

Revised April 18, 2007

Board Meeting
November 9, 2006

ESTABLISH THE EARTH SYSTEMS, ENVIRONMENT, AND SOCIETY MAJOR
WITHIN THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEGREE, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, URBANA

Action: Approve the Establishment of an Earth Systems, Environment, and Society Major within the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences Degree, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Urbana

Funding: No Additional Funding Required

The Chancellor at Urbana with the advice of the Urbana-Champaign Senate recommends for approval a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to establish the Earth Systems, Environment, and Society Major within the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences Degree.

The establishment of the Earth Systems, Environment, and Society Major acknowledges that the issues spanning the physical and social dimensions of the earth system have increased dramatically in number and salience in the past two decades. The opportunity has arisen for an enterprising university to place these concerns at the forefront and to develop a curriculum that will bring together the strengths of a variety of disciplinary perspectives into a unified, systems-focused approach. This major will provide a comprehensive interdisciplinary liberal arts education focused on issues of the

earth system and the environment, presenting an undergraduate experience distinct from any currently available on this campus and at peer institutions throughout the country.

This program distinguishes itself with strong grounding in both the geophysical dimensions and the social and human dimensions of the earth system. The departments of atmospheric sciences, geology, and geography currently offer extremely popular general education courses related to earth sciences. Many students taking these courses have expressed interest in a program that transcends the traditional disciplinary boundaries and brings these geophysical systems together with one another and in relation to biological/ecological and social systems. Although benefiting from exposure to research and coursework outside LAS, this major is dedicated to the principles of a traditional liberal arts education, balancing intellectual rigor with a breadth in exposure to different viewpoints and approaches to the earth system.

The Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs in this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The President of the University concurs, pending further review by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.