

2009 Romeo L. Moruzzi Young Faculty Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education Recipients

Professor Scott Jiusto

WPI is pleased to present the 2009 Romeo L. Moruzzi Young Faculty Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education to Scott Jiusto of the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division, for his development of the Cape Town Project Centre in South Africa.



The Cape Town Project Centre is, in the words of a faculty colleague, "brilliantly conceived and innovative along a number of dimensions." First and foremost, the mission of the Centre focuses on research, education, and action supporting sustainable community development in one informal settlement, Monwabisi Park. Professor Jiusto has created an integrated and ongoing set of projects aimed at transforming this squatter camp into a socially and ecologically sustainable "ecovillage." While individual project teams address needs for housing, water and sanitation, energy, economic development, and urban planning, the teams also work jointly to identify synergies and create a coherent social system.

This approach is also reflected pedagogically, as Professor Jiusto guides the group of more than 20 students toward a new vision of a project report-- an atlas that will serve as a reference and research tool for the community and project teams going forward, with a separate chapter for each team plus an Integrated Plan collectively written by all teams.

Another innovation is the extent to which Professor Jiusto has assembled a local team. Residents of Monwabisi Park serve as "co-researchers," and city officials, NGOs, and community leaders as project sponsors and partners. In this way the Centre's work is grounded in and responsive to local needs and realities, so that research and education initiatives will more likely result in positive and sustainable action.

In just two short years, the Cape Town Project Centre has already demonstrated its potential to change how the city addresses the upgrading of informal settlements. After the group's final presentation, a city planner said, "What the presentation has shown is the value of an integrated approach. What the presentation has exposed is that the city has a very one dimensional approach with respect to informal

settlements." And from a community leader, "Thank you, American students, I know that Monwabisi Park is going to be taken note of by the city."

WPI is proud to recognize Professor Jiusto for his ambitious and creative conception of the Cape Town Project Centre, by presenting him with the 2009 Moruzzi Young Faculty Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Education.