

MEMO

To: John Koker, COLS Dean
From: David Barnhill, Director, and Jim Feldman, Acting Director, Environmental Studies
Re: Annual Report from Environmental Studies
Date: August 5, 2010
cc: ES Faculty

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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				
5/1/09	100	25		May-09	12	
				Aug-09	2	2009: 21
				Dec-09	7	
4/12/10	102	30				
				May-10	11	

FACULTY

- Elsbeth McPhee completed a successful first year on the faculty.
- The ES Program and Geography requested a new position in Medical Geography, with a specialty in GIS and environmental health. This request received a “Priority One” listing recommendation from the Faculty Committee.
- ES and Geography have requested that the position formerly held by John Bowen be returned as a joint ES/Geography position with a focus on GIS and environmental economics with a focus on natural resources.
- Other faculty have started teaching courses that count for the ES major:
 - Dru Scribner taught Political Science 326: The Politics of Development in Fall 2009.

COURSES AND CURRICULUM

- Jim Feldman once again offered a Special Topics course on Campus Sustainability, with a focus on the campus’s solid waste stream. The class presented their audit of the university’s waste stream in a public presentation on May 4, 2010.
- New faculty member Misty McPhee offered two upper level environmental science courses, one on animal behavior and wildlife conservation and the other on the sustainability of food.
- ES offered its core Environmental Science course (ES 260) in both fall and spring semesters for the first time, and will offer 490: Senior Seminar and 370: Environmental Science and Problem Solving in both semesters in the next year.
- Adjunct faculty members taught courses in Environmental Justice (Rob Emmett) and a field studies course in Environmental Science (Shannon Foust-Davis).
- Stefan Becker and Bob Pillsbury taught 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 revised Environmental Studies Major (a stand-alone major with two emphases), approved by ES Faculty in May 2008, was passed through the various levels of university review and will be in place for Fall 2010.
- The cross-listing with ES was approved for several courses, which were all added to the list of upper-level electives:
 - ES/Biology 318: Animal Behavior and Conservation
 - ES/Sociology 313: Rural Sociology (Van Auken).
 - ES/Sociology 315: Demography (Van Auken).
 - ES 320: Campus Sustainability (Feldman)
 - ES 301: Internship in Environmental Science (Various)
 - ES/Anthropology 368: Human Dimensions of Wildlife Conflict (Spehar)
 - Political Science 326: The Politics of Development (Scribner)

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

- Two student groups continued to be active. Community Gardens Oshkosh and the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC).
- The ES program continues to be a major leader in the development of sustainability on campus, including sustainability in the curriculum.
- ES faculty Jim Feldman, Stephanie Spehar, Moe Muldoon, and Douglas Haynes served on the Earth Week planning committee, and planned a variety of successful events.

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; highest overall GPA among graduating students); 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 Spring 2010, this resulted in an internship course taught by Sara Ann Suwalksi. Plans were put in place for faculty to teach courses in this area in the 2010-2011 academic year.

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.
- Budget problems remain acute, especially because of two unexpected expenses in Fall 2009: Our work study student did not file paperwork properly so the federal portion of her salary came from the ES Budget through November 2009; and our color printer required unexpectedly large and expensive amounts of ink. These additional expenses depleted both our 102 and 128 accounts.
- 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. For the second year, we were able to hire an advanced ES student to serve as a Student Advisor. This year, the student was paid out of STEP funds. This position has proven crucial in relieving the advising burden, especially with Misty McPhee in her first year and David Barnhill on sabbatical.
- The increasing number of majors continues to put a strain on several of our core courses. We offered ES 260: Environmental Science during both semesters for the first time, and will offer ES 490 and ES 370 in both semesters in the future. We do not currently have the staffing to offer ES 282 during every semester, even though this discussion-based course frequently has more than 25 students per semester.
- 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.
- We still lack a course on environmental law and regulations, something our major definitely needs, and it remains very difficult for our students to take any of the courses on environmental economics offered by the Economics Department, due to high prerequisites.

