

MEMO

To: John Koker, COLS Dean
From: David Barnhill, Director, Environmental Studies
Re: Environmental Studies Annual Report 2009
Date: 7/27/08
cc: John Cross, ES Faculty

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES (2008-2009 AY)

MAJORS AND MINORS

Environmental Studies has remained strong in number of majors and minors.

	Majors	Minors		Graduates (majors)		
5/5/2003	32	26		May-04	3	2004: 3
9/15/2003	26	26		May-05	4	
5/10/2004	45	21		Aug-05	1	2005: 10
				Dec-05	5	
9/15/2004	51	20				
5/5/2005	60	23		May-06	8	
				Aug-06	3	2006: 16
9/15/2005	57	26		Dec-06	5	
5/5/2006	70	33				
				May-07	3	
10/10/2006	67	32		Aug-07	2	2007: 14
4/2/2007	67	28		Dec-07	9	
9/1/07	76	30		May-08	12	
5/1/08	81	29		Aug-08	1	2008: 19
				Dec-08	6	
9/3/08	78	24		May-09	12	
5/1/09	100	25				

FACULTY

- ES had a very successful search for the position in environmental science, with many strong candidates. We hired our first choice, Elsbeth McPhee.
- ES (thanks largely to Jim Feldman) was able to hire a highly regarded graduate student (about to complete his degree) to replace David Barnhill while he is on sabbatical 2009-10.
- Douglas Haynes, who now teaches nature writing for English and ES, has proved a welcome addition to the ES faculty.
- Religious Studies hired Michael Baltutis, who will teach a revised version of Rel St/ES 162. It will be titled Religion and Ecology, rather than Environmental Ethics.
- Other faculty have started teaching courses that count for the ES major:
 - In spring of 2009, Tracy Slagter offered Pol Sci 395: Global Environmental Politics, the first time the course has been offered since Tom Bickford left.
 - In spring of 2009, Stephanie Spehar offered a new course, Human Dimensions of Wildlife Conservation.
 - Robert Hinrichs will be teaching Comm 455: Environmental Communication on a regular schedule (every other year) starting fall of 2009.

COURSES AND CURRICULUM

- Jim Feldman and Steve Arndt offered a new course, ES 390: Campus Sustainability in the spring of 2009.
- In 2009-10, Elsbeth McPhee will be adding new upper-level environmental science electives in the major. She also will take over teaching ES/Biology 261: Environmental Science, formerly taught by Bob Pillsbury.
- The ES program completed a successful program review, including a visit of our external reviewer who gave productive comments on our curriculum.
- In May 2008, the ES faculty approved a new structure for the major. We waited to submit the proposal until our program review was completed in spring 2009. The new version of the major has been submitted for approval, which hopefully will come this coming academic year.
- We were able to hire Colin Long to teach a field studies course in spring interim 2009. Students frequently ask for field studies courses, and we hope to offer one every spring interim from now on.
- Stefan Becker and Bob Pillsbury agreed to teach the international field studies course fall interim (January 2010) in Belize on Approaches to Resource Management of Tropical Ecosystems. We hope to offer that course every fall interim from now on.
- The cross-listing with ES was approved for several courses:
 - ES/Sociology 313: Rural Sociology (Van Auken).
 - ES/Sociology 315: Demography (Van Auken).
 - ES/Sociology 357: Social Ecology (Van Auken). (Formerly Sociology 342)
 - ES/Anthropology 372: Primate Behavior and Ecology (Spehar). (Formerly Anthropology 370)
 - ES/Communication 455: Environmental Communication (Hinrichs).

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

- Two student groups continued to be active. Community Gardens Oshkosh and the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC).
- The ES program has been a major leader in the development of sustainability on campus, including sustainability in the curriculum.

PROMOTION OF THE PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

- The ES Program was represented in Summerview and the Preview Days.
- The ES program continued its periodic student-faculty “pizza with the profs.”
- The ES program had its annual end-of-the-year gathering for faculty and students. Various awards were given out to students: Academic Excellence (highest GPA in the major for a graduating senior); Student Leadership (effective activism and leadership on and off campus by a graduating senior); and certificates of appreciation for helping with the ES program (open to all majors and minors).

