

Deans' Funding Commitment for Proposed Environmental Studies and Science Major
November 18, 2016

In the event that there is clear faculty support to implement a new cross-college Environmental Studies and Sciences (ESS) major, the Deans of A&S and CALS are committed to providing the following resources:

We will provide space for an ESS Office, ideally to be located somewhere in between the two college quads. In addition, we will help facilitate the creation of additional student spaces, perhaps one on each quad.

We will fund two full-time staff positions to manage the ESS Office and the major more generally.

We will provide appropriate compensation for a Faculty Director of the ESS major, in line with compensation for comparable director positions in the two colleges.

We will provide a base budget to the ESS major, in line with base budgets for comparable programs in the two colleges.

We will provide short-term staffing to help get the program started—to help with such things as advertising the new program, creating a web presence, etc.

Given the interdisciplinary focus of the proposed major, we see great value in the creating of team-taught courses that involve faculty from more than one discipline (and ideally also from more than one college). This value is greatest in the introductory course, the capstone course, and potentially in the intermediate disciplinary training courses. Hence, over the first four years that such an interdisciplinary team-taught course is taught, we are prepared to grant full teaching credit to each faculty member who is part of the teaching team as long as (i) each faculty member indeed brings a different disciplinary background and (ii) enrollments in prior years have been reasonable. After the first four years, we can assess whether to continue this policy.

We view it as very important that the introductory course and the capstone course be developed in a clear and thoughtful manner. Hence, to incentivize an interdisciplinary group of faculty to take the time to develop these courses, we are prepared to provide small summer grants to those faculty (where the materials developed will belong to the ESS program and not to the individual faculty). We are also open to considering whether such course development grants would be useful for other team-taught interdisciplinary courses as well.

We will work with the new major to ensure appropriate TA coverage for its courses.