

Amended October 29, 2007

The seventh meeting of the Committee of Six for the academic year 2007-2008 was called to order by President Marx in his office at 3:00 P.M. on Monday, October 22, 2007. Present were Professors Frank, S. George, Jagannathan, O'Hara, Servos, and Sinos, Dean Call, President Marx, and Assistant Dean Tobin, Recorder.

The Committee turned briefly to personnel matters.

The Dean next distributed to the members a document (appended), prepared by Professor Dizard, that provides background regarding the proposed Environmental Studies major. The Committee reviewed this information before being joined, at 3:30 P.M., by Professors Dizard, Harms, and Temeles, who had accepted the members' invitation to meet with the Committee on behalf of the faculty group that is developing a proposal for the Environmental Studies major. Professor Dizard thanked the members for meeting with him and his colleagues; the Dean, on behalf of the Committee, said that the members were pleased to do so.

Discussion began with Professor Dizard responding to the concern expressed by Professor Jagannathan in the Committee of Six minutes of October 1, 2007, that none of the required courses for the proposed major would appear to offer a foundational knowledge of basic concepts in the areas of energy and entropy. Professor Dizard noted that he had inadvertently left Physics 9 off the list of electives for the major, but the intention of the group is to include this course. Professor Jagannathan reiterated that, while it is his hope that this content will be part of the curriculum of the new major, it could be offered through a chemistry or physics course, or a course designed specifically to be a part of the curriculum for the major, and not necessarily through a physics course. Responding to a question posed in the minutes about whether the proposed program would later be broadened through the addition of more interdisciplinary courses, Professor Dizard said that the list of courses in the proposal was meant to be illustrative and not fixed, and that they did not represent a terminus by any means. He was pleased to learn from the minutes that the Department of Chemistry would be interested in contributing courses to the program, noting that it was the Environmental Studies group's hope that precisely this sort of interest would emerge once a major became concrete, rather than hypothetical. Professor Dizard noted that the group had decided to launch the major with courses that are already being offered at the College, which are sufficient to constitute a major, but said that the hope is that, as the major evolves, many departments will come forward to participate. Over the next five years, in particular, the major should be considered a work-in-progress, he said.

Turning to the subject of "hidden" requirements that may lie beneath the surface of the courses that are being proposed for the new major, Professor George asked why, for example, Biology 23 would be required, while its prerequisite, Biology 18, would be an elective. Professors Temeles and Dizard explained that, in the future, the hope is that students will be able to fulfill the prerequisites, particularly in the sciences and in economics, with introductory environmental studies courses—courses that will cover much of the same content as introductory courses in chemistry and economics, but with an environmental emphasis. Professor Temeles said that, in the meantime, with permission of the instructor, students could take his ecology course, without taking the prerequisite. He noted that the goal is to create a distinct

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Environmental Studies core and not to duplicate other science majors. It was noted that a new FTE in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science should enable the Environmental Studies major to include a statistics course that has an environmental emphasis. Also, a new hire in the Department of Economics may result in the creation of a “green” version of Economics 11, or another introductory environmental economics course.

Professor Sinos asked why it would be necessary to develop new courses to serve as prerequisites, if acceptable prerequisites are already available. Professor Dizard responded that the major would end up with fifteen or sixteen courses if current prerequisites were required and would be daunting to students as a result. Professor Harms noted, on a philosophical level, that the group believes that only those courses that represent the central and foundational ideas of the major should be required. She noted that graduate programs in Environmental Studies are most interested in students having a background in ecology, statistics, and economics and said that the major would be grounded in these areas.

Professor Jagannathan said that he was impressed with the framing of the justification for the major, as Professors Dizard, Harms, and Temeles had now described it. He did question one of the points in the document prepared by Professor Dizard, as described in the following sentence from the document: “As scientists began to turn their attention to environmental problems, it quickly became clear that these problems were not going to be resolved by technical fixes.” Professor Jagannathan said that it should be conveyed that having a background in the sciences is often very helpful when it comes to policy questions. Professor Dizard agreed. He noted that, overall, he now feels that there was misplaced specificity in the initial proposal, and he recognizes that the core of the major should have been described programmatically. The Committee noted that specificity is also valuable and asked that the Catalog description, which included the courses for the major, be retained in the proposal. Professor Dizard agreed to revise the proposal, with the Committee’s recommendations in mind, and to send it to the members for their review before it is brought before the full Faculty, most likely at the Faculty Meeting of November 6.

