Date: July 11, 2011

To: Greg Davis  
Chair, Natural and Applied Sciences

From: Scott Furlong  
Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Re: Report on the Environmental Science Program Review

The Environmental Science program at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the use of scientific knowledge and methods to understand environmental problems. The program also requires some knowledge of policy and government of their majors. Many of the faculty in Environmental Science are key contributors to the graduate program in Environmental Science and Policy. It is a program that was and continues to be closely aligned with the mission of the institution. Given the array of environmental concerns in the nation and world today, it continues to be an extremely important program. The faculty in the program are very active in soliciting outside grants that aids in acquiring equipment, and providing opportunities for student research. The last review for this program was relatively recent (Spring 2008), so there will likely not many new comments since the last review.

Enrollment Trends/Resource Issues:
The Environmental Science program has averaged 88 majors over the past five years, which is an increase from the review in 2008. The faculty in the program also teach in a number of disciplinary programs. There has also been an increase in the number of majors graduating each year and this number is much better in alignment to the number of overall majors. There has been a slight increase in the percentage of females in the program (35% in 2009), but this is still smaller than other natural science majors.

Ad hocs and overloads are used for a number of courses particularly at the lower levels. As is true with many departments on campus, the faculty are one-deep in most areas of study, which can cause issues when people go on sabbatical or in flexibility in scheduling. It is very difficult to find ad hoc replacement for upper level courses. Like other undergraduate programs around campus that have support graduate programs there are resource issues associated with this support that are not adequately addressed. The nature of the program cause ongoing needs associated with the maintenance of labs and equipment. Because of this, faculty do not have access to a large amount of funds for travel purposes. On the positive side, faculty within the program have been quite successful in grant writing and this has provided some resources for program use. The dollars available though are not sufficient for the stated needs of the program.
As noted in my previous program review letter, the Environmental Science program is a critical participant and beneficiary of the renewal of our environmental programs. The research, public outreach, and curricular initiatives will be driven by many within this area and offer exciting opportunities in the future.

Assessment:
The Environmental Science program is continuing to work on its assessment plan. Since the last review, they set up a committee to assess how well the core classes within the major line up with their six learning outcomes. As noted by the AAC and the ES self-study, developing a more formal assessment is critical.

Curriculum Development/General Education:
As noted in my last review, the major change in the Environmental Science curriculum was the reformulation of the major into a single track program. I believe that this was an important change that will continue to strengthen the program.

The faculty in the Environmental Science program are involved in a number of general education courses within their disciplines, but also specifically related to environmental science concerns. Its Introduction to Environmental Science course is one of the most popular general education courses on campus. There continues to be a need for additional seats in the NPS-2 general education area. The chair is aware of this need and continues to work on addressing it.

In summary, the program in Environmental is strongly attached to the mission of the university and is involved in a number of programs around campus. The faculty are very successful in research and grant endeavors. There are resource issues that I hope the university can begin to address in the future.

Cc: Steve Dutch, Academic Affairs Council
    Tim Sewall, Associate Provost