



Office of Research, Innovation,  
and Economic Impact

## INSTITUTE FOR A SUSTAINABLE EARTH

George Mason University®

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## ISE Newsletter

### **[New Access to Excellence Podcast Episode Featuring ISE Executive Director](#)**

Leah Nichols, Executive Director of George Mason University's Institute for a Sustainable Earth, joins the [Access to Excellence podcast](#) to discuss how Mason is turning its campus into a living laboratory for sustainable energy and infrastructure. She highlights how cross-disciplinary teams and community partnerships are shaping real-world solutions at the intersection of energy and the environment.

The Living Lab Initiative is collecting campus-based projects in our [clearinghouse](#)! Submit your project to be part of the Initiative using this [form](#). You can also get in touch with Judit Ungvári via email at [malila@gmu.edu](mailto:malila@gmu.edu) to share data from past projects or inquire about opportunities.

[Click Here to Listen to the Podcast](#)



### **FY26 Grand Challenge Initiative RFP is Live**

George Mason University is now calling for new proposals that advance one or more of the university's six Grand Solutions under the [Grand Challenge Initiative](#). As a key next step, translating bold ideas into action, proposals should leverage George Mason's talent, programs, and infrastructure to create scalable, sustained impact. Proposals will be due February 2, 2026, and awarded by April 30, 2026, with funding beginning as early as June 1, 2026.

The [FY26 Grand Challenge Initiative Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) was officially released to the university community on October 15th.

All GCI community events to date have been recorded. Links to those recordings can be found in the regularly updated [FY26 RFP FAQs document](#) (GMU login required). Please save the date and register via the link below for the upcoming event:

#### [Upcoming GCI Community Event](#)

[GCI Matchmaking Event \(In-Person\)](#) - Friday, November 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

*(Note: While the deadline for signing up to give a Lightning Talk has passed, you can still register to attend the event.)*

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### **The 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belem, Brazil**

As COP30 (November 10-21, 2025) rapidly approaches, ISE would like to hear how members of the GMU community are engaging with COP30 related activities and resources, as well as hear from anyone interested in post-COP30 follow-up engagement. Please email examples or express interest to ISE Associate Director, Julianna Gwyszcz, at [jgwyszcz@gmu.edu](mailto:jgwyszcz@gmu.edu).

In the meantime, check out this [important reminder about ongoing global support for climate action](#) from GMU's own [Center for Climate Change Communication](#) (4C), which features some of their inspiring research and resources on climate change public perceptions and attitudes, as well as the intersections of climate change and health.

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## **Featured GCI Teaming / Collaboration Events Across the University**

Note: ISE is happy to feature open collaboration and teaming events from the different colleges and schools across the university. Please email those offerings to ISE Executive Director, Leah Nichols ([lnicho5@gmu.edu](mailto:lnicho5@gmu.edu)), and Associate Director, Julianna Gwyszcz ([jgwyszcz@gmu.edu](mailto:jgwyszcz@gmu.edu)).



# MEETING

## ▶▶ INVITATION ◀◀

This meeting will provide space to brainstorm, collaborate, and build coalitions around innovative proposals and applications connected to the GCI.



**November 7, 2025**



**11 AM- 2 PM (ET)**



7301 Old Spring Dr, Lorton, VA 22079



Panera boxed lunches  
will be provided

**Please RSVP  
Here**



**JIMMY AND ROSALYNN  
CARTER SCHOOL FOR PEACE  
AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**  
George Mason University

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## Other Events

# REACH CENTER RESEARCH IN PROGRESS SYMPOSIUM



Come hear directly from REACH Investigators as they share new insights, emerging findings, planned work, and collaborative approaches that connect big data to health-protective solutions for climate-sensitive risk factors.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 12:00 - 2:00 PM ET

**Location:** [Hybrid] In person at GWSPH, Executive Case Study Room (700A), or if attending via Zoom, the link will be provided upon registration