Professor O’Hara asked why the group has not included any lab-based courses as part of the major. Professor Harms said that, in the group’s view, at least initially, much of what could be accomplished in a three-hour formal lab could be done in other ways in the courses being proposed for the major. For example, a seminar might meet outdoors every other week to do exercises for three hours. Modeling, outside the context of a formal lab, would also be a part of some courses, she noted. She commented that, if sufficient staffing is put in place, it would certainly be desirable to have an introductory environmental studies course that included labs.

Dean Call asked when the group envisioned making the major available. Professor Dizard, who has been asked to chair the major program, said the hope is that there would be a major as soon as the motion to create one is approved by the Faculty, since all the courses listed are already in place. The Committee thanked Professors Dizard, Harms, and Temeles, and they departed at 4:30 P.M. The members next voted five in favor and zero opposed, with Professor Servos abstaining, to forward the proposal for a new major in Environmental Studies to the Faculty. The Committee agreed to vote on the substance of the proposal after receiving the

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revised version (which will be appended to the Faculty Meeting agenda for November 6) from Professor Dizard, who will provide it later this week.

The members reviewed the proposal (appended) from the Faculty Computer Committee to revise its charge and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward the proposal to the Faculty and six in favor and zero opposed on the substance of the proposal. The Committee next considered eleven proposals for new courses and voted six to zero to forward them to the Faculty. The members then reviewed the Faculty Meeting agenda for November 6 and voted six in favor and zero opposed to forward it to the Faculty.

The Dean made a series of announcements. He informed the members that Gretchen Krull, Assistant Director of Health Education and Sexual Assault Counselor, has requested that she and some of the Peer Advocates for Sexual Respect be allowed to speak with faculty in the Converse Lobby and to distribute literature after the Faculty Meeting on November 6. She has told that the Dean that some students have raised concerns about having the faculty notify them in advance when sensitive material will be presented in classes. Ms. Krull has noted that students feel that many faculty members do an excellent job of informing them at the beginning of the semester, but may not always be giving specific reminders about sensitive material as the semester progresses. The members agreed that it would be fine for Ms. Krull to set up a table with information and to speak with colleagues after the Faculty Meeting.

Continuing his announcements, the Dean informed the members that the search committee for the Registrar is now fully staffed. The members are Allen Hart, Professor of Psychology and Dean of New Students (Chair); Daniel Velleman, Julian H. Gibbs '46 Professor of Mathematics; Michael Ellison, Associate Dean of Admission and Financial Aid; Marie Fowler, Registration Assistant and Receptionist; Marian Matheson, Director of Institutional Research; Sandra Miner, Director of Database Services; and Janet Tobin, Assistant Dean of the Faculty. Dean Call also informed the members that the College Council has endorsed a Faculty Fellows Program. Faculty members who agreed to serve as fellows will develop and participate in academic programs for first-year students in the dorms. The Dean said he plans to make an announcement about the program at the Faculty Meeting on November 6. The Dean next noted that Peter Schilling, Director of Information Technology, has informed him that the simplest, most durable approach to keeping an annual record of the *Faculty Handbook*, as it is maintained on the College Web site, would be to print a copy once a year that will be kept in the archives in Frost Library and to save the text in a .txt file. The Dean said that this is the approach that will be taken.

The President next brought to the Committee's attention concerns that have emerged—as a result of recent court decisions—surrounding a policy voted by the Faculty in 1987 regarding recruitment on campus. That policy states that an organization wishing to use College facilities for recruiting will be asked each year to have a representative sign a statement affirming that it does not discriminate in its employment policies. Any organization that declines to sign such a statement will be asked to speak at an open meeting on campus to explain in what ways the organization does not follow such a policy and for what reasons.

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President Marx explained that, under Amherst's policy, if military recruiters come to campus, they must discuss at an open meeting the Pentagon's policy that prevents openly gay or bisexual individuals from serving in the military. The President noted that Yale Law School had, until recently, a similar longstanding policy. Under the Solomon Amendment, a statute that allows the federal government to withhold funds from colleges and universities that do not extend the same welcome to military recruiters that they do to other recruiters, the government threatened to withhold millions in grant funding to Yale if recruiters were not accommodated. This September, after an appeals court ruled in favor of the Department of Defense, the law school changed its policy. The United States Supreme Court last year unanimously sided against a consortium of schools seeking to bar, or to set similar conditions on, recruiters from their campuses, President Marx noted.

