

University of Delaware
Permanent Status Program Review
BA Major in Environmental Studies
March 2014

The BA in Environmental Studies was granted provisional status in 2009. The major currently enrolls 93 students, and has graduated one class of 28 students in May 2013.

Objectives, Strengths, and Weaknesses

The self-study provides evidence that the major has met its originally stated goals and objectives, and is aligned with the goals of the UD Path to Prominence and the University General Education objectives.

Strengths of the major as outlined in the report include its interdisciplinary nature; the alignment of goals and objectives with Path to Prominence and University General Education goals; and steady enrollments. The major is highly interdisciplinary, drawing on the expertise of faculty across five colleges. The major directly addresses stated objectives from the Path to Prominence for the creation of an integrated environmental science and policy major, and more general environmental awareness across campus, and clearly addresses the majority of the General Education goals.

Weaknesses in the program were outlined in an appended report from an external review (commissioned in 2011), and include the need for (1) clearer alignment of the curriculum with goals of the larger interdisciplinary environmental education community and career opportunities within this field, and (2) a permanent home within one college (suggested: EOE).¹

Impact and Demand

The report states that the major may require additional support to address the recommendations of the external review, though not specific as to what those impacts would entail, or if support for increased demand is in place. Enrollments in the major are steady, with approximately 15-18 first year students, and numerous transfers, entering the major per year. Admissions requirements for the major are clearly stated; there is no evidence as to whether or not they are fairly implemented. Students are advised within departments across several colleges, and advisors are assigned when students choose concentrations; evidence as to the quality of advisement within this structure is not provided. Evidence for continued support for the program is provided in the form of a letter from the Dean of the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment.

¹ Revisions to the Environmental Studies major, which specifically address the recommendations of the external review, have been submitted and are pending as of March 2014.

Evaluation

According to the self-study, graduates of the program have obtained employment in public and private environmental policy institutions such as the US Department of Energy, US Environmental Protection Agency, Clean Ocean Action, and KCI Technologies.

Conclusion

The evidence in the proposal supports granting of permanent status. Enrollments are ample and steady, and graduates are obtaining employment in related fields. The major has met its objectives and aligns with university goals, and resources are currently sufficient to maintain program quality.

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