

DREP STUDENTS – A SNAPSHOT

At the start of Fall 2008, the DREP track has 23 declared students, a number that continues to climb as the program develops. More people are becoming interested and aware of this track's availability, in fact, in-coming student advisors note that freshman are intrigued by Huxley's "disasters" program. DREP track students graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies, majoring in Planning and Environmental Policy with a track specialization in Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning. Many current students have minors in a variety of subjects such as Geology, Geography, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Sociology, Psychology, Journalism, and Economics.

As Huxley College of the Environment students, DREP track students engage in an intensive internship or independent research project before graduation. Many of the DREP students have interned with non-profit and public agencies devoted to disaster risk reduction and emergency response. A few examples include the American Red Cross and United Way, both agencies that in some way address preparedness or mitigation of disasters. A couple of students has worked with Washington State American Red Cross chapters, where they assisted in coordinating disaster table-top exercises and updated chapter Emergency Responsive Plans. Others have worked in local emergency management departments; one student has worked as a public safety officer at Western. Other students have become Institute for Global and Community Resilience interns, working on IGCR research initiatives.

A sample of classes that the DREP students are taking include:

- History and Theory of Emergency Planning,
- Hazards Mitigation Planning,
- Disaster Risk Reduction,
- Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning Studio,
- Introduction to Geographic Information Systems,
- Social Statistics,
- Technical Writing,
- Communication, and
- Climatology.

Students are also have ample time to experience applied research and learning in DREP and GIS related classes. One student applied GIS in a post-disaster research project in order to determine transportation routes in a rural village in Kefalonia, Greece. Another student created a vulnerability assessment about the people living in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo for Disaster Risk Reduction course. Students in the 2008 Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning Studio worked with the Washington State Emergency Management Division, Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities, and the Department of Agriculture to look at current community resilience issues. Projects included a study of post-disaster interim housing needs in Washington State, emergency food ~~availability~~ and provision in Whatcom County, and flood impacts of Lewis County farmers following the 2007 South Sound Winter Storm. The research, interpersonal, and leadership skills DREP students gain through this applied learning will serve them well as they move into the workforce to address issues of natural hazards (earthquakes, hurricanes) mitigation, sustainability, food security, and urban planning.