Environment Program Annual Report for AY 2013-14

1. Academic Departments: Identification and Executive Summary

Mission Statement

The Environment Program at Loyola University New Orleans (ENVA) offers students the opportunity to engage in a broad and integrated study of the environment from a variety of academic viewpoints. This interdisciplinary program includes a wide spectrum of courses from three colleges and ten departments; it focuses on understanding the relationships between humans and the natural world from biological, physical, chemical, sociological, economic, cultural, philosophical, and religious perspectives. In addition to presenting an introduction to major global and regional environmental issues facing the planet today, the program attempts to develop in students the kinds of knowledge, wisdom, and problem-solving skills that will enable them to play an active role in understanding our global and regional ecosystems and contributing to their future well-being.

Executive Summary

• Two of the primary goals for the 2012-2015 academic years (see Strategic Plan, section 7) were realized during 2013-14: the Environment Program secured $10,000 for its speakers/programs during the 2014-15 academic year and release time for its Director during that period (see Section 3, Part B). Further, the Program implemented its plan to complete exit interviews, compiled surveys of its graduating seniors, and applied Program Learning Outcomes for quantitative measures of student work in the Program. Based in part on the exit interviews completed at the end of AY 2012-2013, the Director worked with the Math Department to change the required core Statistics class (Math 260/1) to a 3 hour course (Math 260) without a calculus prerequisite (see Program committee minutes, 10/9/13, referenced in Section 7). In addition, the Program directly assessed a principal Student Learning Outcome (SLO) and began discussion of a 5 year plan for direct assessment.

• During the 2013-14 academic year the Program also approved and implemented Honors Program versions of its 3 major concentrations, successfully preserved all of its faculty and staff positions in the face of university budget cuts, developed and distributed a student advising manual, coordinated activities between Law School and undergraduate students, and supported a new environmental student organization (the Natural History Club). Following the academic year, a benefactor outside the university selected the Program to receive a $1,000,000 gift for its growth and development. The Environment Program Committee will revise its Strategic Plan accordingly next year (see section 3).

• At the end of the spring 2014 semester 49 students were Environment Program majors. 28 were seeking an Environmental Science degree and 21 an Environmental Studies degree. 9 of these majors graduated in May. Of those seeking an Environmental Studies degree, 8 maintained a Social Science concentration and 13 a Humanities
concentration. There were also 11 students in the minor program at the end of the academic year, 6 of whom graduated. The Program presented two awards to four recipients at the Honors Convocation: “The Environment Program Award for Leadership and Service” was given to Jennifer Simon (Environmental Science major) and Anne Barkley (Environment minor). “The Environment Program Award for Scholarship” was presented to Jordan Riewer (Environmental Studies, Social Science Concentration major) and Marina Snyder (Environment minor).

- During 2013-14, the Environment Program sponsored or co-sponsored 13 events, including public lectures by Profs. Timothy Morton (“Ecological Awareness 101”) and Theda Skocpol (“America’s Fight Against Global Warming”), two guided canoe trips, a “Frog Walk” in Jean Lafitte park, as well as concert and multi-media presentations by the environmental artist Jed Speare.

2. Unit Profile Summary

Staff Headcount
Christine Murphey served as Administrative Assistant under the auspices of the Humanities and Natural Sciences Dean’s office, where she works part-time in a position split between the Environment Program and the Dean’s office. The following 14 faculty members (2 retired this spring) taught courses in the Environment Program and attended monthly program meetings, although their home departments are elsewhere:

Faculty Headcount
Francis P. Coolidge, Director of Environment Program, Associate Professor of Philosophy
Paul W. Barnes, Professor and Rev. John H. Mullahy, S.J. Endowed Chair in Environmental Biology
John P. Clark, Gregory F. Curtin Distinguished Professor of Philosophy
Anne Daniell, Instructor of Religious Studies
Eric Hardy, Instructor of History
Craig S. Hood (on sabbatical Fall 2013), Professor of Biological Sciences
Frank Jordan, Chair of Department of Biological Sciences
Michael R. Kelly, Chair of Department of Mathematical Sciences
Anthony E. Ladd, Professor of Sociology
Kathleen O’Gorman, Associate Professor of Religious Studies/Loyola Institute of Ministry
Christopher Schaberg, Assistant Professor of English
Aimeé K. Thomas, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences
Robert A. Thomas, Endowed Chair in Environmental Communications and School of Mass Communications
David White, Professor of Biological Sciences

