



GMU assisting project on ideas to “change the playing field” for corporations, people and democracy

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ARLINGTON, Va. – A multi-partisan spectrum of business, policy and public groups is seeking common ground on changes to the U.S. economic system affecting the regulation and governance of corporations, their impact on consumers, markets, communities and the planet.

The “*Rules Change Project*” – at <http://www.ruleschange.org> – is seeking input from executives, public officials, scholars, researchers, policy activists, students and engaged citizens.

“It’s time to cross lines, exit silos and listen,” says Bill Densmore, an ex-journalist and researcher who is one of the project organizers. “We want to look at how government and business can collaborate to meet the needs of all stakeholders – employees, customers, citizens, communities and the environment – not just stockholders.” The project aims to bring together silos of thought in a reflective, collaborative, national timeout for corporations, citizens and democracy. It’s designed to assess two decades of mainstream thought on corporate regulation, governance and global-resources impact.

“Rules Change” is a pioneering national attempt to convene diverse groups working on topics like corporate personhood, money and politics, measurement, accountability and governance that will rethink the game in the public interest, organizers say.

The project is being assisted by the [School of Public Policy](#) at George Mason University and the [Media Stewards Project](#), with advice from the [Aspen Institute’s Business & Society Program](#), the [New Economics Institute](#) (NEI) and the F.B. Heron Foundation..

“Whether they are worried about the power of government, the power of corporations or diminished public participation in civic affairs, millions of Americans are starting to think the rules of the game need to be reinforced or changed,” says Mark J. Rozell, acting dean of George Mason University’s [School of Public Policy](#).

The discussion-oriented gathering is aimed at promoting cross-silo knowledge, ideas and collaboration on issues like election reform, corporate personhood, success measures and accountability, money and politics, media responsibility and environmental sustainability.

Attendees will look at the rules that govern our economic system – from laws and regulations to consumer behavior, participatory government, corporate governance and more.

“The idea is to pause and collaboratively and consider feasible changes in the rules of the game that promote the public interest,” says John Boyer, a former professor and TV documentary producer who is among organizers of the gathering. “How are we going to get America working better for all of us?”

One effort championed by the Rules Change Project is [The Civic Stewardship Mapping Project](#), a multimedia effort to document for the public dozens of groups working on rules-change initiatives. “It will be a navigational tool for concerned citizens to find out where and how they can do something,” says Marcy Murningham, mapping-project coordinator.

Rules Change is organized around five “rules-change categories” highlighting policy agendas of diverse groups that share the goal of a more just and sustainability society, says Densmore, Rules Change Project coordinator. “Those categories include influence, measurement, ownership, accountability and governance,” says Densmore. “We want to create a time-out space for partisans across the playing field to find common ground on rules – rather than face ongoing gridlock and perceived unfairness in the game.”

The Rules Change Project seeks input from individuals and groups working on topics such as:

- Non-partisan redistricting
- Changes in a “too-big-to-fail” banking system
- Corporate governance and sustainability
- Alternate success indicators besides GNP
- Reducing or revealing the influence of money on Washington
- Economic policies to rebuild a middle class

“The rules of American capitalism have evolved from a shared circle of prosperity,” says John Boyer, an event co-organizer and co-founder of the [Media Stewards Project](#). “Business and government leaders once saw four key stakeholders – communities, employees, the environment and customers – as team members along with stockholders. That’s less and less true. America’s economy cannot fairly go on the way it has. It’s time to see if rules change – policy, marketplace, social, ethical – can restore balance among all five stakeholders.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- <http://ruleschangeblog.wordpress.com/vision> — The Rules Change vision

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