

PROGRAM PLANNING SUMMARY
FOR NEW PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA

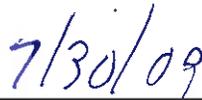
Bachelor of Arts
With a major in Environmental Studies

to be offered by the
College of Arts and Sciences

July 7, 2009



Harris Pastides, President



Date

**Program Planning Summary: New Program Proposal
Bachelor of Arts with a major in Environmental Studies
University of South Carolina – Columbia**

Designation and Proposed Date of Implementation:

The University of South Carolina-Columbia requests approval to offer a new program leading towards the Bachelor of Arts with a major in Environmental Studies to be implemented in Fall 2010. The 120-credit hour curriculum consists of college core requirements (53-62 hours), specialized prerequisites (16 hours), electives (5-15 hours), and major requirements (36-37 hours) of which 19 are core courses and 17-18 are selected to provide concentrations for a student's program.

Justification:

There is a fundamental need to increase opportunities for environmental learning in the nation's colleges and universities. College graduates must face increasingly serious environmental issues, such as climate change, threats to water resources, degradation of natural resources and amenities, and increased contamination of resources with pathogens and pollution. These challenges require an informed citizenry and educated workforce to make wise decisions and develop new solutions for increasingly complex environmental problems. For example, growth in "green" jobs has been predicted to make up as much as 10% of new job growth over the next 30 years.¹ Furthermore, there is a recently increased emphasis on development of alternative energies and protection and wise use of environmental resources, which will serve to increase the need for enhanced opportunities for environmentally literate graduates². The University of South Carolina (USC) recently established a B.S. with a major in Environmental Science, which will produce graduates that are destined for the increased workforce needs in science and technology. However, a large portion of environmental jobs are focused in non-science fields, such as legal or consulting positions,³ while a wide range of management and government positions will require an understanding of environmentally-related social and economic issues. South Carolina has increasingly important environmental issues, such as exponential increases in population and tourism in our culturally and economically valuable coastal regions, safe operation of our nuclear facilities and landfills, and impacts associated with one of the nation's largest and most productive ports. To secure a healthy and environmentally responsible growth for the State requires a workforce and public community that are educated in the complexities of environmental resources and their interaction with social and economic systems.

Higher education in Environmental Studies requires an integration of disciplines to provide the understanding and insights needed for such complex social and economic systems and solutions for emerging environmental problems. The University of South Carolina provides large and comprehensive academic resources that are required for such a high quality, interdisciplinary education. The capacity exists to utilize faculty expertise from multiple colleges and schools and to integrate a broad range of existing courses, in order to create unique interdisciplinary programs that will attract a wide range of new students.

¹ U.S. Metro Economies: Current and Potential Green Jobs in the U.S. Economy. October 2008. Global Insight; prepared for the U.S. Conference of Mayors & the Mayors Climate Protection Center..

² Green Recovery: A Program to Create Good Jobs and Start Building a Low-Carbon Economy. September 2008. Center for American Progress.

³ U.S. Metro Economies: Current and Potential Green Jobs in the U.S. Economy. October 2008. Global Insight; prepared for the U.S. Conference of Mayors & the Mayors Climate Protection Center..

The four primary justifications for the creation of the new program in Environmental Studies are: 1) increasing student demand for undergraduate degrees in Environmental Studies, which will balance the recently established degree in Environmental Sciences, 2) growth of career opportunities in environmentally-related fields, 3) lack of a large, interdisciplinary program in South Carolina that brings together the relevant social, economic, and scientific disciplines, and 4) the large number of 2-year schools that have programs that naturally feed into a comprehensive 4-year degree program.

Anticipated Program Demand and Productivity:

Undergraduate programs in Environmental Studies and Sciences have become increasingly standard offerings at U.S. colleges and universities. In a recent survey of 652 institutions sponsored by the Council of Environmental Deans and Directors of the National Council for Science and the Environment, 840 environmental programs were reported, with 75% being specifically named Environmental Studies or Environmental Sciences.⁴ Environmental Studies degrees generally have higher concentrations in the Social Studies and Humanities, while Environmental Sciences degrees tend to focus considerably more on the Natural Sciences.⁵ South Carolina offers B.A. degrees by similar name at smaller universities, namely Winthrop and Furman Universities. This proposed program would provide access to USC's broad, diverse curriculum, including a range of undergraduate research and scholarship experiences. It would enhance availability of an Environmental Studies degree to serve the broad South Carolina community and retain students that would otherwise be attracted to out-of-state programs.

