



Office of Research, Innovation,  
and Economic Impact  
**INSTITUTE FOR A  
SUSTAINABLE EARTH**  
George Mason University®

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## ISE Newsletter

### **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.

Hopefully you were able to participate in the Town Hall on October 21st. Please save the dates and register via the links below for the following upcoming events:

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

[How To Create a Five-Year Vision \(Virtual\)](#) - Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

[Leveraging the University Institutes \(Virtual\)](#) - Monday, November 3, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.

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

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### **Announcing 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.

*Note: We will host virtual office hours on **Wednesday Oct. 29, at 11:00 am** to answer questions you may have about these opportunities. **Please email Alice Fox (afox30@gmu.edu) to RSVP.***

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

## **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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## **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 (Inicho5@gmu.edu), and Associate Director, Julianna Gwyszcz (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

## Other Events

### Department of Environmental Science and Policy Seminar Series

October 29, 2025: Hung-Ling (Stella) Liu, Associate Professor, School of Sport, Recreation, and Tourism Management, CEHD

[Click Here to Register](#)



**Dr. Stella Liu**

Associate Professor, School of Sport,  
Recreation, and Tourism Management

**Wednesday, October 29, 2025**  
**12:00 PM -1:00 PM**  
**JC room 334 Meeting Room E**

Register for the  
Zoom link



## Third ESP Seminar Series of Fall 2025 From Evidence to Action: Integrating People, Parks, and Planning for Sustainable Outcome

This presentation explores how research can guide sustainable management practices in parks and outdoor recreation. Drawing from a series of projects—including feasibility studies, national-level data analyses, comparative assessments, and survey findings—the talk highlights the multiple ways evidence can inform planning and decision-making. Emphasis is placed on the connections among people, parks, and planning, with attention to how these links shape community well-being, resource stewardship, and long-term sustainability. By integrating diverse methods and perspectives, the presentation provides a roadmap for translating research into practice, fostering more resilient and inclusive approaches to park management.

## 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*

**#1: Candid Philanthropy News Digest**—Sign up to Philanthropy News Digest to receive a free weekly RFP bulletin:

- Click on the link above
- Scroll down to the bottom of the page to where it says “Subscribe to PND newsletters and alerts”
- Enter your email to subscribe

**#2: GrantStation Insider**—Sign up to GrantStation’s Insider newsletter to receive a free weekly newsletter with open funding opportunities:

- Click on the link above
- Enter your information to subscribe

**#3: Candid Foundation Directory Online**—Use Foundation Directory Online to identify prospects for a project or to look up specific funders to find out about their giving history, trends, and amounts:

- Click the link above which will take you the Mason Libraries pag
- Click on “Databases” and navigate to the letter “F”
- Look for “Foundation Directory Online” and click on the link to be redirected to Foundation Directory’s main page
- Please note that this is a subscription-based service accessible through the Mason Libraries. You will have to enter your Mason username and password to get access.

**#4: Sponsored Programs Information Network (SPIN)**—Use the SPIN database to look for funding opportunities from private sources, including open RFP opportunities, and to create funding alerts:

- Click on the link above
- On the bottom left corner of the page, click on “Need to create a new profile?”
- Select “George Mason University” as your institution and fill out your information
- You will receive an email from Mason’s SPIN administrator confirming your account
- See “SPIN Training Resources” for more information

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### **Advancement & Research Development Services Access Only**

Foundation Search is a comprehensive database for finding funding opportunities, creating top prospect lists and analyzing funder information. This is a subscription only service access, and Research Development Services recently acquired an account. **To schedule an appointment to search for funding using this tool, please contact Heather Arold at [harold@gmu.edu](mailto:harold@gmu.edu).**

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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 of our strategic domains
- 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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**BUILD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

**MINOR IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ADAPTATION**

**Why Choose the CRA Minor?**  
This transdisciplinary program bridges climate science, policy development and adaptation strategies, equipping you with practical skills to translate cutting-edge research into real-world community resilience solutions.

**Designed for All Academic Paths**  
Open to any major with just ten additional credits beyond your primary degree—two core courses plus a hands-on practical experience.

**Make a Meaningful Impact**  
Develop expertise to contribute to local and global climate resilience efforts and position yourself in a growing field.

*Scan here to learn more!*



<https://bit.ly/4jG9XyJ>



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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

[Click Here to for More Information](#)

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## In the News

- [George Mason's Grand Challenge Initiative will drive solutions for a peaceful, healthy and prosperous future](#)
- [The brain may not be a muscle, but it still needs exercise](#)
- [Resilient robots in rough terrain](#)
- [PiVoT Peace Lab transforms conflict into connection](#)
- [Center for Community Mental Health partnership provides behavioral health training](#)

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**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.



[ise.gmu.edu](http://ise.gmu.edu)

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