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Significant Grant Boosts Ithaca College Environmental Studies Efforts: HSBC Awards \$500,000 For Scholarships, Community Outreach, Academic Development



Representatives from Ithaca College and HSBC announced the grant, which took place at the college's annual community picnic following the opening Convocation ceremony.

ITHACA, NY — Ithaca College's leadership in environmental and sustainability education and operations will get a significant boost with the assistance of a three-year, \$500,000 grant from the HSBC in the Community (USA) Inc. Foundation. Awarded to the Environmental Studies Program, the grant will fund a number of noteworthy initiatives. The foundation is the philanthropic arm of HSBC Bank USA, N.A., part of one of the world's largest banking and financial services organizations.

“This grant is an acknowledgment and affirmation of Ithaca College's status as a frontrunner in the areas of environmental studies and sustainability,” said Ithaca College President Thomas R. Rochon. “It will allow us to take some important next steps in enhancing the academic component of these programs and further developing our partnerships and other outreach efforts with like-minded organizations and institutions locally, regionally and nationally.”

Programs funded by the grant will include:

- Scholarships to attract incoming students from diverse backgrounds with a passion for social and environmental change, and a fellowship program to recognize and reward students engaged in exemplary environmental or sustainability projects while in college.
- An internship and research fund for supplies and materials, student and faculty stipends, and conference expenses to deliver presentations on successful projects.
- A Scholar-In-Residence Program bringing in a series of exceptional speakers for two-day to two-week visits in order to provide students and faculty with diverse perspectives and ongoing inspiration to act on behalf of the environment.

- A program that uses Ithaca College natural lands (500 acres) as the focal resource for education, research and experimentation, including outreach to local K–12 schools.
- Development of a new sustainability major and minor with a broad curriculum that unites the environmental, economic, social and health aspects of sustainability through advanced systems thinking and interdisciplinary training.
- Expansion of local, regional and national outreach efforts through workshops on sustainability curriculum development that serve faculty from other institutions and development of an online certification program for sustainability coordinators in higher education as well as in the government, nonprofit, and private industry sectors.

“In researching institutions that have a demonstrated record of leadership in this area, Ithaca College stood out,” said Heather Nesle, first vice president of community and philanthropic services for HSBC. “Ithaca’s proposal dovetailed perfectly with HSBC’s commitment to the environment, which supports efforts designed to promote environmental education, conservation, sustainable development, good environmental practices and increased environmental public awareness.”

Now a decade old, the interdisciplinary Environmental Studies Program is housed in the School of Humanities and Sciences and offers B.A. degrees in Environmental Studies and Environmental Science. In addition to serving 63 majors, the program aspires to provide every Ithaca College student with the foundations of ecological literacy that will empower them to be active and responsible citizens.

“Ithaca College has demonstrated how to successfully combine teaching, research, operations and student life with sustainability, and we have brought together stakeholders in the region and within higher education internationally to catalyze environmental change and move towards climate neutrality,” said associate professor of biology Susan Allen-Gil, coordinator of the Environmental Studies Program.

She expects the grant to help accomplish a number of measurable outcomes, including increasing both the quantity and caliber of student applicants for the Environmental Studies Program; helping the college progress toward achieving climate neutrality with the support of research efforts; and providing participants in the workshops and online certificate program with skills they can use to successfully develop and implement sustainability thinking and practice in their respective organizations.

“Our environmental and sustainability model encompasses a comprehensive program that will make Ithaca College the most high-profile example of a college in the U.S. committed to change and to the thorough preparation of student leaders who are likewise committed to change and equipped with the skills and knowledge to take action,” said Allen-Gil.

For more information, visit:

Ithaca College Environmental Studies Program

<http://www.ithaca.edu/hs/depts/envstudies/>

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HSBC Commit to Change

<http://www.hsbccommittochange.com/>

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