Proposal for Rock Ethics Co-Funded Faculty Position in Human Security and Global Ethics
Department of Geography, Earth and Mineral Sciences

The proposed position focuses on a people-centered approach to human security and global ethics in a rapidly changing world. Geography’s emphasis on justice and global environmental change and its collaborative networks across campus make it an ideal location for an ethics scholar who also contributes substantially to the Rock Ethics and university focal areas of climate change and ethics.

1. Description of the Position
The position is for an open-rank faculty member with expertise in **Human Security and Global Ethics**. This individual will be well positioned to advance campus-wide inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching efforts at the intersection of two of the Rock Ethics priority areas for this particular call – climate science, policy and ethics, and global ethics. The particular dimension proposed here is an ethics scholar with expertise in human security to contribute to addressing pressing societal challenges, such as human health, environmental change, poverty reduction, and development. This area of expertise also represents a strong fit and an essential contribution to strategic initiatives in the Department of Geography and the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (EMS). Research on human security is expanding rapidly as a field of scholarship as society deals with environmental changes, human development, and conflict resolution. A human-centered understanding of security foregrounds issues of justice, equity, and fair distribution of risks. It addresses human and ecological health and well-being, human agency to respond to threats to well-being, and the absence of violence and disruption.

A people-centered approach to human security draws attention to present and emerging vulnerabilities that are generated through dynamic social, political, economic, institutional, cultural and technological conditions and their historical legacies. We seek a faculty member who can advance an ethical understanding of these conditions and legacies and offer a vital complement to dominant framings in global change research that propose technical and securitized solutions to the major challenges we face today as a global community. A profound gap exists in the science and humanities knowledge of human security and global ethics due to a failure to consider and understand the multiple meanings of the term security, its frequent conflation with national/state security, and its ties to flourishing and well-being between people and non-human actors. Filling this gap will constitute a unique opportunity for competitive advantage at Penn State. This new faculty member will inspire our community of scholars and educators to critically engage with these multiple meanings of security by examining the ‘human’ and human agency in global change discourses and the interconnectedness between people and the non-human world in proliferating security debates. We expect this new hire to also advance concrete guidelines for operationalizing the concept of human security in our daily lives.

Expertise in **global ethics** will allow the new faculty member to advance efforts across campus to emphasize moral reasoning across a variety of borders – cultural, environmental, race, gender, class, historical experiences, species, and nations. It will also allow this person to offer scholarly insight and instructional experience in addressing both conflict that inevitably arises from differences in norms, values, and practices, and means for human and non-human flourishing. Within the broad frame of pressing societal challenges in Human Security and Global Ethics we see a distinct need for an integrative ethics hire at Penn State in the areas of geographies of care, responsibility, health and well-being, environmentally-induced migration and displacement, impacts of conflicts, energy poverty and security, and/or multi-scalar ethical decision-making under changing risks and uncertainty.

2. Justification for a Position in Human Security and Global Ethics in Geography
A geographer with expertise in Human Security and Global Ethics will be ideally positioned to catalyze innovative research within the department, the college, and across campus. Within the department, this new position directly addresses one of the five areas of integration (intersections) identified in the 2011-
2013 strategic planning process - Social Justice and Human Security - between the discipline’s core areas of strength (human, physical, human-environment, and GIScience). These intersections synergize transformative relations within the department and across campus. The department has discussed possibilities for a large symposium around social justice and human security, co-taught undergraduate and graduate courses, and is advising graduate students in this area. Moreover, this new faculty member will substantially add to two other intersections – Global Change and Climate Interactions (the intersection of multi-scalar environmental change processes with climate systems and social-ecological impacts), and Livelihoods and Landscapes (the interdependency between livelihood resilience, ecosystem functions, and environmental governance in a changing and fragmented world). All three areas represent strategic investments in the domain of coupled human-environment systems.

