Students: In August, 2010, we welcomed our first cohort of UF MDP students. After receiving 35 applications, we admitted 11 students into the program. This first cohort is made up of two Africans, one Colombian/American and 8 Americans, many of whom have overseas experience. The varied experience across the group includes:

- Volunteer on human rights issues in South Africa,
- Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi
- Organizer for the National Organization for Women
- Environmental educationalist for middle schools in Florida
- Volunteer for the Bogota without Hunger project,
- Staff member on an African Mercy ship
- Research assistant on conservation issues in Costa Rica
- Assistant for Doctors without Borders in the DRC
- Lab technician in a toxicology lab
- Volunteer with development organizations in Nicaragua

Four MDP students completed their undergraduate degrees at UF and the academic background of the cohort is varied including agriculture, history, international relations, sociology, psychology, and community science. Two of our MDP students are pursuing a dual-degree with law.

Scholarships: Our first two MDP fellowships were awarded to Greyson Nyamoga from Tanzania and Tshubangu (“Tshi Tshi”) Kalala from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Greyson is a lecturer at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and has worked for the Tanzanian government and as a loan officer for FINCA Tanzania.

Tshi Tshi has worked as a consultant and volunteer for several organizations in war-torn areas of the DRC, including the World Food Program, Heal Africa, Doctors without Borders, and International Crisis Group.

For the 2011 cohort we have two scholarships for outstanding Latin American applicants. We will also offer book scholarships which enable students from Latin America and the Caribbean to pay in-state fees, which are about one third that of out-of-state fees.

Coursework: MDP students are taking four courses this semester, each of which contributes to the foundational pillars of the MDP, namely social, natural, health sciences and practical management skills. Prof. Schmink (Latin American Studies) and Dr. Serra (African Studies) are joint instructors for the Global Classroom: Development Theory and Practice course, which is built around a series of lectures organized by Columbia University and involving the 22 MDP global network universities. The second course, Ecological Principles for Development Professionals, is offered by Dr. Bruna (Wildlife and Ecology Department/Latin American Studies). The remaining two courses this semester are Dr. Rheingans’ Health and Development I course and Conservation and Development Entrepreneurship offered by Dr. Buschbacher (Acting Director of TCD and Program Coordinator of the Amazon Conservation Leadership Initiative).

All MDP students are registered under the MALAS degree until the MDP degree is approved. The MDP degree proposal has already been approved at the departmental and college levels and is now at the Graduate School. We anticipate final approval towards the end of the Spring 2011 term.

Director Search: Currently, the MDP program is searching for a second faculty position in Development and Administration. We are looking for someone with extensive practitioner experience in Latin America and who will also serve as the Director of the MDP program.

To apply for the position please contact Prof. Marianne Schmink, Chair, Director Search Committee Schmink@latam.ufl.edu

Masters in Development Practice Program, University of Florida, 470 Grinter Hall, P.O. Box 11560, Gainesville, FL 32611-5560 www.africa.ufl.edu/mdp
Get Togethers:
- An orientation for the first cohort of MDP students was held on the first Saturday of the fall term in combination with the traditional TCD (Tropical Conservation and Development) orientation. The MDP curriculum fulfills all the requirements for the TCD certificate and MDP students who sign up for the certificate will receive this in addition to their MDP degree.
- A very pleasant student welcome event was also held at Marianne Schmink’s house, generously sponsored by the Center for African Studies and the Center for Latin American Studies.
- Every Friday, the MDP program hosts a ‘tea’ for students, program-co-directors and core faculty.

Above right, Friday tea: standing MDP co-directors Dr. Brian Child and Dr Grenville Barnes. Students, Camila Pazos, Elihu Isele, Jenn Allen, Greyson Nyamoga, Jenn Reid, Erika Trejo. Seated: Micah McCrary and David Morrissey

New Faculty: Earlier this year, we successfully completed the search for the first new MDP faculty position in health and development. We are very pleased to welcome Rick Rheingans to the MDP team. Rick moved to UF from Emory University where he worked as an Associate Professor in the Rollins School of Public Health. His research focuses on developing alternative strategies for delivering water treatment, analyzing the causes and effects of disparities in access to water and sanitation, and identifying practical and sustainable strategies to address infectious diseases and environmental health hazards. He has extensive international experience across Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Rick will teach two health sciences courses in the MDP curriculum. In his spare time Rick enjoys doing endurance bike races, running obstacle courses, and experimenting with small-scale agro-forestry in his back yard.

Field Course: This past summer, Brian Child and Grenville Barnes spent a month in Botswana designing the field school that will take place in May-June, 2011. Dr. Todd Leedy, Associate Director, UF Center for African Studies provided administrative expertise to set up formal linkages between UF and the University of Botswana in support of the MDP field school. This will be a collaborative effort with the University of Botswana, which has also just started an MDP program. The 7-week course will cover numerous development dimensions, including policy, governance, livelihood strategies, environmental monitoring, economics and business, and area planning. Students will spend approximately four weeks working on a development mini-project in collaboration with a local community or organization.

Above: Drs. Brian Child and Todd Leedy at Okavango Research Institute, Maun, Botswana, Summer 2010

Contact us: The MDP offices are located in 470 Grinter Hall. Please stop by or e-mail Dr. Child, bcchild@ufl.edu, Dr. Barnes gbarnes@ufl.edu, or Sheila Onzere sonzere@ufl.edu

The MDP at UF is part of a Global Network of 22 MDPs. 20, including the UF MDP were established with seed funding from the MacArthur Foundation. Our aim is to educate and train a new generation of innovative development practitioners.