REQUEST TO COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOR CURRICULAR IMPROVEMENTS

DEPARTMENT: Institute of the Environment and Sustainability
PROPOSED EFFECTIVE SEMESTER: Fall 2019  COLLEGE: Arts and Sciences

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Academic Program
☐ New degree*
☐ New major*
☐ New curriculum*
☐ New concentration*
☐ New certificate
☐ New minor
☐ Revised major
☐ Revised minor
☐ Admission requirements
☐ Graduation requirements
☐ Deletion □ Transfer
☐ Other (explain**)

Substantive Course Changes
☐ New course
☐ Pre or Co-requisites
☐ Deletion (required by others)
☐ Course #, different level
☐ Credit hours
☐ Enrollment restriction
☐ Course-level restriction
☐ Prefix □ Title and description

Misc. Course Changes
☐ Title
☐ Description (attach current & proposed)
☐ Deletion (not required by others)
☐ Course #, same level
☐ Variable credit
☐ Credit/no credit
☐ Cross-listing
☐ COGE reapproval
☐ Other

Pre or Co-requisites and Other: The Institute of the Environment and Sustainability proposes to reduce introductory-level course options for Environmental and Sustainability Studies majors from four courses to two courses, along with the corresponding changes in the catalog. These courses serve as a pre-requisite for advancement through the ENVS major.

Title of degree, curriculum, major, minor, concentration, or certificate: Environmental and Sustainability Studies major

Existing course prefix and #: N/A Proposed course prefix and #: N/A Credit hours: N/A

Existing course title: N/A

Proposed course title: N/A

Existing course prerequisite & co-requisite(s): Explained in the proposal.

Proposed course prerequisite(s) Explained in the proposal.

Proposed course co-requisite(s) N/A

Proposed course co-requisite(s) that can also be taken concurrently: N/A

Is there a minimum grade for the prerequisites or corequisites? All courses counted toward the Environmental and Sustainability Studies major require a “C” or higher grade.

Major/minor or classification restrictions: N/A

List the Banner 4 character codes and whether they should be included or excluded.

For 5000 level prerequisites & corequisites: N/A

Specifications for University Schedule of Classes:

a. Course title (maximum of 30 spaces): N/A
b. Multi-topic course: ☐ No ☐ Yes N/A
c. Repeatable for credit: ☐ No ☐ Yes N/A
d. Mandatory credit/no credit: ☐ No ☐ Yes N/A
e. Type of class and contact hours per week (check type and indicate hours as appropriate) N/A

1. ☐ Lecture
2. ☐ Lab or discussion
3. ☐ Lecture/lab/discussion
4. ☐ Seminar or □ studio
5. ☐ Independent study
6. ☐ Supervision or practicum

CIP Code (Registrar’s use only):

Chair/Director [Signature] Date 4/26/18

Chair, College Curriculum Committee Date

Dean Date: Graduate Dean: Date

Curriculum Manager: Return to dean □ Date Forward to: Date

Chair, COGE/PEB/FS President Date

FOR PROPOSALS REQUIRING GSC/USC REVIEW:

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove Chair, GSC/USC Date

☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove Provost Date

Revised May 2007. All previous forms are obsolete and should not be used.

CAS 17-327 ENV S
1. Explain briefly and clearly the proposed improvement.

The proposal is to streamline introductory course options for Environmental and Sustainability Studies majors from the current four listed courses to the following two courses:

- Nature, Society, and Sustainability (currently called ENVS 1100, “Nature and Society,” but with a separate related proposal to renumber this course to ENVS 2050, and to adjust its name to “Nature, Society, and Sustainability”)

- Introduction to Sustainability: A Local to Global Survey (ENVS 3000).

In this proposal, either of the above two courses would continue to serve as a pre-requisite for advanced ENVS courses in the Environmental and Sustainability major. The proposal would remove the large 1000-level general education course, GEOG 1000, as an entry option for ENVS majors.

This change will make our entry-level options for ENVS majors the same as our current entry-level options for ENVS minors (ENVS minors already choose between the above two courses).

