The Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara seeks Group Project proposals for our 2012-2014 Master of Environmental Science & Management (MESM) class. The Group Project serves as the master’s thesis for Bren School graduate students. The projects will be carried out from April 2013 to April 2014.

**Group Project Objectives**
The goals of the Group Project are to provide Bren School master’s students with training and experience in multidisciplinary environmental problem-solving, preparation for professional careers; and the opportunity to learn important management skills, such as working as a team, developing leadership skills, managing time and financial resources, organizing and negotiating.

**Desirable Group Project Attributes**
Student groups are expected to collaborate with outside clients to work toward solutions for an environmental problem. The project requires: an environment in which the students can learn to operate as an independent professional team; a spirit of trust and collaboration by all parties; client involvement appropriate to allow students to develop their own ideas and approaches; and open and professional communications and rapport among all parties.

Appropriate topics address environmental problems that require significant analysis to provide products and/or recommendations to the client, which might be a private firm, government agency, non-governmental organization, or other interested party. Projects should involve quantitative analysis and scientific investigation in order to reach a policy and/or management recommendation. The scope of the project must be realistic: Projects should be manageable for a group of 4-6 master's students, spending about 25% of their time during the three academic quarters (9 months), and with a limited budget. Projects that require a completion date well before March 2014 are difficult to accommodate.

Proposals designed to investigate or expand knowledge of an environmental issue are appropriate if they are multidisciplinary, i.e., they include both science and management aspects, and have a clear, problem-oriented objective.

Projects whose main purpose is development of models or datasets are not appropriate, though such work may be part of the project. Extensive data collection is generally time and resource intensive and thus is difficult for a group project to undertake, making this less desirable. Proposals identifying an existing dataset needing analysis and some complementary work are more appropriate, if a policy or management recommendation is the outcome.

Although it is useful to have some external funding from the client for the project (e.g., for summer internships or supplies, sampling and analysis), this is only one of several factors considered in project selection. If the proposal requires substantial resources, the client will need to include a clear commitment of financial support for the proposed project.
All proposers are strongly encouraged to contact Assistant Dean for Academic Programs, Satie Airamé (airame@bren.ucsb.edu) as a first step in proposal development. She will offer guidance on how to develop a strong group project proposal and suggestions for potential faculty sponsors. The Group Project Proposal Selection Committee, a group of three faculty members and three students, will evaluate and select the proposals that will be completed at the Bren School in 2013-14.

**Proposal Format**

*Project proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on January 25, 2013* and are limited to **three pages** (excluding references and financial deliverables). Examples of last year’s successful proposal submissions are available for viewing on the Bren School website (http://www.bren.ucsb.edu/research/current_gp.htm). Proposals must follow this format and should include all of the following:

1. Title, descriptive of the environmental science and management problem to be solved.
2. Name and contact information (email, phone) of the proposer(s). Up to two Bren student proposers may be listed on a proposal.
3. Bren Faculty Sponsor (if applicable). This section is not required. However, if faculty members assisted in proposal development, please include their names here. Proposers are encouraged to contact faculty for guidance on proposal development.
4. Client, including name and email (or phone) of contact person
5. Proposed Project
   A. Problem statement. What is the context for this work?
   B. Project objectives. What are the science and policy or management questions that need to be answered by the project within the allotted time period?
   C. Project significance. Why is this work important? Who is the target audience/client?
   D. Background information. Where is the project location (if applicable)? In general, how did the problem evolve? What has been done to date, if known?
   E. Stakeholders, other than the client. Which other people would benefit from the results of this work?
   F. Possible approaches and available data. Briefly describe likely approaches that may be used to address the project objectives. One task for the students in a group project is to more fully develop the approaches that will best to meet the project objectives, but suggestions from the client are extremely useful in focusing the early work. What data are available to address this problem? How and when can the students acquire the data for their analysis?
   G. A commitment by the client to provide data and other information required for a successful project with no stipulation for a non-disclosure agreement or restriction to publication of the report.
   H. Deliverables. What types of recommendations do you expect to have as an outcome from the project? Are there specific products that you expect to have at the end of the project, other than the final written report, policy brief and oral presentation?
   H. References. The references do not count toward 3-page limit.
I. Budget and justification. Each project chosen by the Group Project Proposal Selection Committee will receive $1,300 from the Bren School to cover the group’s basic operations. This funding will be held at the school and is only accessible by the students. The students will determine how to allocate the funds to cover expenses such as conference calls, travel, conference fees, poster printing, etc. If the proposed project requires additional funding for completion, then the client must provide that funding. If needed, please include a budget with a description of anticipated costs that will be covered by the client. Funds provided by the client for a specific group project ideally should be managed by the client. If the client will provide additional funds to support the proposed project, please clearly describe the client’s financial commitment in the letter of support (Section K). Grants to the University of California for specific group projects would require a Bren faculty principal investigator, preauthorization by UCSB’s Office of Research, and additional indirect costs up to 53%; gifts to the Bren School for a specific group project require an additional 6% for indirect costs. The budget and justification does not count toward the 3-page limit.

