

Social Science and Energy: Interdisciplinary Junior Faculty Hires in Economics, Political Science and Public Policy

Nearly 90% of our current energy needs are met by fossil fuels, with attendant costs in global climate changes, declining availability of oil and natural gas in the next few decades, soaring energy prices driven by global economic growth, and reliance on oil imports from unstable portions of the world. The current global energy economy is not sustainable, with especially serious implications for the State of Michigan.

UM VPR Stephen Forrest's initiative to make The University of Michigan "The Energy University," aims to address society's expectations that technological innovation and invention will come to our energy-rescue. However, solutions in the short and long run must include the human and social side of energy demand, especially behavior, pricing and government policy. While many US universities are vying for the title of "the energy university," the UM has the strongest social sciences departments of all these. The University of Michigan, with its uniform excellence over a broad range of social science and physical science disciplines, is uniquely positioned to respond to all aspects of the energy challenge. To help UM claim the leadership in energy research, our interdisciplinary cluster focuses on the social science and policy aspects of energy, with appointments in economics, political science, and public policy.