

**Program on the Environment Retreat
University of Washington
Douglas Room, Center for Horticulture
September 20, 2004**

CONSULTANT AND FACILITATOR

Tobey Fitch, Fitch Associates

PARTICIPANTS

Deans: Christine Ingebritsen, Associate Dean, Office of Undergraduate Education
PoE: Richard Gammon and David Secord (Co-Directors), Coll Thrush, Gina Diamond, Michelle Hall, Terry Rustan, Mark Withers

Bothell Campus

- **Business Program:** Kevin Lavery (Management)
- **Interdisciplinary A&S:** Chuck Henry (Environmental Science)

Seattle Campus

- **Arts & Sciences:** Karen Litfin (Political Science), Linda Nash (History), Jennifer Ruesink (Biology), Ed Sarachik (Atmospheric Sciences), Mike Wallace (Atmospheric Sciences), Craig ZumBrunnen (Geography)
- **Business:** Debra Glassman (Finance & Business Economics)
- **Engineering:** Philip Malte (Mechanical)
- **Forest Resources:** Bob Edmonds (Ecosystem Sciences), Bob Lee (Mgmt. & Engineering)
- **Information School:** David Hendry
- **International Programs:** David Fenner
- **Ocean & Fishery Sciences:** Parker MacCready (Oceanography)
- **Public Health & Community Medicine:** Richard Fenske (Environmental & Occupational Health)
- **Office of Research:** Stephanie Harrington (Earth Initiative)

Tacoma Campus

- **Interdisciplinary A&S:** Michael Kucher (History)

Student Representatives: Ian Kraucunas (Atmospheric Sciences), Jackie White (Environmental Studies and Biology), Aaron Best and Bethany Van Etten (Sustainable UW Alliance)

INTRODUCTIONS

PoE's Co-Directors, Richard Gammon and David Secord, welcomed retreat participants, introduced Tobey Fitch, and acknowledged and thanked two former PoE co-directors, Mike Wallace and Craig ZumBrunnen. M. Wallace discussed the founding of PoE and expressed his thoughts about why he continues his involvement with the Program.

MOTIVATION FOR RETREAT

This retreat was strongly encouraged by PoE's deans as a way of re-envisioning PoE and positioning it strongly at the forefront of interdisciplinary environmental educational initiatives at the UW.

AGENDA

- Current Situation: Challenges and Opportunities.
- Focus and Priorities (now through 2007).
- Presentation by Sustainable UW Alliance (during lunch).
- Priorities and Goals.

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- PoE and the Earth Initiative.
- Role of Governing Board.
- Next Steps/Timeline.

OBJECTIVES

1. Review and Clarify PoE Mission and Focus (now to 2007).
2. Understand Opportunities and Challenges for PoE.
3. Draft Priorities and Goals.
4. Draft Measures of Success.
5. Discuss Role of Board.
6. Begin Planning Process.

POE ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

- Identify/target new programs.
- Clarify what students should know and be able to do as a result of an Environmental Studies undergraduate degree or minor, e.g., general education/environmental literacy.
- Clarify PoE's role in relation to other degree programs and initiatives.
- Clarify coordinating role for PoE in Environmental Science/Studies on three UW.
- Role in graduate and undergraduate research.
- Explore balance and rigor in PoE courses.
- Create positive definition of PoE.
- Discuss potential master-level programs, e.g., one in Environmental Policy, and general graduate curricula.
- Define differences between other interdisciplinary programs at UW and PoE, e.g., CHID.
- Develop evaluative tools for horizontal programs.
- Offer assurance of continued robust existence of PoE
- Discuss how decisions are made about and by PoE (what's the decision? how is it made? when does it need to be made? who is making it? approving it? who gives input? who gets informed? clearer definition of governance of PoE).
- Develop strategies for partnering with new initiatives, e.g., the UW Earth Initiative.
- Maintain innovative approach.
- Identify curriculum priorities.
- Should PoE have its own faculty? Is it handicapped by not having such an intellectual core? If so, in what form?
- Develop less "squishy" mission.
- Identify appropriate ways for PoE to be engaged with environmental issues (roles of advocacy and responsibility to encourage critical thinking).

