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## Bennington Receives \$200K Grant from National Science Foundation

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The National Science Foundation has awarded Bennington a \$200,000 grant in support of a three-year curricular project aimed at exploring sustainable futures for former mill towns in New England.

According to the project abstract: "Former mill towns like Bennington dot the New England landscape. These are not the urban centers at the forefront of sustainable design, but neither are they rural outposts nor do they fit the image of the quickly spreading suburb. Through analysis of past resource-use regime and human-environment interactions, students will gain insight into what a sustainable future could look like for these communities."

Beginning next summer, the initiative will be developed by Bennington faculty, students, and local community leaders, culminating in a sequence of two courses offered over the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years. The introductory course, *The Future of a New England Mill Town*, will provide the geographic specificity needed for students to understand how social, political, and biophysical processes influence each other. The second course will be an advanced projects course including individual internships with regional organizations during the College's seven-week Field Work Term. In the projects course, students will collaboratively design and implement case studies addressing issues of sustainability in the Bennington region, drawing on qualitative and quantitative research methods from various disciplines. Projects results will be archived and compiled as a resource for partner organizations and as a catalyst for future course and project development.

"The goal is to develop a model for interdisciplinary teaching and learning that embeds students in a specific place of study to understand the interplay between environmental, social and economic factors," said Valerie Imbruce, director of environmental studies and co-chair of the College's Sustainability Committee.