

TITLE: Planetary boundaries and poverty alleviation – do we have to choose?

HOSTS: Wendy Wolford, ACSF Faculty Director and Polson Professor of Development Sociology; Laurie Drinkwater, Professor in the Department of Horticulture

DATE: Tuesday February 25, 2014, 12:00-1:00 PM 300 Rice Hall

The topical lunch provided an opportunity to discuss the relationship between sustainability and economic development as well as to explore potential connections between Mathis Wackernagel (Director of the Global Ecological Footprint Network). Participants discussed the gridlock around the global debate between sustainability and development, the development of the post-Rio+20 SDG (sustainable development goals), the shaping of international development policy, and the design of stimulus for an economy marred by financial crisis. The debate boiled down to the tension between **recognizing planetary limits versus “the right to develop.”** Breaking or at least clarifying this gridlock would be the most transformational piece to add to the current debate. Questions discussed were: what are the choices? How much ecological debt can we accumulate before it is economically disadvantageous? Where are the synergies between poverty alleviation and recognizing resource limitations? What are the knowledge gaps in both the natural and social sciences for addressing this fundamental gridlock in the development debate?

More about Mathis:

Mathis Wackernagel, Ph.D.-Executive Director-Global Ecological Footprint Network

Mathis is co-creator of the Ecological Footprint and has worked on sustainability issues for organizations in Europe, Latin America, North America, Asia and Australia, and has lectured for community groups, governments and their agencies, NGOs, and academic audiences at more than 100 universities around the world. Mathis previously served as the director of the Sustainability Program at Redefining Progress in Oakland, California, and directed the Centre for Sustainability Studies / Centro de Estudios para la Sustentabilidad in Mexico, which he still advises. He is also an adjunct faculty at SAGE at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Mathis has authored or contributed to over 50 peer-reviewed papers, numerous articles and reports and various books on sustainability that focus on the question of embracing limits and developing metrics for sustainability, including *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth*; *Sharing Nature’s Interest*; and WWF International’s *Living Planet Report*. After earning a degree in mechanical engineering from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, he completed his Ph.D. in community and regional planning at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. There, as his doctoral dissertation with Professor William Rees, he created the Ecological Footprint concept. Mathis’ awards include an honorary doctorate from the University of Berne in 2007, a 2007 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship, a 2006 WWF Award for Conservation Merit and the 2005 Herman Daly Award of the U.S. Society for Ecological Economics.

The Ecological Footprint is a science-based tool that tracks both the planet's available ecological resources and human demand on those resources. By measuring the amount of nature we have

versus the amount we use, the Footprint 1) reveals Earth's ecological limits, 2) communicates the risk of boundless resource consumption, and 3) facilitates the sustainable management and preservation of Earth's natural resources for the well-being of humankind. Over the past several years it has emerged as a leading sustainability indicator.

More about the Global Ecological Footprint Network:

<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/>

The topical lunch featured invited guest Thais Corral, Executive Director of the transnational non-governmental organization, the Women, Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). Thais discussed her work in the periphery of Rio de Janeiro, a city known for its expansive urban sprawl, slum communities and environmental challenges. The conversation during lunch focused on urban resilience as a key piece of a sustainable future. As more of the world's population comes to reside in urban areas, many of which already lack sufficient basic services and economic opportunities, climate change, pollution and resource degradation will threaten everyday life and livelihoods. In Brazil, where 80% of the population lives in cities, there is a broad network of women community leaders working collectively to identify environmental risks in their communities. Thais Corral introduced the lunch with a short discussion of the challenges women face and the policy and societal support they need to pursue community-led actions to improve community resilience. Participants also discussed some of the parallels between the work in urban Brazil and work on Sustainable Communities, Rust2Green and Civic Ecologies in the Department of Natural Resources. The lunch is part of a larger project to better understand how to forge linkages across issues of development, gender, collective action and sustainable urban communities.

Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future TOPICAL LUNCH - Mathis Wackernagel,
Executive Director of Global Ecological Footprint Network and Frank T. Rhodes Professor

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Date: Thursday February 25, 2014 – 12:00 – 1:00pm

Organizer:

Sign In	Last Name	First Name	Net ID or email	Dept	College
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✓	Drinkwater	Laurie	led24		

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