

To: Michael Claudon and Richard Cornwall; Department of Economics

From: Steve Trombulak; Department of Biology, Director of the Environmental Studies Program

Subject: The new program in Environmental Studies

As you may or may not know, I was asked last year by the administration to take over the Environmental Studies Program and to see if I could do something to save it from dying. My efforts so far have been to drastically strengthen the requirements for graduation so that it isn't the weakest of all the majors on campus and so that the ES majors aren't simply ~~a group of one or two~~ students that don't want to take the hard courses in any other department. I've enclosed a copy of the program requirements that were recently approved by the curriculum committee. The main differences from the previous program involve 1) the requirement of more courses, 2) the requirement of more courses above the 100 level, and 3) the reinstatement of a required focus within a department. This latter requirement is to insure that ~~a~~ student^s graduate^s with a strong background in at least one discipline, and was designed for each department in cooperation with the faculty that would work with environmental studies students that ~~has~~^{have} particular interests in that discipline.

In recent conversation with Shel^{S.H.}, I learned that your department is currently deciding on what courses to teach during the near future. I want to make sure that you ~~are~~^{are} are aware of the continued place of economics courses in the ES program and that the program will continue to exist independent of whatever happens to the environmental studies track of the economics major.

Courses in the Economics department fit into the new ^{ES} program in two ways. First, students in the Natural Science track may choose to take EC 365 and 394 to satisfy two of their required cognates. Second, students in the Social Science/Humanities track are required to take EC 155 and either 365 or 394. Finally, students who focus in Economics are additionally required to take EC 150, 210, 355, and an additional course of their choice. The focus, by the way, represents a compromise ~~I mediated~~^{mediated} between a six-course focus emphasizing quantitative skills ~~proposed by Shel~~^{proposed by Shel} (comparable to other foci) and a ~~small number of courses~~^{small number of courses} proposed by D.K. I intend the foci to be shaped by the interested faculty in the departments; therefore, if you have any recommended changes, I would love to hear them.

Compared to the number of students in other departments, ES majors are not numerous, but I see signs that the appearance of life in the program may change things. Prior to this fall, there were only seven majors, one ~~who~~^{who} has withdrawn from school, one who has flunked out, and one who went on special student status in order to salvage his grades. Not exactly the cream of the crop. Since this fall, however, I have had 10 freshman, who so far seem to be academically sound, express their intention to major in ES. I am encouraged by this indication of interest by good students in the program and hope that, by demonstrating that the College wants a good program to survive, students will respond.

The gist of all of this is that I want the Economics department to know that the ES program will continue even after D.K. retires and that it stands a good chance gaining strength and numbers. I know that teaching resources are tight and must be preferentially allocated to satisfying the needs of departmental majors. However, your department can provide a service to the College community by teaching a course like EC 365 or 394 at least every other year and by attempting to keep someone on the faculty of the department who can teach these subjects and advise interested students.

If you have any reactions to my requests or questions about the Program I would be more than happy to talk with you about it at your convenience. Don't hesitate to give me a call.