

Environmental Studies: Departmental Vision

To: Tom Hellie, President

From: Tom Love, Environmental Studies Chair

Date: 3 April 2006

Working with then Dean Marv Henberg, a group of faculty across the curriculum (Natural Sciences, Social/Behavioral Sciences, and Humanities) built upon an existing Environmental Studies Minor to launch a two-track Environmental Studies major in the fall of 2002. We have since seen steady growth in Linfield's Environmental Studies program.

1. Students. The Environmental Studies program continues its steady growth, with interest running high among both admitted and potential students. On 1 June 2005 there were 26 declared majors (17 ENV-Science track, 9 ENV-Policy track, and of these 5 had declared a double major (BIO, ANT (2), MAT, BUS)) and 8 minors (2 with double minors in ANT, ART). ENV students initiated and have driven a weekly noontime informal ENV gathering in Dillin, though it remains rather poorly attended.

2. Faculty. Some fifteen faculty members from 9 fields (Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, English, Mass Communication, Philosophy, Physics and Sociology) have voluntarily agreed to serve on the ENV Faculty roster and guide its development. While we developed several ENV-specific courses (a year-long introductory sequence, a junior level policy course, and a senior capstone seminar, as well as community service and two other paracurricular courses, internships, and research/thesis), we rely on course offerings from departments virtually spanning the academic landscape.

A modest budget for this "hyper-department" covers costs associated with instruction for the several ENV courses as well as one-course release time which frees up one of us (currently, Tom Love, Anthropology) to serve as Chair. We are assisted by several very capable adjuncts. A nascent program in Environmental Health exists on the Portland campus, as well as an ENV minor in the DCE program.

ENV faculty are active in their fields and work closely with our very motivated students. (Advising work is done by only a few of these faculty, however.) For example, incoming Chair Jack Murphy (Biology) initiated a collaborative research program on the mycorrhizae of oak savanna in the Willamette Valley, funded by the Jane Claire Dirks-Edmunds Scholarship. He continues monitoring of fungi at Charles Metsker County Park, work launched by a small grant from the NWACC. Karen Sturgeon (Biology) has conducted restoration ecology research with several students over the past decade at Deer Creek County Park southeast of McMinnville for which she has received funding from the Collaborative Research program and the Murdock Charitable Trust. Tom Love (Anthropology) secured collaborative research funding for summer 2005 research with two students (Kelly Stewart and Sirpa Peterson) on Yamhill County Century Farms, a study of agricultural sustainability, as well as a summer paid internship for Brendon Lindsay with a historic farm preservation project on Parrett Mountain. David Sumner (English) has initiated new curriculum on nature writing. And in one of the finer examples at the college of collaborative teaching, Lex Runciman and/or Barbara Drake (English) have teamed up with Karen Sturgeon and/or Chris Gaiser (Biology) at various times to offer Environmental Literature. These latter initiatives are building blocks of an eventual third Humanities-oriented track with the ENV major.