



In the Loop

First iCons group launched, takes on cholera crisis

The first group of undergraduates selected to take part in iCons, an integrated and collaborative new four-year science program, came together for the first time Dec. 4 to begin the hands-on process of engaging some of the most pressing global challenges.

In all, 45 students from a dozen departments and programs were chosen to take part in the inaugural iCons class of 2014. The group will be dealing with issues surrounding:

- Biomedicine
- Renewable Energy
- Climate Change
- Clean Water



Chemistry professor Scott Auerbach says that iCons scholars learn to integrate various disciplines to solve problems, to communicate in complex teams, and to engage in interdisciplinary laboratory and research studies in a chosen concentration. The plan is that students will emerge as the future leaders of science, learning to ask and answer visionary and controversial questions, putting them in the vanguard of critical scientific research and development.

Dean of the College of Natural Sciences Steve Goodwin welcomed the iCons students and helped launch on a case study introducing the novel iCons pedagogy. As part of the case study, the students considered the recent cholera outbreak in Haiti, grappling with the societal and technical challenges faced by Haitians and aid workers today.

Led by the iCons I faculty - Chemistry professor Justin Fermann, Microbiology professor Sue Leschine, and Geosciences professor Steve Petsch - student teams determined how science can speed solving these problems. The members of the cohort brought a diverse array of perspectives and experiences to the discussion. One student had been to Haiti and was able to speak with authority to her classmates about clean water access.

Auerbach said that iCons faculty and students alike are eager to continue with this case study when iCons I (NatSci 190-I: Global Challenges, Scientific Solutions) has its inaugural class meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 18.

More Information

[iCons](#)

December 15, 2010.