**Lunch Provided! Registration Required.**

[REGISTER HERE](#)



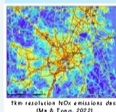
**Presentations  
From:**

+ **Pilot Awardees**

+ **Student Fellows**

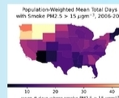
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**CENTER-FUNDED RESEARCH  
PROJECTS:**



**RESEARCH PROJECT 1:**  
A Community-Centered Study of Road Pricing in Washington, D.C

**RESEARCH PROJECT 2:**  
Landscape fire PM2.5, air conditioning, and mortality among dialysis patients



## Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Projects

Since 2022, George Mason faculty have successfully competed for Congressional earmarks in the House and Senate. It is a dynamic process and every year presents new challenges. In an effort to continue this success, all interested faculty and administrators are strongly encouraged to join a webinar from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. on November 19 that will provide important information on the process of submitting and competing for a Congressional earmark. The session will be hosted by Kerry Bolognese, Director, Federal Relations, and Rebekah Hersch, Associate Vice President, Research and Innovation Initiatives.


[Click Here to Register](#)


# IDIA INDUSTRY DAY 2025

 INNOVATION  PARTNERSHIP  IMPACT

*Bringing together industry leaders, government, and academia to build lasting partnerships that will advance digital innovations, transdisciplinary research, and workforce development in a rapidly changing world.*

 **When:** 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM - December 2, 2025

 **Where:** Fuse at Mason Square 3351 Fairfax Dr. Arlington, VA 22201

 **Contact:** [idia2@gmu.edu](mailto:idia2@gmu.edu)

Register now!



Space is Limited



Office of Research, Innovation,  
and Economic Impact  
**INSTITUTE FOR  
DIGITAL INNOVATION**  
George Mason University

 [GMUDIGITALINNOVATION](https://www.linkedin.com/company/gmudigitalinnovation)  [IDIA.GMU.EDU](https://www.idia.gmu.edu)

## Additional Funding Resources

### Summer Team Impact Project 2026

The Office of Undergraduate Education is calling for proposals for **Summer Team Impact Project Grants (STIP) for Summer 2026**. These projects will support multidisciplinary summer teams of undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty and staff members, who will explore **a faculty-driven central theme, research question, or community-identified problem**.

We are particularly interested in proposals that speak to one of the areas of the **Grand Challenge Initiative** ([www.gmu.edu/grandchallenge](http://www.gmu.edu/grandchallenge)). However, all proposals are welcome. The deadline for submissions is **November 21, 2025**. These selected projects will begin at the end of May 2026.



Visit [go.gmu.edu/stip](http://go.gmu.edu/stip) for more information.

**Application Deadline:  
November 21, 2025**



The STIP call for proposals is open now to faculty submissions through November 21, 2025. See [website for full details](#) on the process and guidelines. Email questions to [impactgm@gmu.edu](mailto:impactgm@gmu.edu).

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### **Funding Opportunities: Where to Find Them**

*Open to All Mason Faculty and Staff*

Help enhance George Mason University Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity!

The Office of Research, Innovation and Economic Impact (ORIEI) [Research Development Services](#) in collaboration with [George Mason University Libraries](#) is developing a central resource of successful grant applications for all of our academic units. These grants will be stored in a private [Open Science Framework](#) platform. Only users approved by Research Development will be allowed to access grant documents.

We would appreciate if you would be willing to share your funded grant proposal within this private repository. At a minimum we would need the narrative description of the project (e.g. “research strategy” or “project description”). All other application components (and reviewer comments) are welcomed, but optional. This is a voluntary program, and we will not share documents without investigator permission.

Permission to access grants within this repository will only be provided to George Mason University community members who agree to the following terms:

- Documents within the repository are to be used as examples for insight on optimal application development and presentation. Copying and pasting sections from these documents into proposals is not allowable.
- Documents are for individual use only. Do not disseminate or share with others. Your Mason collaborators must receive our permission for their own individual access.
- It is prohibited to use documents from this repository in artificial intelligence applications.