Student Headcount
14 graduates: ENVB 4, ENVH 2, ENVS 2, ENVR (minors) 6
beginning in fall: 61 majors/minors in the EP: 50/11
end of spring: 60 majors/minors: 49/11

**Description of Course Offerings**

http://bulletin.loyno.edu/undergraduate/environment-courses

**Total courses initiated by Environment Program: 2**

Faculty Course Load:
- E. Hardy (1)
- A. Thomas (1)

**ENVA Courses 2013-2014**

ENVA A105 FOUNDATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (Fall and Spring)
ENVA A394 NATURAL RESOURCES LAW

Interdisciplinary ENVA Course 2013-2014 Offerings:

**FALL 2013**

- BIOL-A208 ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION
- BIOL-A330 ECOLOGY & LAB
- BIOL-H295 HONORS SOCIOBIOLOGY
- BIOL-Z236 EVOLUTION  (2 sections)
- CHEM-A105 GEN CHEMISTRY I LEC (2 sections) & LAB
- ENVA-A105 FOUNDATION ENVIRON
- ENGL-A352 LITERATURE IN THE ENVIRONMENT
- PHIL-V245 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
- RELS-A470 SPIRIT OF NATURE WRITERS
- SOCI-A285 SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTER
- SOCI-A355 ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

**SPRING 2014**

- ENVA A105 FOUNDATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
- ENVA A394 NATURAL RESOURCES LAW
- BIOL A208 ECOLOGY & EVOLUTION
- BIOL H295-033 HONORS Human Ecological Science
- BIOL Z244 MISS RIVER DELTA ECOLOGY
- BIOL Z250 TROPICAL ECOLOGY & lab
- BIOL Z264 GLOBAL ECOLOGY
- CHEM A106 GENERAL CHEMISTRY II (2 sections) & lab
- CMMN A475 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS
- HIST A394 THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT
- HIST X294-007 TECHNOLOGY, NATURE & THE WEST
- MATH A260-051 STAT INFERENCE FOR SCIENTIST
- PHIL H295-033 GREENING THE REAL-PHILOSOPHY OF THE ECO-CRISIS
- PHIL V243 ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY
- PHIL V245 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
A. Process of Strategic Planning

The ENVA Program’s process of strategic planning for AY 2013-2014 developed out of a “mini-retreat” for the ENVA faculty in May of 2012 and crystallized in a meeting in June 2012 between the Director (Francis Coolidge) and the CHNS Dean at the time (JoAnne Cruz). The short and long term needs (and correlative goals) for the Program are spelled out in the document “Strategic Plan/Funding Needs for Environment Program” (see Section 7).

B. Top Strategic Goals

Based on the aforementioned Strategic Plan, the top strategic goals for AY 2013-2014 were:

1) Funding a course release (1/semester) for the ENVA Program Director.
2) Funding a $10,000/yr program/speaker budget for the ENVA Program.
3) Funding an extraordinary position in Ecological Economics.

Goal one was realized for the next academic year (2014-2015) through negotiations between the incoming ENVA Director (Dr. Craig Hood, position effective 8/14) and the CHNS Dean (Dr. Maria Calzada) as well as the forthcoming reception of a $1,000,000 gift to the Program (see Section one, above). Dr. Hood will be released from teaching one course during 2014-2015 through funding from CHNS. The second course release (and additional releases in future semesters) will be funded on the basis of the gift to the Program. The second goal (a $10,000 budget) was also realized for 2014-15 through negotiations between Dr. Hood and Dean Calzada.

The ENVA Program Committee will revise its Strategic Plan during 2014-15 in light of the gift to determine whether immediately to fund an extraordinary position in Ecological Economics or to build on the gift and pursue funding for a tenure track or endowed chair position in light of the Program’s longer term planning (see Strategic Plan, section 7).
4. **Budget for Current Academic Year**

The Environment Program paid salary ($7,000) to the Program Director. The operating pool funds were dispersed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense category</th>
<th>Amount of expense</th>
<th>Description of spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments for meetings</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>Student and faculty meetings, retirement reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker expenses</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Honorarium, transportation, traveling expenses, receptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker contributions from other departments for co-sponsored events</td>
<td>-2108</td>
<td>Co-sponsors for speaker events: 1808 (Tim Morton) 300 (Jed Speare).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycled paper supplies for fall 2014 meetings</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student plaque awards</td>
<td>223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing brochures and manuals</td>
<td>1137</td>
<td>Prospective student brochures, advising manual for majors &amp; minors and advisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student field trips</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>Fall and spring canoe trips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5072</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **General statement on how assessment has been conducted within the department during AY 2013-2014**

