

**BYLAWS**  
**of the**  
**Environmental Studies Program**  
**University of Wisconsin-La Crosse**

I. Title: Environmental Studies Program, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse

**II. Organization and Operation**

Program members are governed by six interdependent sets of regulations:

1. Federal and State laws and regulations;
2. UW System policies and rules;
3. UWL policies and rules;
4. College policies and rules;
5. Shared governance by-laws and policies for faculty and academic staff; and
6. Program by-laws

A. Preamble

1. Mission:

The UW-La Crosse Environmental Studies Program educates and transforms students through interdisciplinary and experiential learning. We foster student engagement with the principles of sustainability, stewardship, justice, and citizenship, from local to global levels.

2. The Environmental Studies Program values:

- innovative approaches that enhance the integration of the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities
- shared experiences, service learning, and field trips, which create a sense of individual identity and group cohesion
- personal connections to local environments and cultivating a sense of place
- knowledge of and commitment to environmental stewardship, through community partnership and shared expertise

3. Environmental Studies Program Student Learning Outcomes:

- Integrate equity and complexity in approaching environmental problems.
- Differentiate multidisciplinary approaches to environmental issues.

- Reflect critically about their roles as citizens, consumers, and participants in an interconnected world

## B. Meeting Guidelines

1. Program meetings will be run according to the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order (<http://www.robertsrules.com/>) and WI state opening meeting laws <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/office-open-government/Resources/OML-GUIDE.pdf> summary at <https://www.uwlax.edu/info/meetings/>
2. Minutes will be recorded by a voting member or the program ADA and distributed in a timely fashion to program members. Copies of the minutes of program meetings and committee meetings shall be kept in a secure location by the program. Minutes from closed meetings will be taken by the Program Director and written within one week of the proceedings. They will be available by request.

## C. Definitions of Membership & Voting Procedures

1. Leadership membership of the program includes the Program Director (regardless of tenure department) and any instructional staff whose position is budgeted through the environmental studies program (i.e. red-booked IAS and any tenure-track faculty). These individuals have primary decision-making responsibility for running the program, including curriculum decisions, program assessment, and program priorities. The program director's duties are given below.
2. Program membership includes all those in the Leadership team described above and all instructors teaching core courses in the program any given semester.
3. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, a simple majority of those voting carries the vote. Voting occurs with a voice vote or a hand vote and any member can call for a roll call vote. Proxy voting is not allowed. Members who join virtually and have heard all the deliberation are eligible to vote.

## D. Definitions of Quorum and Majority

A quorum for the purpose of conducting business at any program meeting shall be a simple majority of the persons eligible to vote. For personnel meetings a quorum is achieved with 2/3 of those eligible to vote.

## E. Changing by-laws

These by-laws may be amended by the following procedures: A two-thirds majority of the current program membership present and eligible to vote on by-laws is required to amend the by-laws; Any proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed one week in advance of the meeting in which they will be discussed and/or voted on.

### III. Faculty/Staff Responsibilities

- A. Responsibilities of the faculty members and all instructional academic staff of the program shall include regular attendance at program meetings, engagement in the activities of the Environmental Studies Program, and participation in the promotion and development of the Program.

Total workload for IAS is defined as a standard minimum teaching load or additional workload equivalency activities: <https://www.uwlax.edu/globalassets/committees/faculty-senate/20200514-policies-fs.pdf>

- B. Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)

The program will follow the UWL SEI policy and procedure available on the Faculty Senate webpage. Results from the Faculty Senate approved SEI questions are required for renewal and promotion of Instructional Academic Staff in the form of (1) the single motivation item and (2) the composite SEI consisting of the 5 common questions.

For IAS promotion SEI scores will be reported using the Teaching Assignment Information (TAI) form. The program will add both the motivation item and the composite SEI fractional median for each course. In addition, the candidate's overall fractional median for the term on both the single motivation item and the composite SEI are reported. Finally, the program adds the program's fractional median for both the single motivation item and the composite, the minimum and maximum composite SEI for the department, and the candidate's rank in SEI scores relative to all program instructors for that term (e.g. 3 of 15).

The program will use the following additional open-ended questions as part of its SEI form:

1. *Did you find the assignments for this course useful? Please suggest changes in assignments, course materials, text, class operation, etc., that would enhance your learning in this course.*
2. *Briefly describe the most meaningful experience for you in this course. Please include why you feel it was significant.*
3. *Would you recommend this class to a friend? Why or why not?*

4. *Were there teaching techniques that enhanced your learning? (For example, were there presentation styles, questioning skills, teaching aids, body language, or humor used by the instructor that enhanced your learning?)*

5. *Were there teaching techniques that detracted your learning? (For example, were there presentation styles, questioning skills, teaching aids, body language, or humor used by the instructor that detracted from your learning?)*

All SEI scores and answers to the open-ended questions will be provided to instructors.

#### **IV. Merit Evaluation**

The results of merit reviews for all ranked faculty and instructional academic staff (IAS) who have completed at least one academic year at UWL are due to the Dean's Office on Dec. 15 annually. Merit reviews reflect activities during the prior academic year ending June 1.

