



WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REORGANIZATION OF THE EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

RESOLUTION 22-XX

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees, in support of the president's recommendation and with due regard for the professional judgement of the faculty as expressed through their chosen representatives, has the authority to establish and prescribe the principal functions of major academic divisions, colleges, centers, departments, and professional schools within the university; and

WHEREAS, such units are established, altered, or abolished only on vote of the Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, the President, Provost, and Faculty have expressed support for a reorganization of existing units, programs, and personnel within the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department of the College of Science and Math into a revised academic structure that promotes increased interdisciplinary interaction, research, and shared curriculum; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the recommended reorganization of the Earth and Environmental Sciences Department of the College of Science and Math is hereby endorsed; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the President or her delegate are authorized and directed to perform all other actions they deem reasonably necessary or desirable in order to effectuate the Board's directives herein.



**College of Science
and Mathematics**

Kathrin Engisch, Interim Dean
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DATE: April 14, 2022

TO: Dr. Sue Edwards, President
Board of Trustees

FROM: Kathy Engisch, Interim Dean
College of Science and Mathematics

ABOUT: Recommendation to reorganize departmental units within the College of Science and Mathematics to enhance interdisciplinarity of Environmental Sciences program and increase administrative efficiency

The Earth and Environmental Sciences undergraduate major has been housed in the department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. Faculty with environmental expertise in other departments, including Chemistry, Biological Sciences and Physics, have not been involved in the curriculum. A strong interdisciplinary major that belongs to no individual department is better for our students. Therefore, I recommend the reorganization of faculty and staff in the Earth and Environmental Sciences department to elsewhere in the College.

The department faculty and staff were informed of the possibility of relocation on May 14, 2021, in a presentation about the future of the Environmental Sciences undergraduate major. On August 30, 2021, I held an open forum to discuss ideas about the revision of the Earth and Environmental Sciences major into an interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences major; all faculty in the College with interests in environmental sciences were invited to attend, including faculty at the Lake Campus. After several large open forums, an interdisciplinary steering committee was selected that continues to work on developing the curriculum, including building an interdisciplinary framework for the key concepts and skills, and identifying current courses and developing new courses to make up the program of study. The goal for putting the revised major through College and University approvals is Fall of 2022, with a launch in Spring of 2023. The interdisciplinary major will be managed by an undergraduate program director and an interdisciplinary steering committee, in collaboration with the chairs of the departments in which the faculty contributing to the program reside.

A second meeting with Earth and Environmental Sciences faculty occurred on October 29, 2021. I explained my reasoning about the relocation being necessary to realize the full potential of an interdisciplinary undergraduate major in Environmental Sciences. The process for faculty being moved to other departments was also discussed. Briefly, every department's bylaws include an article about faculty moving to the department; it stipulates there must be a vote of the faculty to approve the move.

As of today, every faculty in the current department of Earth and Environmental Sciences has found a relocation home department, and the relocation home department faculty have unanimously voted to accept the EES faculty. Three are moving to Biological Sciences; three are moving to Chemistry; and one is moving to Physics. The three staff have been relocated, replacing others who departed or enhancing our capacity in needed areas.

In summary, I believe the reorganization of the Earth and Environmental Sciences department is necessary for the establishment of a strong interdisciplinary major in Environmental Sciences.