

3rd National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment
Education for a Sustainable and Secure Future

Environmental Majors

Curricular Needs for Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies Degree Programs

Chair: Molly Anderson

Background:

The Council of Environmental Deans and Directors (CEDD) Taskforce on Curriculum has developed a draft "Core Competencies for Undergraduates in Environmental Programs" document identifying the basic assumptions, core competencies, and some area-specific competencies of undergraduate environmental education. The goal of the document and the process that creates it will be to improve the strength and credibility of academic environmental programs. The Taskforce hosted this session to gather input on the draft from the academic environmental community, as well as thoughts on what next steps should be taken in the definition and implementation of a framework document stating what makes environmental programs unique in teaching skills, knowledge and perspectives not found in traditional disciplinary programs.

Some key questions:

- What skills, knowledge and perspectives make environmental programs unique? (E.g. What skills, knowledge and perspectives does a graduate from an environmental program have compared with a graduate from a traditional disciplinary program?)
- What are the commonalities amongst various environmental programs? (E.g. What does a graduate from an environmental chemistry program share in common with a graduate from an environmental policy program?)
- Is there a core canon of environmental education, and is it useful to identify?

Recommendations:

- Host intensive writing workshop (size and participants to be determined by CEDD Taskforce on Curriculum) to draft a document to circulate for comment to academic community.
- Incorporate comments to create a living document that can be presented to academic administrations, prospective students and employers to emphasize the strengths and potential of environmental programs.
- Reference and build previous competencies work.
- Focus on adoption and implementation by leaders of academic environmental programs, in order to strengthen undergraduate environmental education.