PLANNING PROCESS

- Vision.
- Mission and Focus (Why are we here? Who are we serving? What are we offering? How are we going to do this in a unique way)?
- Priorities and Specific Goals.
- Roles and Expectations.
- Process.
- Relationships within Group/Unit Across Groups.

T. Fitch organized the group into small table discussion sections and asked them to prioritize the top three opportunities and needs that PoE should/could address and for which it is uniquely positioned. Each group posted their results and participants then did a "gallery walk" around the room reviewing each group's list.

PRIORITIES

The following issues and potential activities were recurring themes in most of the breakout sessions:

1. *Best Practices.*
 - PoE should serve as model of best practices in interdisciplinary studies at the tri-campus UW and nationally (e.g. team teaching, experiential learning).
2. *Sustainability.*
 - Status of UW's Environmental Stewardship Statement?
 - PoE should play a role in stimulating inclusion of sustainability across curricula, in association with larger implementation of the UW's Environmental Stewardship Policy.
 - Create a certificate program that would integrate learning and practical work associated with concepts of sustainability, e.g., certificate in sustainable living practices with community-based internships.
 - Thematic focus of curricula (should be balanced and include discussion on the contested nature of sustainability in various disciplines and in different parts of the world).
 - Should a Pacific Northwest track concerning sustainability be created?
 - Infuse sustainability into all departmental programs with PoE providing incentive and support for the units.
 - Focus on students, e.g., develop curricula and student programs around theme.
 - Extend sustainability beyond UW campuses, e.g., sustainability-focused internships.
 - *Create a sustainability unit with PoE that focuses solely on sustainability curricula and that serves as a clearinghouse for all initiatives at the UW and as a catalyst for starting new initiatives.*
3. *Curriculum Reorientation.* Note: The issues identified below will be addressed at a separate Curriculum Retreat scheduled for later in Autumn Quarter 2004.
 - Focus and build on strength of existing B.A. program by assessing current PoE curricula, e.g., how much science should there be in a B.A.? Expand curriculum to meet student needs, e.g., offer an interdisciplinary, introductory (100-level) course on the environment, coordinate 100-level environmentally-related courses offered by other units, strengthen the essential laboratory and field components of environmental education, and establish connections between undergraduate and graduate students in research.
 - Increase focus on global programs, links and opportunities for students.
 - Take UW seriously as an entity/institution *in place* and use that in curriculum development.
 - Should a B.S. in Environmental Science be developed? Assuming it's a good idea, what would it take to do this at UW-Seattle? Is it doable in one degree, can it be done here, i.e., budget and inter-unit relationships may be problematic. Should track and document demand and issue of graduate programs preferring specialized BS degrees vs. Environmental Science Degrees.
 - Convene and coordinate faculty on content and course management and team teaching guidance. Need more connections across campuses.
 - May need dedicated budget to go to departments to strengthen environmental programs.
 - Should the Sustainable Resource Science (SRS) degree program be revived?
 - Offer courses on environmental education, perhaps in connection with College of Education.

Other:

- Find donors interested in supporting environmental education, in consultation with UW Earth Initiative, and pursue external grant opportunities with appropriate UW units as partners, where consistent with PoE's revised mission.
- Internal priorities include better coordination, better communication and better planning, .e.g., clarify/expand role of PoE as information node within campus and community (advising, outreach, programs, solutions). Will be developing a unit-wide communications plan in consultation with D. Hendry of the UW Information School (and PoE board member).