While lauding the spirit and intent of Amherst's policy and actions, President Marx noted that they are now clearly in violation of the law. He said that he sees three approaches that the College could consider. Amherst could keep the policy without making a public announcement that it was doing so; however, it is likely that it would be disclosed publically at some point that the College was in violation of the law and was either unaware of it, or was purposefully avoiding this subject. Under this scenario, the sciences at the College would be at serious risk, since grant funding could be eliminated, and faculty would no longer benefit from the peer review of essential bodies such as the National Science Foundation. A second option would be to make a public statement that the College would keep its policy, despite the consequences. The sciences again would be seriously threatened. The third option would be to continue to welcome military recruiters to campus and to invite them to participate in the sort of open meeting described in the current policy. If the recruiters chose not to participate, the College would host a meeting during which the military's discriminatory policy would be discussed. This issue is sufficiently important that such a related discussion might be held at the College, whether or not recruiters chose to attend. The campus would benefit from such discussions, the President believes, even if recruiters are not coming to Amherst. Any option should be weighed in light of the College's commitment to oppose discrimination against gay students, while also being sure not to discriminate against students who wish to perform military service, for example, through the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC).

The President asked for the Committee's advice on the best way to proceed with addressing this issue. The Committee felt that the President should inform the Faculty at a Faculty Meeting of the need to modify the current policy. The members agreed that retaining the current policy poses a very significant risk to the sciences at the College, and that most colleagues would recognize that the third option, as outlined by the President, would retain the spirit and goals of the current policy. President Marx thanked the members for their advice.

Under "Questions from Committee Members," Professor Jagannathan asked whether progress has been made in establishing the ad hoc Science Planning Committee. The Dean said that department chairs of science departments would be receiving a letter about the committee this week.

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Professor Sinos next asked if the Faculty Housing Committee might be asked to do a survey to determine the level of satisfaction with the rental housing office. She reported that a number of tenure track colleagues have expressed concerns, at a systemic level, about the operation of the rental housing office. The Dean reported that there is currently a transition in leadership in that office, since Mark Healy, Director of Rental Property, is no longer with the College. Gary Doherty, Assistant Director of Rental Property, is assuming Mr. Healy's duties on a temporary basis. President Marx suggested that, if it becomes necessary to evaluate the services of this office, the Committee on Priorities and Resources (CPR) might be asked to conduct a survey, as they have done for the issue of childcare.

The Committee turned to personnel matters.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Call  
Dean of the Faculty

## Background for the Proposed Environmental Studies Major

A brief history of Environmental Studies at Amherst. For roughly fifteen years, a varied group of faculty have informally met to talk about the need for courses that focused on the environment. These conversations resulted in a new course now and then. Most visibly, several First Year Seminars began to be offered: Fred Cheyette and Ed Belt taught "In Search of a Land Ethic"; and Dick Schmaltz and Tom Looker initiated "The Imagined Landscape," which was joined in various iterations by Jan Dizard, Tekla Harms, Arthur Zajonc, Kevin Sweeney, and Richard Todd; and more recently, Joe Moore and Jan Dizard have taught "The Value of Nature" together and singly.

A few courses relevant to the environment have been regularly offered in the sciences, in courses designed for non-science majors as well as courses intended for students who are science majors. There was talk, some years back, of creating an environmental science major but interest in this was not high enough to gain traction.

Courses in the humanities and social sciences have been fewer and offered less frequently. Nevertheless, over the past decade or so, there have been courses focused on the environment offered in the economics, philosophy, sociology/anthropology, English, and LJST departments.

The creation of the Pick Readership in Environmental Studies in 1999 marked the beginning of a more focused conversation among what turned out to be a growing number of faculty interested in environmental studies as distinct from environmental science. When President Marx announced the Presidential Initiative Fund in 2003, this group, now numbering fifteen to sixteen faculty from across the college, was more than ready to accelerate our discussion and focus on getting environmental studies included in the curriculum.

We met more or less monthly over the course of the academic year 2004-05. We began with a review of what has been done at colleges with whom we regularly compare ourselves. We were chagrined but not surprised to discover that we are virtually alone in having no formal course of study in environmental studies. We then proceeded to invite faculty from those programs we found most interesting (Bates, Middlebury, Tufts, Oberlin, Carleton, and Mt. Holyoke) to come to Amherst and share their thoughts with us.

We pressed our visitors on the choice of studies rather than science and we heard nothing positive about environmental science as a major. Graduate programs in environmental science prefer students who have solid grounding in one or another of the science disciplines. Moreover, environmental science attracts students who are already predisposed to science, thus reinforcing the split between the sciences, on the one hand, and the humanities and social sciences on the other. Environmental studies, by contrast, brought together both faculty and students from a wide range of science and non-science disciplines. After considerable discussion, we decided that Environmental Studies was far more attractive for the reason that all environmental issues require an integration of science, social science, and the humanities. This begs the question of why we need an environmental studies major.