DIVERSITY

The ES program continues its collaboration with African American Studies, Social Justice, and Women’s Studies minors in offering courses that count for each least two of these programs. In the fall of 2008, Jordan Landry offered the course “Ethnic Women Writers, Place, and Protest,” which was counted for all four programs.

CONCERNS AND REQUESTS

- ES has grown rapidly, as has the demands on the director of the program. Currently the director has a two course release per year. In other departments, some with fewer majors, the chair is given a three course release per year. It is our understanding that a two course release is also given to the director of some minors, which certainly have far fewer demands. While a two course release may have made sense when the ES program was starting out, it no longer seems reasonable to give the director of ES less release time than department chairs. The external reviewer in our program review noted how demanding an interdisciplinary program is to run. As a result, we request a change in the release time for the director.
- The budget for ES also needs attention. With a new faculty member, particularly one in the sciences, and increasing number of majors, the program will face greater financial demands. This is true for both the 102 account and the 128 account.
- The increasing number of majors also strains our ability to give our students adequate advising. As an interdisciplinary major and with students of very wide-ranging interests and goals, ES needs to give students substantial advising. In 2009-2010, since David Barnhill is on sabbatical and Elsbeth McPhee will be new to the university, we will have in effect one advisor for 100 majors. In 2008-2009 we received \$1,000 in funding from the advising center to hire a student advising mentor, who offered advising sessions to new majors and helped with registration advising. This proved very effective and we need to continue it, but we cannot afford to use our limited budget to pay for it. As a result, we request \$1,000 of growth agenda money to hire a student advising mentor. (International Studies, I believe, has at least a half-time advising position.)
- The increasing number of majors is putting a strain on several of our core courses. The last two years we have had 24 students in the senior seminar—far too many for such a class. Starting 2010-2011 (when David Barnhill returns from sabbatical), we plan to offer the course each semester, rather than merely once a year. However, that will mean one fewer elective course can be offered. We may soon run into a similar problem with ES 282 and 370, courses that are limited to ES majors and minors. Thus we will likely need extra courses to support our program.
- The fact that Religious Studies will no longer teach a course on Environmental Ethics (formerly ES/Rel St 162) is a significant loss. The course will be replaced by a newly titled

ES/Rel St 162: Religion and Ecology, but we will no longer offer an in-depth examination of the complex ethical issues involved in environmental studies.

- There is some concern that Dr. Baltutis does not have the strong interest and expertise in environmental issues that his predecessors, Bron Taylor and John Baumann, had.
- We still lack a course on environmental law and regulations, something our major definitely needs.
- Geography 471 and 472 on Geographic Information Systems are in high demand by ES majors, and we expect this to increase with our new emphasis in environmental science. At the same time the demand for the courses by Geography majors is increasing. We hope there is growth agenda money for additional sections of these crucial courses, at least 471.
- In terms of clerical support, we are now a program with 100 majors with a one-quarter time (10 hours) ADA, while other departments with similar number of majors have much greater clerical support. Our ADA's main obligation is to Sociology. This has increasingly caused problems, despite the hard work of our ADA.

GOALS FOR THE 2009-2010 AY

- Successfully integrate Elsbeth McPhee into the ES program.
- Gain approval of the new structure for the major.
- Continue leadership in campus sustainability.
- Continue to integrate the learning outcome of sustainability into our curriculum.
- Continue to build bridges with faculty in other departments.
- Increase student involvement in campus sustainability & environmental issues
- Show how un-indispensable David Barnhill is during his sabbatical.

FACULTY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

David Barnhill

Publications

- "East Asian Influence on Recent North American Nature Writing." *Teaching North American Environmental Literature*. Ed. Frederick O. Waage. New York: Modern Language Association, 2008. 277-93.
- "The Social Ecology of Gary Snyder." *Indian Journal of Ecocriticism*, 1.1 (August 2008): 21-28.
- "Deep Ecology" and "Social Ecology." *The Spirit of Sustainability*, volume one in the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Sustainability*. Berkshire Publishing, in press.

