VT’s Center for Sustainable Nanotechnology (VT SuN) and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars are partnering to make the current Nano Consumer Products Inventory (NCPI) more relevant to stakeholder needs. This partnership is creating exciting new research opportunities at the interface between nanoscale science and engineering and public policy. Participation from undergraduate and graduate researchers working with core VT SuN faculty will be critical to the program’s success. This seminar provides a forum for interested students and faculty to learn more about the partnership and opportunities available for research and collaboration.

The National Nanotechnology Initiative in the U.S. recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary. The Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies (PEN) recently updated its Consumer Products Inventory which now lists over 1300 products, which held only 54 when PEN first started tracking products back in 2005. After 10 years and billions of dollars in research where do we stand in terms of technological achievement, environmental health and safety research and possibly most important, societies understanding and acceptance of nanotechnology? Looking forward to the next 10 years, where will science and society be in terms of these questions and where should our focus be in an environment with shrinking federal and state research budgets and where 60% of the public in 2010 say they still have heard little to nothing about nanotechnology?

Todd Kuiken is a senior research associate for the Science and Technology Innovation Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center where he focuses on public policy and the environmental health and safety aspects of nanotechnology as part of the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies. He speaks frequently on public policy issues related to nanotechnology and synthetic biology and has published numerous articles on nanotechnology, synthetic biology and mercury cycling. He is also collaborating with DIYbio.org on a project to ensure safety within the rapidly expanding community of amateur biologists.

After completing his B.S. in Environmental Management and Technology at Rochester Institute of Technology he worked directly with renowned scientists on the biogeochemical cycling of mercury at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

He earned an M.A. in Environmental and Resource Policy from The George Washington University concentrating on the scientific, economic and community development aspects of environmental issues. While there he worked at various environmental non-profits including National Wildlife Federation. He worked within the Clean the Rain campaign that dealt with the environmental and public health threats associated with mercury pollution.

Todd also has a Ph.D. from Tennessee Tech University where his research focused on the air/surface exchange of mercury associated with forest ecosystems. As part of his dissertation he synthesized these results with other studies associated with mercury cycling, public health threats and policy alternatives to bring attention to the threats and need for an improved public policy dealing with mercury pollution.