If you are willing to share your successful grant application as a resource, please email the materials to Leslie Frieden, [lfrieden@gmu.edu](mailto:lfrieden@gmu.edu). **All materials will be confidential.** In addition to the application, please provide the following information to help us categorize your grant sample using this brief [intake form](#). There is an option on this form to indicate whether you would be available to serve as a resource for investigators wishing to learn more about the funding sponsor and grant program. If so, we would include your George Mason University email address in the supporting information for your grant sample.

Please note we intend for this to be centrally managed through Research Development Services. If you would like additional permission settings or additional terms and conditions for sharing, please contact [lfrieden@gmu.edu](mailto:lfrieden@gmu.edu).

Please let us know if you have any questions. We appreciate your contributions to the George Mason University Research Enterprise.

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### **Deadline Approaching: New Research Translation Funding Opportunities**

The Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact (ORIEI), along with the Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE), and the Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (CECiL),

would like to announce calls for the following new funding opportunities, STRP and CIRCLE Grants (see details below) – both supported by George Mason’s Accelerating Research Translation (ART) cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation.

*Please don’t hesitate to reach out to Leah Nichols ([lnicho5@gmu.edu](mailto:lnicho5@gmu.edu)) ART PI or Jessica Zelt ([jzelt@gmu.edu](mailto:jzelt@gmu.edu)) on the ISE/ART team with questions.*

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### **Accelerating Research Translation: Seed Translational Research Projects (STRP)**

George Mason University’s Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact (ORIEI) is inviting faculty to submit proposals for Seed Translational Research Projects (STRP). These projects aim to turn research into real-world solutions that make a difference by applying and scaling research outcomes in practical ways. This can include:

- Developing tools, services, or programs that solve real problems;
- Partnering with high-impact organizations or businesses to co-design and/or implement solutions;
- Creating university programs that offer data, science-based services or training to communities, organizations, or individuals;
- Starting a business or nonprofit.

Both market-oriented (e.g., commercial products, social ventures) and non-market-oriented (e.g., community programs, high-impact partnerships) translation projects are encouraged. Awardees will receive up to \$25,000 to support research translation activities ranging from testing and improving their solution with user feedback to developing and validating a plan to support scaled implementation of the solution to developing partnerships to securing funding to grow or sustain the venture or effort.

**Proposals are due November 17, 2025. [Read the full call for STRP proposals here.](#)**

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### **Creating Impactful Research Connections through Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)**

George Mason University’s Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE), in collaboration with the Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (CECiL), is inviting faculty to submit proposals to participate in the Creating Impactful Research Connections through Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) program. The CIRCLE program is designed to support faculty seeking to scale up the impact of their research through community-engaged, experiential-learning curriculum.

The goal of the CIRCLE program is to help faculty and student teams (1) develop a deep understanding of the value and use-contexts of their research beyond the academy, and (2) modify (or develop) an upper-level undergraduate and/or graduate course so that students can produce – through engagement with community-based partners – valuable information, useful data products, or other usable research-based outputs for those partners. Selected faculty will receive up to \$25,000 in funding, training, and mentoring through the CIRCLE program.

**Proposals are due November 17, 2025. [Read the full call for CIRCLE proposals here.](#)**

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## **Student Opportunities**

**2026 Cohort of NobleReach Scholars**



The NobleReach Scholars Program application window is officially open through December 10, 2025 —and if you missed our information session, we've got you covered. The recording is now available, featuring insights from Rebeca Lamadrid, Senior Vice President of Talent Programs and tips for the application process. [Apply by December 10, 2025.](#)

### **The Experience:**

- Full compensation from your host agency plus an \$18,000 program stipend
- Two-week bootcamp in Washington, D.C. featuring speakers like former Defense Secretary Robert Gates, former Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, and Scott Kupor Director of the Office of Management and Budget and training on methodologies that help to drive innovation in public service
- Direct mentorship from experienced government and industry professional
- Quarterly sessions connecting you with a cohort of exceptional peers and a network of experts who share their knowledge on driving innovation.