Assessment of the Program was both direct and indirect. Indirect assessment was accomplished by the Director conducting exit interviews with graduating seniors. In preparation for the interview, students were asked to complete a survey (see Senior Exit Survey, section 7). These surveys contain questions correlated with the top SLO’s (Student Learning Outcomes) for the department (see these SLO’s below). Thus, the scores on these questions allow the Program to indirectly assess student outcomes; the scores are listed next to the the SLO’s below. In addition to these surveys, student performance in the Senior Experience/Capstone course was evaluated and assessed by soliciting input from the students’ supervisors. [All graduating seniors are expected to complete a Senior Experience that involves one of three options: internship/practicum, research project, or independent study project (library based paper)]. All seniors received positive evaluations from the Directors of their Capstone courses (see Practicum Evaluation, Section 7).

Direct assessment of the Program during AY 2013-14 focused on SLO number four. During AY 2013-14 the Director proposed that the six top SLO’s be assessed directly over a cycle of five years, with one SLO to be assessed per year except for
numbers two and three (to be assessed jointly during one year). The Program Committee agreed to assess SLO number four first (during AY 2013-14). The order for the remaining assessments will be determined during AY 2014-15.

Assessment of SLO number four took place by examining and averaging the final exam scores of the Environment majors and minors enrolled in the core course Ecology and Evolution (Biol A208). The direct assessment score is 4.1/5. The indirect assessment score (noted below) is 4.9/5, indicating that the self-assessment by seniors is higher than what is indicated by the test scores. Both assessments, however, reveal the Program is doing well with respect to this SLO.

Top Student Learning Outcomes (SLO’s) for Environment Majors and Minors and Exit Survey Scores

Upon Completion of the Program, Environment Majors and Minors will be able to:

1] Articulate how concepts and terms such as "environment," "ecology," and "nature" function in cultural, historical, literary, philosophical, and religious texts. Score: 4.3/5

2] Understand the seriousness of our contemporary global environmental problems through an examination of their history, causes, socio-environmental impacts, and potential policy/behavioral solutions. Score: 3.6/5

3] Understand that environmental problems are, by their causes and impacts, inherently social problems, with deeper roots in economic and political structures, cultural values and beliefs, technologies, and systems of inequality. Score: 4.8/5

4] Demonstrate fundamental competence in understanding the structure and function of biological ecosystems and ecology. Score: 4.9/5

5] Demonstrate effective oral and written communication necessary to construct, evaluate, and present solutions to environmental problems. Score: 4.6/5

6] Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and qualifications necessary for either acceptance in graduate programs in Environmental Studies/Science [and related disciplines] or the pursuit of environmental careers. Score: 4.5/5

No changes to the curriculum have yet occurred based on these assessment results since they were just compiled in May 2014. The Environment Committee will review these results during AY 2014-15 and, as needed, make appropriate changes to the pedagogy or curriculum of the Environment Program.
6. **Summary of Achievements**

**Faculty Achievements 2013-2014**

Although the Environment Program (EP) has no faculty of its own, fourteen members are listed on the EP website based on courses taught within the program and membership in the Environment Program Committee. A sample of these faculty members achievements include:

**Paul Barnes (Biological Sciences)**

**Publications**


**Presentations:**


**Research Grants:**

2013-2014. Louisiana Board of Regents, Supervised Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE). Elucidating the mechanisms and physiological significance of rapid changes in epidermal UV-shielding in plants. P.W. Barnes (PI) and A. Barkley (UG). $4,500.


**Anthony Ladd (Sociology)**

**Publications**


Ladd, Anthony E. 2013. “Stakeholder Perceptions of Socio-Environmental Impacts From


**Papers Presented at National Conferences**

Anthony E. Ladd, “Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss: Fossil Fuels, Fracking, and the Third Carbon Era.” Association for Humanist Sociology meetings, *October 9-12, 2014, Cleveland, Ohio.*


**Robert Thomas (Mass Communication)**

Host: “EnviroCommentary” air the first Saturday every month at 8 a.m. on WGSO 990 AM.

The radio show focuses on environmental issues facing Louisiana with an opportunity for listeners to call-in with questions and comments. The show is part of a series called "All Things Local," created and co-managed by Loyola School of Mass Communication alumnus Kevin Fitzwilliam 03.