- 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 around 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 2010-2011 AY

- Develop a brochure for the new curriculum.
- Develop an advising protocol to assist students in the new curriculum.
- Continue to strengthen the ES program with new hires and/or alliances with other programs.
- Continue to assist Elsbeth McPhee in her needs for her animal research
- Continue to nurture our positive relationship with Biology concerning Elsbeth McPhee's position, and our relationship with departments housing other associated faculty.
- Review and expand our contact with ES alumni, including developing an active Facebook page.
- Work with Office for International Education in establishing study abroad opportunities in environmental studies.
- Continue to support sustainability on campus.
- Begin to develop an inventory of career skills, knowledge, and experience in our courses, and career development opportunities off campus.

FACULTY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

David Barnhill

Book chapters

- "Gary Snyder's Ecosocial Buddhism." *How Much is Enough?: Buddhism, Consumerism, and the Human Environment*. Ed. Richard Payne. Somerville, Mass.: Wisdom, 2010.

Articles

- "Surveying the Landscape: A New Approach to Nature Writing." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment* 17.2 (Spring 2010): 1-18.
- "A Community of Love: Kenneth Rexroth's Organic Worldview." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, forthcoming in volume 15, 2011.

Dictionary and encyclopedia entries

- "Ecology, Deep." *Spirit and Sustainability*. Ed. Willis Jenkins. Great Barrington MA: Berkshire, 2009. 138-139.
- "Ecology, Social." *Spirit and Sustainability*. Ed. Willis Jenkins. Great Barrington MA: Berkshire, 2009. 132-135.

Conference presentations

- "Critical Utopianism and Bioregionalism Literary Criticism." Biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature, Nature and Culture. Victoria, British Columbia, June 5, 2009

Jim Feldman

Books

- Chapter titled “Spontaneous’ Rewilding of the Apostle Islands” in Marc Hall, ed., *Restoration and History: The Search for a Usable Environmental Past* (New York: Routledge Press, 2010)
- *A Storied Wilderness: Nature, History, and the Rewilding of the Apostle Islands*; in production with University of Washington Press; publication expected in Spring 2011

Reviews

- Feldman, James, review of *The Untilled Garden: Natural History and the Spirit of Conservation in America, 1740-1840*, by Richard W. Judd, forthcoming from *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*.
- Feldman, James, review of *The Vanishing Present: Wisconsin’s Changing Lands, Waters, and Wildlife*, ed. Donald M. Waller and Thomas P. Rooney, *Environmental History* 14 (July 2009): 592-93.

Conference Presentations

- American Society for Environmental History, March 2010, Portland, OR; “The Need for Legible Landscapes,” part of a workshop on the relationship between Environmental History and the National Park Service
- American Society for Environmental History, March 2010, Portland, OR; “A Storied Wilderness: Nature, History, & The Rewilding of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore,”
- University of Wisconsin System President’s Summit on Excellence in Teaching and Learning, April 2010, “Sustainability in the Curriculum at UW Oshkosh”
- Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences, Madison WI, October 2009, roundtable participant, “The Search for a Usable Past.”

Elsbeth McPhee

Articles

- McPhee, M. E., A. Segal, and R. E. Johnston. 2010. Effects of predation risks on daily activity patterns in golden hamsters. *Ethology*.
- delBarco-Trillo, M. E. McPhee, and R. E. Johnston. 2010. Adult female hamsters can learn to avoid interspecific mating after exposure to heterospecific males. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- ES major Nadeesha Thewarapperruma was given an award for her poster presentation at the Celebration of Scholarship, showcasing her Senior Seminar research on sustainable transportation options for UW Oshkosh. She also won the Environmental Studies Academic Excellence Award in May, 2010 for the highest g.p.a. in the major.
- ES major Erik Kolda also won an award for Academic Excellence for having the highest overall GPA among graduating seniors.
- ES student Korin Franklin was awarded a UW System Solid Waste Research Grant for the project titled “Disposal and Recycling Rates of E-Waste for Northeastern Wisconsin Businesses and Institutions.” ES student Kaci Worth travelled to Indonesia to serve as a research assistant to Dr. Stephanie Spehar and to do initial groundwork for her own independent research.
- ES students Stacey Henk, Lisa Uttecht, Melissa Hayes, and Amanda Owens received summer internships.