Work in progress

- "Critical Utopianism and Bioregional Ecocriticism." *The Bioregional Imagination: New Perspectives on Literature, Ecology, and Place*. Ed. Karla Armbruster, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Tom Lynch.
- *Radical Politics in American Nature Writing*. Under contract with Rowman and Littlefield.

Presentations

- "Sustainability in the Curriculum: Possibilities and Challenges." AFT Higher Education Annual Meeting, Miami, March 6, 2009.
- "Meeting the Carbon Footprint Challenge." Presentation with Tom Sonnleitner, Steve Arndt, and Jim Feldman, at the Renewable Energy Summit, Milwaukee, March 26, 2009.

- “Critical Utopianism and Bioregionalism Literary Criticism.” 2009 conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment.” Victoria, British Columbia, June 5, 2009.

Scholarly service

- Co-Chair of the Religion and Ecology Group of the American Academy of Religion. Attended the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in November, 2008, and recruited and organized panels for this year and next.
- Member of Board of Advisors of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture.

Teaching Initiatives

- Co-organized (with Jim Feldman) the Winnebago Project, a Faculty College on infusing sustainability into the curriculum, May 2009.

Departmental, College, and University Service

- Co-Chair of the Campus Sustainability Council.
- Faculty advisor for student groups Community Gardens and SEAC.
- Chief organizer for
 - The Fair Trade Festival, December 4, 2008.
 - Aldo Leopold Day, March 6, 2009.
 - Earth Week, April 20-24, 2009.
- Active in the planning and promotion of Earth Charter the week-long Earth Charter Community Summit in October 2008.
- Spearheaded a drive to have UW Oshkosh declared the first Fair Trade University in the country.
- Member of the External Grants Expansion Plan team.
- Collaborative work with African American Studies, Social Justice, and Women’s Studies (joint courses, campus events)

Jim Feldman

Publications

- Chapter titled “‘Spontaneous’ Rewilding of the Apostle Islands” in Marc Hall, ed., *Greening History: The Presence of the Past in Ecological Restoration*, under contract with Routledge Press.
- Continuing work on ms, *Storied Wilderness: Nature, History, and the Rewilding of the Apostle Islands*. Publication expected in Spring 2010.
- Review of *American Wilderness: A New History*. Ed. Michael Lewis. *Environmental History* 13 (July 2008): 576-77.
- Review of *The Vanishing Present: Wisconsin’s Changing Lands, Waters, and Wildlife*. Ed. Donald M. Waller and Thomas P. Rooney. Forthcoming from *Environmental History*.

Conference Presentations

- “The Place of Environmental History in Campus Sustainability.” Organizer and panelist. American Society for Environmental History, March 2009, Tallahassee, FL.

- “Infusing Sustainability Throughout the Curriculum.” Nineteenth Century Studies Association Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI, March 2009.
- “How Food Service is Organized on the UW-O Campus and the Ramification for Procuring Local.” Cultivating Sustainable Agriculture: Higher Education Programs in Wisconsin. Madison, WI, October 2008,

Teaching Initiatives

- Organized, with David Barnhill, Faculty College on infusing sustainability into the curriculum, May 2009.

University Service

- Member of the Campus Sustainability Council
- Member of the Campus Parking Policy Advisory Committee
- Service on the Liberal Education Reform Team
- Service on the Student Conduct Panel
- Speakers brought to campus, a part of the Earth Charter Community Summit, October 2008: Christine Bader (British Petroleum), Kim Biederman (Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters), and Ellen Barth (Wisconsin DNR).

Community Service

- Oversaw 3 internships with the City of Oshkosh Sustainability Initiative.
- “Documenting Wisconsin Environments.” invited speaker at the Wisconsin Historical Society’s Wisconsin Records Assessment Project Symposium. April 29, 2009.
- “Sustainability, History, & Environmental Studies,” keynote speaker at the Center for History, Culture, & Environment Graduate Student Symposium, April 7, 2009.

Note: *The research activities of other faculty participating in the ES program are included in the end of the year reports of other departments.*

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- ES major **Breanne McDonald** was awarded the Environmental Studies Academic Excellence Award in May, 2008 for the highest g.p.a. in the major.
- ES major **John Knox** was awarded the Environmental Studies Leadership Award in May, 2008. He served as President of the Student Environmental Action Coalition.