



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT 05753

David K. Smith
Alumni Professor of Economics

9/22/86

Memo to Steve Trombulak

Subject: Environmental Studies Program

Steve - Glad to see that you're moving forward in a re-thinking of Environmental Studies.

Comments begin by noting that I enthusiastically support the restoration of tracks on the very modest basis proposed: Social Sciences/Humanities. Tracks were specifically eliminated a few years ago, and I regretted that. To have the study so focussed on Biology seemed to me to miss a great deal of what lays behind environmental problems.

I would argue for certain adjustments in your proposals. First, I would have all majors write a thesis. This has been the most useful part of the Environmental Economics major which used to be. All need an exercise in applying book learning in a real world situation.

I would require at least one term of Statistics for all majors, for evaluating the Environment is very much a matter of collection and examination of data. What is the message carried in the data?

I would require Ec 365 as long as it is taught, and then hope that if Natural Resource Economics carried on beyond my retirement that its content would include certain elements of 365.

On Page 3, I would drop the four courses under the various foci to two and eliminate the 400 series course. In many cases, there won't have been the prerequisites, and I doubt that simply requiring more courses ~~can be justified~~ can be justified

A hint: I'd re-read the text and change to students who (rather than that) or people who (rather than that) etc.

Cheers -

D.K. Smith

September 22, 1986

TO: Steve Trombulak, Biology

FR: Ray Coish, Geology

RE: The Environmental Studies Program

Lucy, Brew, and I have gone over your good proposal for a more focused program in Environmental Studies.

We like what you are proposing. It is good to attract people who are not in the natural sciences. The 13 or 14 core courses in the two tracks should give all environmental studies majors a solid foundation, including areas that you term "hard". The core courses deliberately do not stress any one department. And, it is good that each student have a clear focus -- an area of competence.

We do ask to modify the geology focus:

Geology: 4 courses at the 200-300 level, 1 course (not 2 courses) at the 400 level, 2 units of GL 700 (new).

There are two reasons for the change from what you have proposed. First, our 400-level courses are directly tied to senior research, and our geology majors are not likely to take more than one 400-level course. Second, we have long required a senior thesis of each person who majors in geology. We find that essentially every geology senior benefits from senior research, whether or not the person is getting good grades. This was the case for those majoring in Environmental Studies - Geology under Howard Woodin's program. We want to keep this requirement. If our position causes you any problem, let me know.

Not all departments can do this

No

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Compounds the trouble