### **Who We're Looking For:**

- Recent graduates (Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree between December 2022 - August 2026) with:
- Minimum of a 3.2 GPA from your most recent degree
- Demonstrated interest and experience in one our strategic domain
- U.S. Citizen or authorization to work in the United States without employer sponsorship
- A willingness and ability to relocate within the United States for your placement

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## **GMU-USGS Climate Adaptation Science Center Fellowship Program for Spring 2026-Fall 2026**

### **Program Overview**

The department of Environmental Science and Policy offers undergraduate and graduate fellowships in the Fish and Wildlife Adaptation Program with the US Geological Survey's National Climate Adaptation Science Center (NCASC). In this program, fellows will conduct research and develop policy-informing products that support managers adapting to the impacts of climate change on fish and/or wildlife resources. This program provides fellows with the opportunity to acquire professional experience outside of academia, while simultaneously advancing in their degree program.

The fellowship comprises the spring, summer, and fall semesters in 2026. During the summer semester, fellows work remotely and in office 1-2 days/week at the NCASC headquarters (Reston, VA) for a total of 25-30 hours/week, with the option to be fully remote as needed. During the spring and fall semesters, fellows will collaborate with mentors virtually or in-person at NCASC headquarters for 10-18 hours per week. Fellows will focus on the background of current issues of climate change and fish and/or wildlife resources and learn the process by which policy and management-informing tools are produced at NCASC. Projects focus on understanding climate change impacts on fish and wildlife, primarily supporting existing research projects with NCASC Principal Investigators (PIs). Each fellow will work on one or more projects (potential projects below), working directly with the project PI at NCASC.

### **Compensation**

- Undergraduate students will be funded with \$8,400/year (spring 2026, summer 2026, fall 2026), and graduate students will be funded with \$11,000/year (spring 2026, summer 2026, fall 2026).
- Students who will earn fellowships may want to register for EVPP 494 Internship or EVPP 894 Supervised Internship.

### **Eligibility**

- Active undergraduate or graduate students in Environmental Science, Environmental and Sustainability Studies program, Conservation Science, Data Analysis or related studies with the project, throughout the entire fellowship.
- Fellowship will be combination of remote work and in office 1-2 days/week at the NCASC headquarters (Reston, VA). Students can potentially be fully remote as needed. During spring/fall students are not expected to come in.

### **Application materials**

- Letter of interest (1 page) discussing what you hope to get from the internship and highlighting relevant experiences and skills
- Current resume
- (Un)official transcripts
- [Graduate Students Only] A one-page research proposal (single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font) that could be supervised by USGS mentees. The topic should be relevant to USGS CASC's mission and projects. Selected graduate students may have the opportunity to work on that project with CASC mentorship or adjust current NCASC research efforts to align with the student's interests.

### **Application submissions and contact**

- Professor Younsung Kim (ykih@gmu.edu)

### **Application deadline**

- November 17, 2025, Monday, 11:59 pm (EST)

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## **Climate Resilience Public Workshops and Short Courses**

Interested in learning more about public workshops and courses supported by the Institute for a Sustainable Earth and the Virginia Climate Center? [Click here](#) to receive registration information and updates about our offerings related to climate resilience.

[Click Here to for More Information](#)

**The Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE)** aims to connect members of the Mason community with others across the Mason community—and with other communities, policy-makers, businesses and organizations—so that, together, we can more effectively address the world's pressing sustainability and resilience challenges.

**The ISE Newsletter** provides up-to-date information on conferences, funding opportunities, and research pertaining to environmental science and sustainability. The biweekly newsletter aims to facilitate information sharing among researchers, practitioners, and relevant local, national, and international organization.



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