To: College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

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

Subject: Placement in ENPH prefix in General Education Program

The Environmental Public Health (ENPH) program has been a vital part of the UW—Eau Claire curriculum since the late 1970s. During this time, it has moved through multiple organizational homes, including the College of Professional Studies and most recently, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. However, in 2013 it was formally integrated into the Watershed Institute for Collaborative Environmental Studies (WICES) within the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

While this program was outside of CAS, all courses offered for General Educational credit could only satisfy University-wide General Education (GE-V) requirements. Most notably, ENPH 110 (formerly ENPH 210) has served as an introductory-level environmental and health studies course for many hundreds of students, but qualified only as a GE-V elective course. With the addition of a new faculty member this year, we are able to contribute additional GE courses within the ENPH prefix and we recognize existing courses that already meet GE objectives. Given that these courses are being offered by the Watershed Institute, a program in CAS, we feel it would be appropriate and beneficial to allow these courses to apply for GE designations outside of GE-V.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of studies at the interface of human and environmental health, courses with the ENPH prefix are anticipated to draw from multiple disciplinary perspectives in the natural sciences and social sciences and be applicable in a variety of areas. So we request that the ENPH prefix be allowed to be placed in the General Education subcategories of GE-IIF, Interdisciplinary Studies-Natural Sciences and GE-IIIG, Interdisciplinary Studies-Social Sciences. The choice of these two subcategories reflects the uniquely applied science nature of ENPH, which values the roles of physical and biological sciences and also social sciences in the pursuit of positive health outcomes. This is particularly notable in an introductory course, ENPH 115: Introduction to Global Environmental Public Health, which considers health outcomes including those in the developing world, where societal and economic conditions are conspicuous but also highly important factors. Courses could continue to apply for GE-V, University-Wide GE when crossing GE categories I – IV. The General Education placement for a particular course offering would be determined by its nature and content, and would be requested as a part of course revision or new course development processes and be subject to approval by the CAS Curriculum Committee and University Liberal Education Committee.

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