J. Internship opportunities (optional, but encouraged). Clients may offer a summer internship for one or more Bren students in the group project. Only include an internship in the proposal if the opportunity definitely will be offered by the client if the project is selected. Internships should not only further the objectives of the group project but also must provide students with opportunities to develop professional skills. An internship requires that the client or another individual in the client’s organization be able to mentor the student in a professional capacity. Ideally, internship opportunities will be paid. However, please include an unpaid internship if a valuable summer opportunity exists but funding is unavailable. If paid internships are offered, it is highly encouraged that the client pays the interns directly (see Section I for information on grants and gifts). If one or more internships will be available, please describe the internships and the client’s financial commitment to support the interns in the letter of support (Section K). Proposals with and without internships may be selected by the Group Project Proposal Selection Committee. The description of internships does not count toward the 3-page limit.

K. Letter of support. If the client offers additional funding (Section I) or internships (Section J), then the client must submit a letter of support clearing describing the client’s financial commitments and the timeline on which the funds will be available for the students. The letter should be addressed to the Group Project Proposal Selection Committee. The letter of support does not count toward the 3-page limit.

Selection Process
All submissions will be reviewed by the Bren School Group Project Proposal Selection Committee, composed of three faculty and three students. Final selection will be made by mid- March. At that time, clients, students, and faculty will be informed of the accepted projects. Students will be assigned to projects based on expressed preferences. Proposers whose projects were not selected also will be notified at that time.

Project Selection Criteria
Approximately 16 Group Projects will be undertaken during 2013-2014. Criteria used by the Group Project Proposal Selection Committee to select projects include:

- Extent to which project represents a significant environmental problem that requires the group project to propose a solution.
- Extent to which the project has clear science and policy or management questions.
• Extent to which the project matches expertise and capabilities of Bren School students and faculty. Refer to http://www.bren.ucsb.edu for information on the school and its faculty.
• Extent to which logistics are practical.
• Extent to which scope of project is feasible, given student experience and time availability.
• Extent to which the anticipated financial needs of the project are met.

Project Timeline
After proposal preparation and selection, group projects are conducted in three quarters (Spring 2013, Fall 2013, and Winter 2014) spanning part of the students’ first and second year of their Masters’ program. As described in Section 5J, the project may involve summer internships.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1:</th>
<th>Write group project proposals.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall:</td>
<td>Write group project proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter:</td>
<td>Group Project Selection Committee choose projects and students are assigned to projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring:</td>
<td>Students gather data, review literature, and develop a work plan to complete project objectives.</td>
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<th>Year 2:</th>
<th>Students continue working on project objectives.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall:</td>
<td>Students continue working on project objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter:</td>
<td>Students complete project objectives and prepare a final report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring:</td>
<td>Students deliver final presentation.</td>
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Additional Information
Examples of final papers from each year’s completed projects are available at http://www.bren.ucsb.edu/research/gp_past.html

Questions regarding Group Project goals or proposal preparation can be addressed to Assistant Dean for Academic Programs Satie Airamé (airame@bren.ucsb.edu) or by emailing projects@bren.ucsb.edu. Please let us know if you are a member of a Corporate Partner organization.

Submit proposals by Friday, January 25, 2013 at 5 pm via email to:
Attn: Group Project Coordinator Amy Burgard (aburgard@bren.ucsb.edu)
Bren School of Environmental Science & Management
2400 Bren Hall
UC Santa Barbara, CA 93106-5131