

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:  
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Northern Iowa to establish a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Resource Management (ERM) in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The ERM major is intended as an interdisciplinary and pan-university program that will complement the existing environmental and sustainability programs currently offered on campus. All required and elective courses are currently in the UNI catalog of courses, and no new faculty will be hired to support this major. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective 1.1; “The Regent institutions provide clear pathways for students to enter, move through and complete their education and career goals.” The Council of Provosts and the Board office reviewed this proposal and recommend approval.

**Background:**

**Description of proposed program.** The Environmental Resource Management (ERM) major is targeted to students who are searching for career options in the broadly-defined ‘outdoor environment’ that is related to natural resources, environmental systems, and sustainable development. Students interested in the ERM program will be interested in the environmental and human management of public and private spaces across differing kinds of environmental systems - from public parks and lands to conservancy units managed by governmental and other non-profit agencies and organizations.

**Academic objectives.** This program aims to serve those students who do not wish to pursue careers as environmental scientists *per se* from more tightly focused ‘environmental science’ programs. It will complement the existing ‘Environmental Science’ and ‘Sustainability’ – oriented programs at UNI.

ERM is interdisciplinary by its nature. Students in the major will greatly benefit from disciplines such as soil science, water science, geology, etc. Skills in geospatial analysis are critical for students who want to do wildlife conservation, landscape design, agriculture, or rangeland management. A B.A. degree with the bundled courses is an effective approach to prepare the students to get entry level jobs in environment management, or for advanced professional training and graduate school. Students with an environmental resource management degree have a very wide range of potential positions. The overall goal for environment management is to manage, improve and protect natural resources to maximize their use without damaging the environment.

Students with this degree can work with private landowners, companies, as well as the government, public or private universities. Specifically, students with this major can work as agricultural/rangeland/park managers, work to conserve soil and water, to delineate and protect wetlands, to suppress wildfires (the need for which is increasing rapidly in recent years), to improve air and water quality, to remediate contaminated sites, to restore ecosystems, and many other jobs that protect the long-term usage of natural resources.

**Need for proposed program.** This major adds a programmatic focus that UNI currently lacks for the many existing environmentally-focused courses already offered in various departments and units. It is intended as an interdisciplinary and pan-university program that compliments the more

localized environmental and sustainability programs offered. Its intended place in the curriculum is to offer students professional career options in management-oriented corporate, government and non-profit organizations. The main objective is to offer undergraduate students a coherent multi-disciplinary major degree program that encompasses the main systems aspects of human-environmental interaction(s).

Students at UNI need a management-oriented career option in the broadly-defined resource management-oriented non-profit, government and/or private sectors as an alternative to those careers that are principally science-oriented and that require a B.S. degree or similar to enter. For those students who are interested in employment with environmental nonprofit organizations, these jobs tend to be administrative, fundraising or of a business nature. Students pursuing an ERM degree will use data and information developed by traditional environmental science — and so they should be exposed to the basics of traditional environmental science — but they will be the end users of such data, not directly generating it. The purpose of the synthesis of environmental, administrative, and recreational knowledge is the effective management of natural resources and landscapes for human enjoyment.

Link to institutional strategic plan. The current institutional mission for UNI is “The University of Northern Iowa provides transformative learning experiences that inspire students to embrace challenge, engage in critical inquiry and creative thought, and contribute to society.”

The ERM major is intended as an interdisciplinary and pan-university program that will complement the existing environmental and sustainability programs currently offered on campus. It is intended that the ERM curriculum is a vehicle to enhance our students’ abilities to reach out beyond the campus limits to engage themselves in those more encompassing issues of human social, political, and economic sustainability in the wider local, regional, national, and international environmental arenas.

Relationship to existing programs. The ERM major is intended as an interdisciplinary and pan-university program that compliments the more localized environmental and sustainability programs at UNI. It is intended that the ERM program should package parts of the existing curriculum to offer students expanded career options.

No programs other colleges in Iowa appear offer this type of resource management program. Although several institutions offer environmental science or studies, those programs differ significantly from resource management. Iowa State University has a program in Natural Resource Ecology and management but it is specifically focused on animal ecology and forestry. Cornell College offers a 3-2 graduate program with Drake focused on forestry. This program brings a broader administrative focus on resource management.

Unique features. UNI has a wealth of expertise in environmental issues across campus. This program meets the growing interest in interdisciplinary programs by solidifying a new and unique program in natural resource management from existing coursework in majors crossing every college.

Resources to establish a high-quality program. All required and elective courses are currently in the UNI catalog of courses and are offered at regular intervals as part of other department-specific programs. The program is created from existing courses and programs already in place across campus. The primary collaborating departments are Geography, Biology, Earth Science; and Kinesiology, Allied Health & Human Services. Additionally some electives are from History, Chemistry, Languages & Literature, Management, and Political Science. Since all of the courses

already exist within UNI programs, the resources and facilities needed to teach them are in place. Course enrollments should be strong given the large number of electives in the program.

Student demand. UNI is one of the 40 U.S. colleges and universities affiliated with the Non-profit Leadership Alliance. UNI students already make up over 6% (30-35) of the total number of students nationwide (500) that are certified by this program each year.

