September 1, 2012

To: College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

From: Watershed Institute for Collaborative Environmental Studies, James Boulter, Interim Director

Subject: Request for New Course Prefix: ENV (Environmental Studies) and Placement in General Education Program – Approved by WICES on August 29, 2012

The Watershed Institute for Collaborative Environmental Studies (WICES) has recently undergone tremendous growth as a result of Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition support. It has gained two tenure-track faculty members and will add a third within a year. It has assumed responsibility for two existing interdisciplinary minors, Environmental Science and Environment, Society and Culture, and planning is now underway to add a new interdisciplinary certificate program in Sustainability Studies.

We would like to propose the addition of a new course prefix, ENV (Environmental Studies), and to have its “home” in the Watershed Institute within the College of Arts and Sciences. This will enable WICES faculty or faculty affiliates to offer independent study/directed studies courses and for the development of special topics courses. These courses will be proposed immediately following the establishment of the new ENV prefix. A new prefix is equally important as part of the development of new coursework for the minors and certificate, and to enable WICES faculty to create environmental studies courses within their respective areas of expertise, for the program curriculum or for general education. There is also interest in cross-listing some existing courses in order to more effectively identify them as contributing to the core learning outcomes of the Watershed Institute.

Because of the nature of environmental studies, and in light of the broad composition of the WICES affiliate faculty group, courses with the ENV prefix are anticipated to draw from multiple disciplinary perspectives in the arts, humanities, natural sciences and/or social sciences. Given the diverse, interdisciplinary approach to environmental topics and issues that are likely to be addressed in such courses, there is a strong probability that many of the courses may be appropriate for General Education designation, and be applicable in a variety of areas. So we also request that the ENV prefix be allowed to be placed in the General Education subcategories of GE-IC, Interdisciplinary Studies-Communications, GE-IIF, Interdisciplinary Studies-Natural Sciences, GE-IIIG, Interdisciplinary Studies-Social Sciences, GE-IVE, Interdisciplinary Studies-Humanities, as well as in GE-V, University-Wide General Education, with the General Education placement determined by the nature and content of the particular course offering. The relevant GE placement would be requested as a part of the new course development process and be subject to approval by the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee and University Liberal Education Committee.

Thank you for considering our request. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.