Producer: MRGO-ING, GOING, GONE, documentary film, co-produced by Kevin McCaffrey, covers wetlands destruction, coastal erosion, flooding, political wrangling and mismanaged public resources through interviews with professionals and local witnesses. The film several times in October 2013 on WYES.

**Robert Verchick (Law School)**


**Achievements in service**

**Paul Barnes**


External Evaluator, European Science Foundation COST-Action UV4growth Program-- UV-B Radiation: A Specific Regulator of Plant Growth and Food Quality in a Changing
External PhD Thesis Evaluator, Tendry Randriamanana, “Global change and sexual dimorphism in two Salicaceous species” (Dr. Riitta Julkunen-Tiitto, advisor), University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland. 2014


Anthony Ladd
Interviewed for news story on shale gas development and fracking in Energy Wire, by Pamela King, June 9, 2014.
Interviewed for film documentary on the BP Oil Disaster, After Disasters, produced by Lisa Katzman, May 9, 2014.

Robert Thomas
Member, Loyola Sustainability Committee
http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/campus-sustainability-group
Addressed campus issues concerning climate change and recycling, among other things. Bob Thomas is an active member.

Student Achievements
Awards:
Environment Major Program Award for Leadership and Service: Jennifer Simon
Environment Minor Program Award for Leadership and Service: Anne Barkley
Environment Major Program Award for Scholarship: Jordan Riewer
Environment Minor Program Award for Scholarship: Marina Snyder

Community involvement through internships and local research:
Patricia Bratcher: Studio in the Woods (Coolidge)  
Amanda Clesi: Edible Schoolyard (Coolidge)  
Sarah Drew: The Lens (Thomas)  
Madison Stark: Sierra Club (Coolidge)  
Sarah Eder: Blair School Grocery (R. Thomas)  
Emily Lagard: Audubon Zoo (Schaberg)  
Darlene Spinello: Insectarium (Coolidge)  
Jordan Riewer: Tulane Law Clinic (Coolidge)  
Marina Snyder: Costa Rica Garden & Writing (Schaberg)  
Delarosa: Experiments in Anthropoda Diversity (A. Thomas)  
Jennifer Simon: Fish Ecology Research (Jordan)  
Jake Gibson: Diverse Ecology of Tropics (Jordan)  
Anne Barkley: UV Plant Ecophysiology (Barnes)  

Student Funded Collaborative Research
Mallory Hirschler (ENVB major) was awarded a Louisiana Board of Regents S.U.R.E. grant which will allow her to continue her work during the 2014-2015 AY under faculty mentorship of Professor Frank Jordan (Biological Sciences) conducting a study of recruitment of blue crab larvae into the Lake Pontchartrain estuary. A goal of the
Louisiana Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (LAEPSCoR) project, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), is to increase the participation of women and other underrepresented minorities and in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. The Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE) program seeks to further this goal by fostering opportunities for such students to conduct supervised research with a faculty mentor.

**Anne Barkley** (Environmental Studies Minor) was awarded a Louisiana Board of Regents S.U.R.E. grant which allowed her to work under faculty mentorship of Professor Paul Barnes (Biological Sciences) to conduct a study on the effects of UV light on plant growth during the 2013-2014 academic year. The title of her spring 2014 research presentation was, “Elucidating the mechanisms and physiological significance of rapid changes in epidermal UV-shielding in plants.”

**Loyola Association of Students for Sustainability**

Anne Barkley served as Association President during fall 2013 and Eddie Schneider during spring 2014. LASS was a driving force in the success of the student government passage of the optional green fee for students.

**Loyola Sustainability Committee** [http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/campus-sustainability-group](http://academicaffairs.loyno.edu/campus-sustainability-group) student/staff/faculty collaborative group, also worked very hard for the institution of the green fee.

**Loyola New Orleans Natural History Club**

Jenny Simon served as Club President.

### Supporting Documents

Environment Program Committee Minutes 2013-2014
See: [http://chn.loyno.edu/environment/minutes](http://chn.loyno.edu/environment/minutes)

Environment Program Course Proposals 2013-2014
See: [http://chn.loyno.edu/environment/minutes](http://chn.loyno.edu/environment/minutes) and refer to Appendices of minutes as follows:

- The Urban Environment: October 9, 2013
- Greening the Real: Philosophy of the Eco-Crisis: November 6, 2013
- World Religion and Ecology: April 23, 2014