Student demand has also been demonstrated by participation in USC's School of the Environment (SOE) offering of the interdisciplinary minor in Environmental Studies since 1996. Furthermore, students have consistently requested a major in this area. An active student organization (SAGE-Students Advocating a Greener Environment) submitted a petition, dated September 5, 2006, to the USC Faculty Senate requesting approval of an Environmental Studies major. The USC Student Senate also passed legislation, SBL(06)025 on September 20, 2006, requesting the same.

Enrollments in the proposed program are estimated to begin at 15 headcount in FY 2010 and increase to 100 headcount in 2013-2014. Estimates are based on the current number of Environmental Studies minors, the existing student expressed demand for an Environmental major, current enrollments in the new B.S. in Environmental Sciences, and the student headcounts in other out-of-state Environmental Studies degree programs. The program is not subject to any separate accreditation process.

Assessment of Extent of Duplication with Existing Programs:

Given the large and increasing demand for environmentally trained students, there is a need to increase education opportunities in South Carolina. A review of the Environmental programs in South Carolina indicates that while a number of universities and colleges offer environmental components within their degrees, very few B.A. degrees are offered in Environmental Studies and provide the opportunity to include substantial social, economics, or humanities components in the environmental degree program. Other related programs are as follows:

⁴ Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD), National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) Curriculum Study, Phase II. <http://ncseonline.org/CEDD/cms.cfm?id=1500>. Accessed June 2009.

⁵ Romero, A. & P. Silveri. 2006. Not All Are Created Equal: An Analysis of the Environmental Programs/Departments in U.S. Academic Institutions from 1900 until May 2005. *J. Integrative Biol.* 1:1-15.

USC: BA- Environmental Studies

Two Year College Programs. Thirteen South Carolina 2-year colleges offer environmental courses and/or technical environmental degrees, and in many cases only one course is offered. Although degree programs (AA) from these schools are certainly important to South Carolina, most of the career opportunities listed above require a four-year degree. Therefore, students attracted to the new USC Environmental Studies degree program could also come from state's technical colleges and the two-year campuses of USC where they were exposed to environmental issues

Four Year Programs. Only one public South Carolina university, Winthrop University, presently offers a Bachelor of Arts program in Environmental Studies. As outlined below, the USC proposed program is distinguished by the existing, highly diverse, interdisciplinary faculty and curriculum strengths that serve to form the basis of the new major.

Relationship to Existing Programs at USC:

We propose a program based on the environmental strengths of USC to create a nationally recognized program that builds off of the strong, comprehensive basis at USC and offers a unique educational resource to the state for the following reasons: 1) The focus on interdisciplinary strengths across the University allows us to complement the Major Program's core courses with innovative courses in areas such as environmental communication, environmental management and policy, sustainability and "green" economies, and natural history studies, thereby utilizing existing courses but combining courses from various disciplines to create an interdisciplinary major; 2) The Major Program is complemented by USC's investment in Living-Learning communities on sustainability; from their first year, majors will have the unique opportunity to live together in sustainability-oriented communities and to live in model "green" residence halls supported by a faculty Principal; 3) Coalescing academic perspectives for integrative study is consistent with strong, interdisciplinary trends in environmental research and will strengthen the interdisciplinary research and scholarship and applied social sciences activities among faculty; 4) These programs can serve to direct students into environmentally oriented graduate programs and support environmental research and scholarship across campus and collaborations with other colleges and universities.

Relationship to Other Institutions:

In 1998, USC, Clemson University, and the Medical University of South Carolina founded the Sustainable Universities Initiative (<http://www.sc.edu/sustainableu/AboutSUI.htm>), a statewide network of faculty, staff and students who share an interest in integrating environmental considerations into their work. Although the primary funding for this initiative has terminated, the partnership still provides a foundation for continued interaction and collaboration on Environmental education, research, and outreach activities.

Resources Required:

No new state resources will be required to administer the proposed degree. New course offerings and student advisement will be supported through additional faculty hires that have been generated through other sources within the University.