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## Grant will fund Great Lakes education

Business First of Buffalo - by [Tracey Drury](#) Business First

The **University at Buffalo** has received a \$3.1 million federal grant to create a new doctoral program focusing on Western New York ecosystems.

The grant from the **National Science Foundation** is designed to use the Great Lakes basin as a living laboratory to train a new generation of environmental experts. UB students will perform research projects focused on restoring the region's ecosystems at area lakes, rivers, creeks and shorelines.

Potential projects include evaluating the success of local stream restoration, assessing indices designed to characterize ecosystem health in stressed urban environments, developing new simulation models for the Great Lakes and surrounding watersheds, evaluating how pharmaceuticals and personal care products discharged into sewers impact Lake Erie fish and comparing U.S., Canadian, and Native American perspectives on assessing and restoring stressed ecosystems.

The 25 doctoral students selected for the Ecosystem Restoration Through Interdisciplinary Exchange (ERIE) program will be among the first in the nation to be trained with a strong foundation in the engineering, scientific and policymaking considerations involved in restoring ecosystems, whether they are studying engineering, philosophy, geology, American Studies or another discipline.

Applications are now being accepted. Students in the first ERIE class will be admitted early in 2008, and begin their doctoral studies in September.

The UB grant was one of just 20 awarded nationally this year in NSF's Integrative Graduate Education Research and Traineeship (IGERT) program. UB previously received IGERTs in geographic information science and biophotonics. Principal investigators on the ERIE program are Alan Rabideau, professor of civil, structural and environmental engineering in the UB School of Engineering and Applied Sciences; and Don Grinde, professor and chair of the UB Department of American Studies.

Participating students will also have the opportunity to work with faculty from UB Law School, **Buffalo State College**, **Niagara University** and several Canadian universities. Other partnerships with 16 local organizations include the Tuscarora Nation, **Seneca Nation of Indians** and Saint Regis Mohawk; Buffalo/Niagara Riverkeeper; the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** and U.S. and Canadian environmental agencies.

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