During Lunch Break Aaron Best and Bethany Van Etten from the Sustainable UW Alliance (SUWA) spoke to the group. They can be reached via email at suwa@u.washington.edu. SUWA has been working on its number one goal: a two-part campaign regarding more recognition of building green buildings and using clean energy

on campus. They want to strengthen the “alliance” part of their name and are working towards developing an advisory board. They invited the group to refer any interested students to them. They also would like to develop a way to combine/coordinate their web site with PoE website.

PRIORITIES (continued after lunch)

- *Outreach.* Suggestion was made to strengthen environmental seminars and invite distinguished speakers. It was noted that this is also a funding issue. Ideas included having a quarterly event, continuing to partner with University Book Store to host visiting authors. Need to pursue donor funding to support outreach. Need to determine what exactly we mean by “outreach” in an internal and external context, and where this fits among other competing priorities of PoE’s limited budget.
- *PoE Structure.* Possibility of endowed chair was raised which led to discussion of positive/negative elements around the fact that PoE has no faculty lines. It was noted that a positive element is that it may allow better support because there is no “territorial” faculty/department loyalties and allows for more cooperative efforts. However, having some faculty, even on a rotating basis might allow for better continuity. The question was raised “Does the lack of permanent faculty contribute to the inability to forward PoE’s reputation and recruitment of top students?” Is PoE sustainable without faculty? Would PoE be a stronger, growing unit if it had a small core of dedicated (rotational?) faculty? It was noted that student credit hours are tied to teaching faculty, i.e., FTE and associated dollars do not go to PoE. Can PoE meet its mandate to become a national model in interdisciplinary environmental education without an intellectual core of even a few dedicated, committed faculty, physically housed together and with their main goal and mission to serve PoE students (as opposed to those in dispersed units around the UW)? What might such a faculty group look like and how would it interact with faculty from related units around the university? How would such a model make PoE unique, remain collaborative, and avoid the pitfalls that accompany the benefits of such an arrangement?
- *Quality.* Is PoE creating a cohesive, outstanding program that’s more than the sum of its parts? How does it create an “intellectual core”? If PoE has support (financial) for its mission it could buy the faculty time it needed. Originally time was donated and bought; over time more of it has been donation. Assessment of the degree program’s intellectual rigor will be ongoing. A particular challenge will be to address the varied conceptions of what is meant by “rigor” inside and outside of the natural sciences.
- *Sustainability.* PoE supports sustainability globally and the UW initiative locally through:
 - Curriculum development in support of units, generally putting the content into sustainability.
 - Other related student projects, service learning, graduate and undergraduate projects.
 - Potential opportunity for projects for PoE capstone students.
 - Communication: speakers, web communication (assess the mode).
 - Support and advice for student organizations.
- *Coordination.* Discussion of PoE curriculum/programs and how to coordinate with other departments/courses; capture freshman through proposed 100 level courses. Offer “portal” classes to environmental studies. Can this level of coordination be done without dedicated faculty?
- *Graduate Programs.* What need is currently unmet and may increase in demand over the next few years? Can PoE address these needs? Question raised: “After students receive a BA or BS, where can they go to further their education in environmental studies/science? Currently, Western Washington University and The Evergreen State College offer such programs. What can PoE do more deliberately for opportunities for graduate education? How can it work with units to offer interdisciplinary graduate programs that meet clear needs that are currently unmet?
- *Miscellaneous.*
 - PoE needs to be deliberate about its decisions and activities, and accountable for them, over the next several years.
 - Governing Board has grappled with the appointment of an External Board for several years. External Board would potentially serve as advocate for PoE in the community and perhaps provide funding/endowments. This issue should now be considered in the context of UWEI’s existence.

