Innovation in Teaching Transboundary Water Courses – An Interdisciplinary Approach

Lynette de Silva et al.
Oregon State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ucowrconfs_2008
Abstracts of presentations given in Session 3 of the UCOWR conference.

Recommended Citation
http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ucowrconfs_2008/42

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Conference Proceedings at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2008 by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.
3.0
Panel Title
"Innovation in Teaching Transboundary Water Courses – An Interdisciplinary Approach."

Panelists
Ariel Dinar, Adjunct Professor, International Policies Program, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, and Lead Economist, Development Economics Research Group, World Bank, 1818 H St. NW, Washington DC 20433, USA; E-mail: ADinar@worldbank.org

Lynette de Silva, Associate Director, Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation, Oregon State University, Department of Geosciences, 104 Wilkinson Hall, Corvallis, OR 97331 E-mail: desilval@geo.oregonstate.edu

Shlomi Dinar, Assistant Professor, Director, Middle East Society Department of International Relations and Geography, Florida International University, 3000 NE 151st Street, 323A, Academic 1 North Miami, FL 33181 E-mail: dinars@fiu.edu

Daene C. McKinney, CE Associate Chairman/Professor - George and Dawn L. Coleman Centennial Fellowship in Engineering, The University of Texas at Austin, Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering Department EWRE, 1 University Station C1786, Austin, TX 78712-0273 E-mail: daene@aol.com

Abstract
Failure to adequately address the way we manage our water resources will continue to degrade the integrity of our basins’, cause social harm, impact the economy, possibly lead to conflicts, and ultimately result in unsustainability of the water resources in the world’s river basins. And, as both water quality and quantity degrade, we find ourselves challenged to find ways to address our water needs, and address ways of working with our limited natural resources. While such challenges are overwhelming when addressed by decision makers on a domestic scale, they may become much more complicated and difficult to handle at a transboundary scale, when water is shared among several sovereign states. It is the realm of increased scarcity, and the ability to
manage it that makes the distinction between sustainable development and use of transboundary water.

Training professionals in transboundary water is a relatively new academic field. It gains momentum in parallel to the increased scarcity of water among those that “share” transboundary water. Naturally, the subject of transboundary water is taught in different ways. We believe that water management education must go beyond the traditional physical systems approach to water resources management, it must also include ways of improving agency coordination, public participation and multi-objective decision-making – elements of ecology management that are often left out of formal water resources education programs.

Additionally, when dealing with transboundary water, adding legal, international relations, strategic behavior, modeling and regional economics is essential for a balanced curriculum leaving students more prepared to grasp with real world issues. In other words, we call for an interdisciplinary-integrative approach for teaching transboundary water courses. Providing analytical tools to cope with existing scarce/conflict situations and analyze possible policy interventions are proposed, rather than the examples of single case studies.

In this session we will present 4 curriculum-approaches to transboundary courses that exemplify nuances of the philosophy that was stated above. Each of the speakers will share the methodologies used in their program and/or class (majors in geography, water engineering, international relations, and international policies). Tools such as class discussions and simulations, student research benefiting from exchange with real world transboundary officials, use of special software for planning and evaluating cooperation, will be discussed and demonstrated.