

ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY



University Curriculum Committee

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March 2, 2018

TO: Susan Kalter, Chairperson, Academic Senate

FROM: Jean Standard, Chair, University Curriculum Committee

RE: Executive Summary – Proposal for the New Major in Environmental Systems Science and Sustainability (ESSS)

The University Curriculum Committee has approved and is forwarding for Academic Senate consideration the attached proposal from the Department of Geography, Geology and the Environment for a new Major in Environmental Systems Science and Sustainability (ESSS).

The Department provided the following rationale for adding the new program:

- The department currently offers about a dozen courses with an environmental focus, some of which have been part of the curricula for decades.
- Eight of the department's tenure-line faculty members pursue environmentally related research agendas and the department administers and provides advising for the Minor in Environmental Studies.
- The introduction of a major program in environmental science is a natural step in the evolution of the department's mission, and Geography, Geology and the Environment is the most logical academic unit from which such a program ought to grow and in which it should be administered.
- The curriculum design is highly interdisciplinary, capitalizing on existing faculty talents from over a dozen academic programs across campus, including geography, geology and the environment. The new program takes advantage of existing faculty interests and strengths in geo-spatial analysis, water science, and human-environment interactions.
- ESSS will attract new student populations (to Illinois State) who are interested in issues related to environmental systems and sustainability that currently go elsewhere for their undergraduate studies. The curriculum of the envisioned ESSS program provides currently untapped opportunities for student learning and training at the University, builds upon existing academic offerings at Illinois State, and amplifies elements of Educating Illinois 2013-2018 in important ways.

The University Curriculum Committee supports the proposal to add this new major degree program.

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Attachments