Geography as a discipline has a rich history of scholarship on ethics and justice that, to a large extent, focuses on linkages between philosophical theories and grounded, emotionally connected, and committed work for social and political change. What can be referred to as the moral turn in geography is a commitment to venture beyond the discipline’s “boots on the ground” legacy of field research and instead tether theory to geographical realities to influence public policy and scholarship. For this reason, geographers are actively engaged in what could loosely be called a form of thick descriptive ethics focused on questions of moral geographies. This engagement with moral geographies reveals that spaces are coded with various signs of group membership, social status, and environmental privilege. The discipline of geography is unique, and the Penn State Geography Department is an exemplar of this exceptionality in that geographic scientists from perspectives grounded in the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences work at the intersections of ethical approaches to human security as they make key connections between normative ethical questions of social justice and more meta-ethical questions of morality. This focus enables greater relevance in geographic research while utilizing more critical theoretical approaches. In addition to ethical place making, with an explicit focus on the role of interconnectedness, geographers have contributed greatly to scholarship on care ethics, including feminist care ethics, as well as development ethics, with a normative emphasis on ethically desirable and just development trajectories. Learning responsibility in a globalized world entails recognizing our privilege and being accountable to historic blindness and our contemporaneous being. Such responsibility is essential in debates on sustainability and development trajectories, not because moral reasoning as in reducing one’s individual footprint is right for some privileged, well-informed, and ethically motivated individuals but because we owe a more responsible way of being in the world to our close neighbors, geographically-distant others, future generations, and non-human actors. Questions of social justice lie at the heart of global concerns for security, well-being, and societal transformation.

The Department of Geography offers a diversity of expertise and resources that will facilitate a transformative research program and leading educational curriculum in Human Security and Global Ethics. The department has a world-renowned record of research in the fields of environmental change, global development, and social justice. This new faculty member will complement existing areas of strength while providing new synergistic opportunities across the department. As only a few examples, faculty member P. Tschakert has expertise in climate change adaptation, and development and climate ethics, evaluating the role of anticipatory learning as a key tool in enhancing adaptive capacities among marginalized populations. B. King has expertise in various dimensions of justice in human-environment interactions and conservation. A. MacEachren develops and applies geovisualization, spatial analysis, and geosemantics methods to challenges in public health, crisis management, and questions of security. L. Dowler examines the role of militarization and attendant discounting of women’s citizenship through institutions such as the U.S. military and space program. I. Logan and L. Yapa offer expertise on global development and poverty interventions in the US and sub-Saharan Africa. We have leading scholars on violence and cross-border politics (M. Wright), migration and citizenship (L. Nelson), alternative energy futures (K. Calvert), ethics of hazard forecasting (Cervone), and GIS, health applications, and movement
analysis (J. Blandford). A hire in Human Security and Global Ethics will find immediate areas of collaboration to enhance existing portfolios. This person will also provide much needed expertise for addressing gaps in the domains of care and responsibility, health, risk, displacement, and conflict, and designing ethics-focused outreach and service learning under the umbrella of global engagement.

Existing undergraduate courses that attend to socio-political processes and ethical dimensions of human well-being include GEOG 123 (Geography of the Developing World), GEOG 130 (Environment, Power, and Justice), GEOG 333 (Human Dimensions of Natural Hazards), GEOG 434 (Politics of the Environment), and GEOG 497A (Geographies of Environmental Justice). A hire in Human Security and Global Ethics will infuse the undergraduate curriculum with explicitly ethical frameworks that will enable better course integration for students and the design of new courses, especially at the above described intersections. Geography’s graduate program regularly offers courses on environmental change and geopolitics. An ethics scholar will enrich our graduate curriculum and offer co-taught seminars with faculty members in the department, Rock Ethics, and beyond. Lastly, the Geography Department has extensive linkages with the John A. Dutton e-Education Institute. The new faculty member will play a key role in broadening impacts to a wide network of students and professionals around the world.

3. Justification for facilitating ethics connections across Penn State

Within EMS and Penn State, we see the position in Human Security and Global Ethics as a critical need with the potential for transformative collaborations on current and future cutting-edge research programs. Existing and future research within EMS and Penn State on the persistence of socio-economic poverty, inequalities, and multidimensional vulnerabilities to global climate change will benefit from a scholar with a thorough engagement in the ethical and normative dimensions of these processes. While work on care ethics is well established in the social sciences and humanities, an ethics scholar with grounding in global change will initiate novel collaborations and provide transformative integration across a range of disciplines on campus in a fundamental ethics domain currently lacking at Penn State.

The new faculty hire in Human Security and Global Ethics will contribute to new directions in engaged scholarship and outreach for undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty working within EMS and across campus. This person will engage not only with novel scholarship, theoretically and methodologically, but also with institutional responses to climate change, human conflict, poverty, or migration and displacement. The 2012 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) addressed the United Nations prediction of 50 million environmental refugees by 2020. While the concept of a climate refugee has not been endorsed by the United Nations, increasing attention is paid to the ways in which global environmental change transforms human settlements and migration patterns. Similarly, intra-country and regional conflicts result in human displacement and insecurity that have lasting impacts for socio-political and environmental systems. A scholar with expertise in the ethical dimensions of risk, ill-health, and conflict, in addition to the community-level and bodily impacts, will catalyze new linkages between several departments and research centers on campus as well as between Penn State and institutions such as Oxfam International and the United Nations Refugee Agency. Groups like CARE provide disaster risk reduction and relief for populations disrupted by hazard events and persistent poverty. We see exciting opportunities for student and faculty global engagement.