This proposal also connects to our separate proposal to renumber ENVS 1100 to ENVS 2050, so that future ENVS majors will enter the program with a 2000-level (or higher) introductory course.

The change includes eliminating extraneous catalog language about ENVS 3000 Honors, thus making the requirements easier for students to read.

2. Rationale. Give your reason(s) for the proposed improvement. (If your proposal includes prerequisites, justify those, too.)

The Institute of the Environment and Sustainability is in the process of re-evaluating our entire curriculum, especially the preparation that ENVS majors receive at the entry level for their upper level ENVS courses. With this change, we plan to build on the strengths of our current introductory ENVS courses. These include:

- The chance for students to develop a strong cohort early in our program by working together both in the classroom and during outside community or field activities.

- The opportunity for majors to work closely with ENVS faculty from an early point in their program.

- An emphasis on community and field experiences during the semester.

- Extensive reading and writing in an interdisciplinary context.

- A smaller class size.

- Making the introductory requirements for ENVS majors the same as the introductory requirements for ENVS minors.

This proposal corresponds with a separate proposal to renumber and adjust the name of our current ENVS 1100, “Nature and Society” (to ENVS 2050, “Nature, Society, and Sustainability”). Hence our introductory options would begin at the 2000 rather than the 1000 level, and explicitly signal the sustainability dimensions of the curriculum.

In summary, by coordinating and aligning our introductory courses with the larger Environmental and Sustainability Studies curriculum, we believe students will benefit in terms of: (a) cohort building—i.e., a shared community experience and professional camaraderie; (b) more sustained professional interactions with ENVS faculty; (c) preparation for and success in upper level ENVS coursework; and (d) a higher likelihood of degree completion in a reasonable time.

3. Effect on other colleges, departments or programs. If consultation with others is required, attach evidence of consultation and support. If objections have been raised, document the resolution. Demonstrate that the program you propose is not a duplication of an existing one.
In terms of enrollment in the ENVS major: Approximately 5-8 students a year (10%-20% of new ENVS majors) have used the general education course GEOG 1000 to meet our entry course requirement. We realize that even in a course as successful as GEOG 1000 (one of the largest in the college, and an important general educational opportunity for students across WMU), a small drop in numbers is not ideal. However, we feel the benefits for our ENVS majors in terms of their experience and opportunities as outlined above—and their likelihood of success in the program—warrants making the requirements for the ENVS major the same as the requirements for the ENVS minor.

4. Effect on your department’s programs. Show how the proposed change fits with other departmental offerings.

The proposed change will allow ENVS to more fully integrate our curriculum from the introductory level through the most advanced capstone coursework before graduation. It will also ensure that all of our majors and minors begin their ENVS program with comparable experiences and opportunities.

5. Effects on enrolled students: Are program conflicts avoided? Will your proposal make it easier or harder for students to meet graduation requirements? Can students complete the program in a reasonable time? Show that you have considered scheduling needs and demands on students’ time. If a required course will be offered during summer only, provide a rationale.

We anticipate no negative effects on enrolled students, and many positive effects, especially with respect to student cohorts and opportunities for all of our entering majors to get to know and work with ENVS faculty. The proposal entails no ENVS program conflicts. Students will not find it harder to meet graduation requirements (see 7 below), and some students may find it easier to succeed across our upper level courses. The Institute has always been able to schedule introductory ENVS courses to meet student demand and schedules—e.g., adding a section if necessary, and scheduling different sections on different days or times (see 7 below).

6. Student or external market demand. What is your anticipated student audience? What evidence of student or market demand or need exists? What is the estimated enrollment? What other factors make your proposal beneficial to students?

We have had consistent demand for our introductory ENVS courses (verified as well by WMU’s Director of Exploratory Advising). Whether selecting ENVS as a major or minor, we want all of our incoming students to have the same opportunities, as well as a sense of shared experience.

