O130. VIEWPOINTS OF THE CHESAPEAKE: INFLUENCING LOCAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Michael Robert Hardesty[1,2], Kirstin Webb[1], Erika Koontz[1]

[1]Washington College, [2]Center for Environment & Society, USA
mhardesty2@washcoll.edu

Within the Chesapeake Bay region there is a spectrum of perspectives regarding climate change despite the immense and scientifically acknowledged ramifications it holds for the region and its people. Students attending Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland explore these perspectives through a 16-week experiential program each fall, called the "Chesapeake Semester". This immersive program emphasizes interdisciplinary coursework, ethnographic studies, field experiences, and a comparative study in the Caribbean. Through analysis of our interactions and personal experiences from two consecutive Chesapeake Semester programs, we identify key perspectives, discern the implications of diverse stances when preparing for the consequences of climate change, and address how this knowledge influences both local and global citizenship. The authors explore the potential reasons for the incongruous perspectives in the Chesapeake region and Caribbean as well as compare the advantages and obstacles that result. We seek to understand these attitudes for the purpose of preparing for the imminent effects of climate change and conclude that while diverse perspectives often lead to rich cultural heterogeneity, misinformation can stymy necessary social and environmental awareness necessary for effective policy formation.