GLOBAL CITIES/CITIZENSHIP: TRANSFORMATIONS OF URBAN AREAS IN EUROPE AND THE USA

This Excellence Mobility project will create a shared curriculum among four partner institutions focused on the study of social and natural transformations of urban areas in Europe and in the United States. The partner institutions are the University of Bologna, the University of Nottingham, the University of Denver, and Portland State University. The project start date is 1 November 2008, and the end date is 31 August 2012.

The participating institutions will employ existing courses that reflect the distinctiveness of their geographic locations and pedagogical approaches. The objective is to promote curriculum integration and development, enhance student learning, and stimulate faculty scholarship centered on the challenges confronting contemporary cities in a time of rapidly expanding urbanization and escalating concerns about the sustainability of urban life. These challenges are demographic, socioeconomic, spatial, ecological, and aesthetic. The project brings together students and scholars from across the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities to develop interdisciplinary perspectives on urban transformations and work toward sustainable urban futures. By connecting courses across the institutions through common themes, the project goes beyond what is available on the individual campuses to allow for broader inter-institutional and interdisciplinary learning. The project will not only educate students in urban sustainability, but also encourage civic action.

We propose the exchange of 48 undergraduate students and 20 teaching staff equally divided between the European and American partner institutions. Students will move for terms of 4-5 months; faculty for periods of shorter duration.

All partner institutions have established track records of transatlantic exchange and reputations for academic excellence, and have signed bilateral cooperation agreements. Students and faculty will study in cities that are actively confronting the challenges of contemporary urban life. Each partner institution has expert faculty dedicated to promoting civically-engaged teaching and research. Participating students and faculty will gain a unique historical, cross-cultural, and comparative understanding of contemporary urban forms. They will acquire leading-edge training in the theories and methods required for professional work in the area of sustainability studies and other interdisciplinary fields, as well as in the more traditional disciplines.