These forms of engaged scholarship and outreach are anticipated to fuse into the curriculum at multiple levels. Penn State’s strategic plan Priorities for Excellence identifies ethics education as an important outcome of undergraduate training and a scholar working in this area will contribute to ongoing and new initiatives across campus. As the plan articulates, “the University should ensure that no student graduates from Penn State without having had the opportunity to confront issues of ethics and ethical dilemmas, both theoretical and applied.” This is only possible with faculty with specific expertise on moral and ethical frameworks that can be applied to a range of societal challenges. A scholar who is well grounded in ethical frameworks will generate synergistic relationships between
existing faculty that address social and environmental justice and human mobility with normative and ethical perspectives that will broaden existing educational opportunities to better communicate across boundaries and enhance human well-being. We propose a General Education course that addresses Human Security and Well-being and provides analytical and applied tools for interpreting complex contemporary conditions to highlight inequities and identify fair, feasible, and sustainable solutions.

A faculty hire in Human Security and Global Ethics will strengthen existing links between EMS and The Rock Ethics Institute through course offerings and interdisciplinary training. This position will directly complement existing faculty expertise around Ethics in Climate Change, a focal area of the Rock Ethics Institute, and further strengthen skills in thick descriptive analysis and meta-theory, for instance regarding fluid notions of power between the global, the local, and the everyday, and making visible what may get erased in other approaches. These visualizations are concerned with the securities and vulnerabilities of certain people, highlighting everyday practices and identities such as class, race, and gender. This new faculty member will also strengthen other key efforts on campus, such as climate change and dispute resolution (Law School) and climate change risks (EESI and SCReM). The department already has strong ties with several campus institutes and offers joint degrees with Women’s Studies and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment, and is expanding its linkage with the Population Research Institute. In addition, this position will bridge new collaborations with other colleges and programs such as the School of International Affairs, Global Studies, and BioEthics. We see high potential for faculty collaboration with (in alphabetical order): S. Canagarajah (English: migration); L. Fowler (Dickinson School of Law, PSIEE: environmental law, mediation, and conflict resolution); K. Keller (Geosciences: climate risk management, decision-making under uncertainty); G. Lengerich (College of Medicine: participatory, data-based approaches to public health); J. Marks (Bioethics and Medical Humanitarian Program, Dickinson: human rights, national security, catastrophe planning); B. McDonald (History: food security, global environmental politics, national security, terrorism); K. Mehta (Science, Engineering, and Technology, Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship: global health, telemedicine systems, development ethics, women in entrepreneurship); Miranda, P (Health Policy and Administration and Demography: health disparities, vulnerable populations); K. Schafft (Education, Center on Rural Education and Communities: social and spatial inequality, population redistribution); S. Sivaprasad Wadhia (Law: national security, race, immigration), J. Swim (Psychology: climate change perceptions, human behavioral change); N. Tuana (Philosophy, Women’s Studies, Rock Ethics Institute: coupled epistemic-ethical issues in climate science, intersecting inequalities); and J. Wagner-Lawler (English, Women Studies: climate change narratives). The high level of synergies and multiplication of campus strengths through this position indicate an extremely good fit, exceptional promise and timeliness, and the well-founded prospect for sustained long-term contributions.

4. Search Strategy
The position will be open rank, but we have a preference for senior candidates (Associate or Professor). We believe that a senior faculty member will be needed to network the existing landscape at Penn State, provide leadership in building an ethics capacity in global change between Geography, EMS, the Rock Ethics Institute, and across campus, and be successful in publishing in both geography and ethics journals as well as other interdisciplinary outlets. We will place print and online advertisements in the AAG Newsletter and the Chronicle of Higher Education, use listserves (e.g., Canadian Association of Geographers, H-Net Job Guide, Women’s Studies Association), and follow up with personal contacts.

5. Support from the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences
Dean William Easterling supports this proposal. He is aware that the Rock Ethics Institute will pay up to 50% of the salary and the start-up costs over five years. EMS will follow its standard budget model for an Institute hire, meaning the College and Department will split the other 50% evenly (i.e., 25% each).