Future ERM students will be able to enhance their interests in environmental careers by combining courses from Biology, Geography, Earth Sciences, and Leisure, Youth and Human Services and the courses included from other locations at UNI to develop the knowledge and skills needed by the various agencies and entities who will in the future be tasked with managing our environmental resources.

UNI is well-positioned to offer this major for the following reasons:

- Many students have asked about careers in non-profit organizations involved in environmental resources. Graduates would be applying for program managers, marketing coordinators, volunteer coordinators, membership coordinators, or development director within environmental conservation organizations, natural history museums, zoos, etc. In addition, students desiring to work for the government such as the National Park Service could be hired into outdoor recreation planners or geographers.
- Given the broad-based expertise that UNI offers, we are well-positioned to offer a program that integrates management with science to students who anticipate environment-based careers but who do not wish to become traditional environmental scientists.

Workforce need/demand. State and local governments likely will continue to look to the limited resources of environmental nonprofits to fill their own budget holes or expect nonprofits to fill their budgetary gaps as governments continue to be underfunded. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, industries with the highest levels of employment in this occupation include: Federal Executive Branch, State Government, Local Government, Social Advocacy Organizations, and Colleges, Universities and Professional Schools. Environment Resource Management is listed as #19-1031 "Conservation Scientists" on the website of Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor, see below).

<http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes191031.htm>

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Employment (1)</b>	<b>Percent of industry employment</b>	<b>Hourly mean wage</b>	<b>Annual mean wage (2)</b>
<a href="#">Federal Executive Branch (OES Designation)</a>	6,690	0.34	\$36.25	\$75,400
<a href="#">State Government (OES Designation)</a>	4,810	0.22	\$26.52	\$55,160
<a href="#">Local Government (OES Designation)</a>	3,470	0.07	\$25.83	\$53,740
<a href="#">Social Advocacy Organizations</a>	1,850	0.92	\$30.48	\$63,390
<a href="#">Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools</a>	740	0.03	(8)	(8)

Cost. New costs are primarily for marketing and recruitment.

	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>TOTAL NEW COSTS</b>
Year 1	\$6700	\$300
Year 2	\$6780	\$300
Year 3	\$6900	\$300
Year 4	\$7000	\$300
Year 5	\$7100	\$300
Year 6	\$7200	\$300
Year 7	\$7300	\$300

Projected enrollment.

Undergraduate	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Majors	15	30	40	50	55	55	55
Non-Majors	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Anticipated sources of students. We estimate that 10-15 students will enroll in this program annually by extrapolating from the current experience of certification of ~30 students/year from the Nonprofit Management program. Most students are expected to be new incoming students with some transfer students from community colleges and current UNI students still seeking a major.

Articulation agreement. Once the program is approved and established we will contact community colleges to seek articulations.

Off-campus delivery. There is no plan to offer this program away from the UNI campus.

Accreditation. There is no programmatic accreditation applicable to this program. It will be covered under existing accreditation approval from the Higher Learning Commission.

Opportunities for internships. UNI will seek internship possibilities at both public institutions and private organizations. Most of the involved departments already have a number of these offered to their current students.

Date of implementation. Creation of the proposed program will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog. The anticipated implementation date is August 2018.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT



**COLLEGE OF  
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**

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June 2, 2017

Patrick Pease  
Head, Department of Geography  
University of Northern Iowa

Dear Patrick Pease:

Thank you for sharing your materials for the proposed major (BA) in Environmental Resource Management (ERM) which will be submitted by UNI to the Iowa Board of Regents for consideration.

I have shared these materials with Helena Dettmer, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), and with our department of Geographical and Sustainability Sciences and the CLAS Environmental Sciences program. Both support your proposal as does the Associate Dean and myself.

This proposed new major is indeed unique, filling a need that clearly exists while helping undergraduates to enter a field that will also support the public good.

We wish you the best success with this proposed program of study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chaden Afzalali".

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
UI Alumni Association Dean's Chair in the Liberal Arts & Sciences

c: Helena Dettmer  
Kathryn Hall

## IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

DATE: September 1, 2017

TO: Patrick Pease, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs & Interim Dean of the Graduate College, David Saunders, Professor and Head Department of Biology and Siobahn Morgan, Professor and Head Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences, Mickey Mack, Head Department of Kinesiology, Allied Health & Human Services, University of Northern Iowa

FROM: Amy Slagell, Associate Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences,  
Iowa State University



David Acker, Associate Dean  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

RE: UNI's Proposed BA in Environmental Resource Management

Thank you for the opportunity to review the curriculum and an early draft of the Form A you are preparing for the Regents. The proposal is an interdisciplinary initiative that pulls together existing course offerings at UNI, plus one new course, to provide a 30-hour core, with the rest of the major completed through a focus in one of four tracks.

In addition to being reviewed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the proposal was shared with the director of ISU's Environmental Studies programs and with the Department of Natural Resources-Ecology and Management.

There were no concerns about exact duplication of programs. The explanation of the training and types of careers that students in the proposed program might pursue varied greatly from track to track with some tracks having a more administrative than scientific focus. Iowa State's current programs in Natural Resource Ecology and Management and Environmental Science are more science-oriented and focused. ISU students who add the secondary major in Environmental Studies, to their primary major will find their way to many of the same careers as students who complete the proposed program at UNI.

Environmental Resource Management is part of a growing area of Environmental programs where there is clear student interest and likely growth in jobs.

We appreciated the opportunity to review the proposal.