7. Effects on resources. Explain how your proposal would affect department and University resources, including faculty, equipment, space, technology, and library holdings. If proposing a new program, include a letter and/or email of support from the university library affirming that the library resource issues have been reviewed. Tell how you will staff additions to the program. If more advising will be needed, how will you provide for it? How often will course(s) be offered? What will be the initial one-time costs and the ongoing base-funding costs for the proposed program? (Attach additional pages, as necessary.)

The Institute has sufficient faculty to handle this change (and appropriate faculty in terms of interdisciplinary teaching experience at the introductory level). Additional students might well fit into our current introductory sections, but if needed, we can offer an additional intro section to accommodate up to 30 more students.

8. General education criteria. For a general education course, indicate how this course will meet the criteria for the area or proficiency. (See the General Education Policy for descriptions of each area and proficiency and the criteria. Attach additional pages as necessary. Attach a syllabus if (a) proposing a new course, (b) requesting certification for baccalaureate-level writing, or (c) requesting reapproval of an existing course.)

N/A

9. List the learning outcomes for the proposed course or the revised or proposed major, minor, or concentration. These are the outcomes that the department will use for future assessments of the course or program.

N/A
10. Describe how this curriculum change is a response to assessment outcomes that are part of a departmental or college assessment plan or informal assessment activities.

This curriculum change is not a direct response to assessment outcomes, although we expect positive impacts in this area. The Institute already uses the current ENVS 1100 (proposed to change to ENVS 2050) as a baseline for establishing entry-level student communication skills and entry-level student proficiency/competency to analyze different dimensions of complex interdisciplinary problems, such as persistent organic pollutants, climate change, and Great Lakes policy, among other cases. Reducing the number of introductory entry points into the program might well enhance our opportunities for baseline assessment across the whole of our ENVS student population. We see similar possible benefits for the college’s and the university’s efforts at increasing student success and student retention.

11. (Undergraduate proposals only) Describe, in detail, how this curriculum change affects transfer articulation for Michigan community colleges. For course changes, include detail on necessary changes to transfer articulation from Michigan community college courses. For new majors or minors, describe transfer guidelines to be developed with Michigan community colleges. For revisions to majors or minors, describe necessary revisions to Michigan community college guidelines. Department chairs should seek assistance from college advising directors or from the admissions office in completing this section.

N/A

12. Please offer both “Current Catalog Language” and “Proposed Catalog Language” if there is to be a change in the catalog description for a given course and/or program. For the “current” language, please copy and paste relevant language from the most current catalog and for the “proposed” language, please share the exact proposed new catalog language. As possible, bold or otherwise note the key changes in the new proposed catalog language.

Current Catalog Language:

A.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies Major (32 hours)

Entry Options (4 hours)

Any of these four courses serves as the prerequisite for all subsequent Domains.

ENVS 1100 – Nature and Society Credts: 4 hours
ENVS 3000 – Introduction to Sustainability: A Local to Global Survey Credts: 3 hours
(A minimum grade of “B” is required to count towards the Environmental and Sustainability Studies major.)
ENVS 3000 - The Honors Cluster section is also applicable.
GEOG 1000 – World Ecological Problems and Man Credts: 4 hours
(A minimum grade of “B” is required to count towards the Environmental and Sustainability Studies major.)

B.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies Minor (18 hours minimum)

Entry Options (4 hours minimum)

ENVS 1100 – Nature and Society Credts: 4 hours
ENVS 3000 – Introduction to Sustainability: A Local to Global Survey Credts: 3 hours
(The Honors Cluster section is also applicable.)
Proposed Catalog Language:

A.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies Major (32 hours)

Entry Options (3-4 hours)

Either of these courses serves as the prerequisite for all subsequent Domains.

ENVS 2050 – Nature, Society, and Sustainability Credits: 4 hours
ENVS 3000 – Introduction to Sustainability: A Local to Global Survey Credits: 3 hours
(A minimum grade of "B" is required to count towards the Environmental and Sustainability Studies major.)

B.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies Minor (18 hours)

Entry Options (3-4 hours)

ENVS 2050 – Nature, Society, and Sustainability Credits: 4 hours
ENVS 3000 – Introduction to Sustainability: A Local to Global Survey Credits: 3 hours