

Topical Lunch Wednesday, September 2, 2009

Title: Access to Clean Water

Host: Marcela González Rivas

Attendees: Helene Schember, Frank DiSalvo, Mark Lawrence, Kevin Pratt, David Lewis, Monroe Weber-Shirk, Gregory Poe, Terry Tucker, Alice Pell, Gail Horst-Warhast, Rebecca Schneider, Tammo Steenhuis, Mike Walter, Mildred Warner, Stephan Schmidt, Kevin Morrison, Hans Pike Oliver and David Lee.

The goal of the topical lunch was to start an interdisciplinary communication among different researchers on the Cornell campus, ideally leading toward a coordinated effort in studying the problem of water access.

The lunch began with a presentation by Marcela González Rivas regarding the world's current inequalities in water access, and particularly the challenges in meeting the world's Millennium Development Goals related to water. This was followed by a discussion which, given the diverse research interests among the participants, revolved around a variety of different interests and questions participants had. The interests could be grouped into four main groups: agriculture development; environment and sustainability; management arrangements of the provision of water services; and water governance.

The lunch seemed successful in raising awareness among the group about the different researchers and interests around Cornell and the potential for future collaboration. Toward the end of the discussion, participants focused on the need to raise the international visibility of Cornell's considerable talent and resources related to water issues. As of now, participants agreed that that visibility is undeservedly low. The main question was how to capitalize on the existing talent, given the wide range of interests. People noted that there are few funding opportunities at the moment given the economic environment, but the lunch concluded by people saying that as a group we would look out for funding possibilities.