The World in 2050: Four Forces Shaping Our Northern Future

Part of IERES’s Arctic Working Group
Co-sponsored with the GW Department of Geography

with

Laurence C. Smith
University of California, Los Angeles

This talk, accompanied by stunning photographs and graphics, will present a balanced, politically neutral projection of what the world might look like in forty years’ time should current global trends in (1) population demographics, (2) resource demand, (3) economic globalization, and (4) climate change continue their current trajectories. The first part of the talk ("The Push") identifies key global pressures and trends, including urbanization, population aging, energy technology, water supply, immigration, and the rising economies of China, India, and the developing world. The second part ("The Pull") describes the emergence of a new geographic region, the "Northern Rim", comprised of Canada, the northern United States, Greenland/Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Russian Federation (called the Northern Rim Countries or NORCs). These eight northern countries and their surrounding seas will experience profound transformation over the next 40 years, making the Northern Rim a place of rising human activity and global strategic value relative to today.

Dr. Laurence C. Smith is Professor and Chair of Geography and Professor of Earth & Space Sciences at UCLA. His research includes topics of Arctic climate change, hydrology, carbon cycles, and satellite remote sensing. He has published over 70 peer-reviewed articles including in the journals Science, Nature, and PNAS. In 2006 he was named a Guggenheim Fellow by the John S. Guggenheim Foundation, and his work appeared prominently in the Fourth Assessment Report of the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2007. He is currently serving on steering committees for the National Research Council, NASA, and the World Economic Forum, and in 2012 and 2014 was an invited speaker to the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Thursday, January 16, 2014
1:00 – 2:30 pm
Lindner Family Commons
1957 E Street NW, Room 602

Please RSVP at http://go.gwu.edu/Smith2050.

This event is on the record.

The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs is one of the world’s leading schools of international affairs and the largest school of international affairs in the United States. Located in the heart of Washington, D.C., its mission is to educate the next generation of international leaders, conduct research that advances understanding of important global issues, and engage the policy community in the United States and around the world. In the January/February 2012 issue of Foreign Policy, the Elliott School of International Affairs’ undergraduate and master’s programs were ranked among the top ten international affairs programs in the United States by the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey.