors that relate to sustainability, and ideas for courses that they would be interested in taking. All of these comments led me to think that a sustainability minor could be part of the answer."

Currently, the closest thing to a sustainability major is the Environmental Thought and Practice interdisciplinary major which is limited to 15 students in each graduating class. The new minor enables all students from around the university to engage in a structured sustainability program that had been missing from the university.

"This minor provides an excellent opportunity for students to take the work that they have been doing through their extracurricular activities and apply it to their coursework," Jones said. "Students who graduate with the minor will have a strong understanding of the opportunities for sustainable change in communities. We hope that the students of the minor will be empowered through their experiences here and step up to meet the pressing challenges that our generation faces today." Students will have that opportunity through the minor's practicum, which allows students to put into practice what they've learned in the UVA and Charlottesville communities.

The Global Sustainability minor was passed by the Office of the Provost on January 28, 2011, and has been met with great enthusiasm. Stewart Ackerly, the student representative to the Board of Visitors, hailed it to the board as a great example of "students filling a need when they see them."

The School of Architecture's new minor will challenge students to learn about global issues while beautifying Virginia.