Why do we need an environmental studies major? When some of us first began talking about environmental studies some fifteen years or so ago, the field was in its infancy. Now, there are several professional associations devoted to environmental studies, a number of peer reviewed journals (e.g., Environmental History, Environmental Ethics, Conservation Biology, Restoration Ecology, and Ecological Restoration), well established majors in most colleges and universities, and a growing number of graduate programs offering PhDs in the field.

The impetus for growth in this field came, initially, with the realization that we are facing serious environmental challenges. From the 1970s on, we have been warned of all manner of threats to our health, our economy, and to nature itself. It would be odd if college curricula did not begin to reflect this mounting concern. As scientists began to turn their attention to environmental problems, it quickly became clear that these problems were not going to be resolved by technical fixes. If solutions are to be found, they are likely to require both creative thought about politics, economics, and social priorities and the participation of a citizenry that is prepared to understand issues that cut across the boundaries between science, social science, and the humanities.

Environmental studies was thus conceived as an interdisciplinary endeavor in which scientists and non-scientists could bring their respective disciplinary perspectives to bear on a wide range of issues. Bridging academic disciplines long separated is not easy but the success of environmental studies at a wide range of colleges and universities makes it clear that this is possible. The field is still far from mature, but it has clearly passed the point of having an uncertain future. What may have seemed a passing fad born of volatile public passions several decades ago must now be recognized as a durable and important field of study. Moreover, the experience of colleagues in environmental studies clearly indicates that a program integrating work in science, social science, and the humanities is attractive to students. Indeed, we owe it to our students to offer them a curriculum that broadly reflects both the long-standing traditions of scholarship as well as the emergent fields that will shape scholarship and public policy debates in the world in which they will take their places.

Many lament that our open curriculum allows students to avoid courses that they think lie outside their "comfort zone." An environmental studies major will be, so far as we can tell, the only major that will require majors to take courses in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Moreover, a number of environmental studies courses will be team taught by science and non-science faculty, presenting students with a model of faculty collaborating together in the classroom. This will convey to students the importance of being at least conversant in disciplines from across the curriculum.

The structure of the Environmental Studies major. We envision a major with six core courses, as follows: An Introductory, team-taught course; a course in Ecology; a statistics course with an environmental focus; an environmental economics course; and environmental history survey course; and, sixth, a capstone, team-taught, course to be taken in the first semester of senior year. These courses embody what we think is fundamental to (and unique about) environmental studies—these six courses embrace science, social science, humanities, methodology, and two courses in which scientists and non-scientists work together to make clear the importance of interdisciplinary inquiry.

In addition, there are currently fourteen courses offered regularly, and another 5-7 new courses that will be offered beginning in the fall of 2008 (with authorized searches now underway) from amongst which students may select electives to complete the major requirements. This list includes some courses with prerequisites, particularly in the sciences and in economics, which we hope, over time, can be dealt with by having introductory courses with an environmental studies emphasis that accomplish what the standard introductions (to Chemistry, Economics, etc.) accomplish. This will increase access to advanced science courses for students in environmental studies.

This is to say, up front, that the Environmental Studies Major is a work in progress. We expect that once the major is approved, a number of colleagues and their departments will see attractive ways to contribute courses to the major. Absent a major, however, there is little or no incentive for individual colleagues or departments to invest the time and energy required to devise new courses if there is no major to which these courses contribute. We now have a "critical mass" of faculty (and the courses they will teach) to launch a rigorous major. We are confident that, once launched, the range of courses we will be able to offer students electing to major in environmental studies will expand to make the major's interdisciplinary character even more pronounced.



Proposed Revised Charge

10/12/2007

### **The Faculty Computer Committee**

The Faculty Computer Committee consists of three faculty members appointed by the Committee of Six for two-year terms and one student member elected by the student government. In addition, the Director of Information Technology (IT), the Director of Academic Technology Services (ATS), and the Librarian of the College are ex officio members without vote. One of the faculty members serves as chair. The committee advises the Director of IT and the Director of ATS on topics related to the use of computer technology in support of research and instruction and on other IT issues affecting the academic life of the College. One member of the committee serves as a faculty representative to the College's Internet Strategy Group.

Current Charge, as found in the Faculty Handbook:

Three members of the Faculty, drawn primarily from those disciplines making the most use of technology, form a committee to work with the Director and staff of the Academic Computer Center. The members of the Committee are selected by the Committee of Six. One of the faculty members serves as chair. By definition, members of the Faculty Computer Committee also serve on the Information Technology Policy Committee, a campus-wide committee that addresses policy matters related to the use of information technology at the College.