DRAFT

ADVOCACY

As an organization PoE:

- Enables people to make informed choices and conclusions about environmental problems.
- Strives for balance.
- Advocates for environmental education.
- Advocates for the importance of exploring and addressing environmental issues.
- Advocates for the application of science to environmental questions and encourages that decision-making be informed by analytical data, scholarly analysis and reasoned discussion.
- Supports its students who decide to be environmental advocates, equally among myriad other career and personal options. Students who receive a PoE education should be better at the analysis of complex environmental issues no matter the forum in which they apply that analysis.
- Recognizes and critically reflects on the fact that the history of Environmental Studies is rooted in activism.
- Understands that policy decisions are based on at least three sets of interrelated factors: natural science, law/policy/management and ethics/values.
- Balances a desire to have an outstanding position and reputation with the reality that PoE cannot please all the people all the time. Should not excessively allow fear of critics to alter PoE's course of action.
- Wants its students to understand how and why policy decisions are made.

EARTH INITIATIVE

Stephanie Harrington represented the Earth Initiative during a discussion on the role of the Earth Initiative and its relationship to PoE. Discussion included the following:

- The Earth Initiative supports the efforts of PoE.
- More “branding” of environmental studies is needed at the UW. Environmental studies, which includes numerous degree programs and initiatives across three campuses, is collectively exceeded in magnitude only by Health Studies at the UW and yet there seems to be little recognition of this fact.
- The Earth Initiative is working to let the UW community know that it is available to interact with them in regard to speakers and funding (not just research funding, but also curriculum development funding and faculty).

SUMMARY

The group brainstormed priorities for the next 2-3 years for PoE. The intention was for the directors and staff go to work on renewed vision/mission statements for PoE along with a draft set of goals, based on the retreat discussions, for vetting by the PoE Board. Specific measures of success should be developed for each priority item consistent with PoE's mission and vision. The retreat notes below will be outlined, clarified, and expanded later in a separate document prepared for the board by the PoE directors and staff.

UNDERGRADUATE

Vision

Define and catalyze excellence and innovation in innovative environmental education at the UW. Specifics might include reaching 200 majors in the BA program by 2008 and solidifying several graduate programs.

Priorities

- B.A.
- GENERAL: Revise curriculum for BA program based on a set of clear learning objectives consistent with UW and national standards.
 - ‘freshen up’ curriculum
 - develop 100-level introductory course
 - revisit target number of majors (is 200 still a good number?)
 - devise tracking and reporting methodologies concerning student outcomes (jobs, acceptance to graduate school, etc.)

DRAFT

- B.S.
 - decision about proceeding with development of B.S. by 2007.

Graduate

- Continue to promote interdisciplinary study at the graduate level with interdisciplinary certificates.
- Certificates in Environmental Management and Biodiversity/Conservation Biology should involve at least the following disciplines: policy, law, physical science, health science, biological science, social science, business.
- Graduate work needs to be done in such a way that it sets PoE up for long-term success with an interdisciplinary master's program (should be done after B.S. becomes successful). One measure of success will be the number of students enrolled in the certificates.

Other

- Increase awareness of program through advertising, establishing more connections both across campuses and in the community.
- PoE can play a role in establishing more shared research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students.
- Strengthen the sense of an environmental community for students and faculty.
- Devise and implement a comprehensive communication plan.

TENTATIVE TIMING – Schedule to evolve with events of the year.

1. **Now – 2007:** Check, re-set mission
2. **By Oct 30, 2004:** Draft of today's meeting with clearly stated goals presented to Board and distributed to all participants.
3. **Before Nov 11, 2004:** Draft priorities and goals, clarify measures of success
4. **Before Nov 11, 2004:** Review PoE human and financial resources. Begin aligning staff and director duties with priorities.
5. **Before Dec 1, 2004:** Review undergraduate curriculum.
6. **By Nov 24, 2004:** Clarify workload and staff goals
7. **By Nov 24, 2004:** Draft communications plan
8. **Jan 2005:** Draft budget for 2005-2007 biennium

CLOSING

Richard Gammon and Dave Secord thanked all participants and Tobey Fitch for contributing to PoE's planning process and assured all that they would be kept up-to-date concerning the implementation of priorities identified. [They expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm and excellent ideas of the many PoE stakeholders (directors, staff, students, board, teaching faculty, and deans) who devoted a day of their time to the retreat.