##### **A. Evaluation Process & Criteria**

All IAS are evaluated in three categories weighted as follows:

Teaching (60%)

Service (20%)

Professional Development/Scholarship (20%)

All IAS members who are eligible for merit pay have a June 1st deadline for entering teaching, scholarship, and service activities into the electronic portfolios system (Digital Measures) on activities from the prior year June 1st – May 31st. This report must be submitted electronically or on paper to the program Director by June 1<sup>st</sup> for the prior academic year activities.

The Director will then review the portfolios and assign a numerical merit rating in each category in the range 4 to 1, with 4 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest score. The following rating scale will be used in each category:

High Merit: 4.0 – 3.0

Merit: 2.9 – 1.5

Non-merit: 1.4 – 1

An overall rating for each individual will be arrived at by multiplying the merit rating in each category by the category's respective weighting as given above. Then these three scores will be summed to obtain an overall merit rating using the same scale for High Merit, Merit and Non-merit given above.

As an example, person A is assigned a rating of 3 in Teaching, 2 in Service and 4 in Professional Development/Scholarship. Then the overall merit rating would be:

$(3 \times 0.60) + (2 \times 0.20) + (4 \times 0.20) = 3.0$  which would place person A in the High Merit category for his/her overall merit rating.

Each IAS member will receive written notification from the Director of his/her merit rating by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The written notification will include the numerical rating in each category as well as the overall numerical rating.

The basis for evaluating each category may include, but is not limited to:

#### Teaching

- Classroom visits by the Director
- Peer evaluations supplied in writing to the Director
- Student evaluations – both numerical scores and written student comments
- Teaching awards and/or nominations for teaching awards
- Evidence of innovative and/or effective teaching methods
- Syllabi that align with the Program's student learning outcomes (SLOs)

#### Service

- Effective service to the Environmental Studies program as evidenced by positive outcomes of the service activities
- Effective service in the community on behalf of or representing the Environmental Studies program
- Effective service on college and/or university committees
- Effective service on community and/or regional/state committees or project

#### Professional Development/Scholarship

- Attendance at environmental or other conferences/workshops that enhance teaching and/or the Environmental Studies program overall
- Presentation of scholarship (of teaching or otherwise) at conferences/workshops
- Working with a student on independent research in an environmental area

#### B. Distribution of Merit Funds

In the event that money is available for Merit distribution, the Environmental Studies program will determine the allocation of merit funds to each individual according to the following formula:

$mx + HM(x + 100) = \text{total merit funds available for distribution}$

$m = \text{number of individuals receiving a Merit rating}$

$HM = \text{number of individuals receiving a High Merit rating}$

$x = \text{merit dollars for each individual receiving a Merit rating}$

$x + 100 = \text{merit dollars for each individual receiving a High Merit rating}$

### C. Appeal Procedures

If an individual disagrees with his/her merit rating, the individual must submit a written appeal to the Director, stating the reasons for his/her disagreement within one week of being informed of his/her merit rating. The Director will then provide a written response to the individual after consulting with the Dean of the College of Liberal Studies. If the response from the Director is not satisfactory, the affected individual may appeal directly to the Dean of the College of Liberal Studies.

### V. Faculty Personnel Review

This section is not applicable at this time.

### VI Instructional Academic Staff Review

#### A. Annual Review

In Accordance with Faculty Personnel rules UWS 3.05-3.11 and UWL 3.08, academic staff will be evaluated annually. <https://www.uwlax.edu/human-resources/resources/chairs-supervisors/supervisor-training/supervisor-performance-management/#expand-170854>

The evaluations will be performed by the Program Director.

#### B. Promotion Procedures

Policies and procedures guiding promotion for IAS are available at <https://kb.uwlax.edu/103704>

1. The Environmental Studies IAS Promotion Committee will include the Program Director and any IAS in the Program holding a higher rank than that of the person applying for promotion. Additional committee members will be selected by the Program Director to create a committee of five members, including at most one additional faculty member with expertise in Environmental Studies; all other members should be IAS holding a higher rank than that of the person applying for promotion.
2. The Environmental Studies IAS Promotion Committee will meet in October to consider applications for Promotion. IAS members eligible for promotion will be notified no less than 20 days in advance of the Committee meeting and asked to prepare the portfolio for review using the Digital Measures as described on the HR website.
3. At least one week prior to the meeting, the IAS member will provide the portfolio to the Program Director, who will add the required departmental information and share the completed report with the Committee. All committee members will review the portfolio prior to the meeting. The IAS member will be given an opportunity to provide additional oral or written support for the promotion prior to the meeting going into closed session.

4. A simple majority vote will be used to determine the Committee's decision, and the Department Promotion Committee Transmittal & Signature Page will be completed to record that vote (<https://www.uwlax.edu/globalassets/offices-services/human-resources/transpage.pdf>). The IAS member will be notified within seven days of the results of the hearing. The Program Director will write a letter of support that will accompany the candidate's portfolio, which is then sent to the Dean.

### C. Appeal Procedures

In the case of a negative retention or career progression decision, the affected instructional academic staff member may make appeal directly to the Dean of the College of Liberal Studies.

## **VII. Non-Instructional Academic Staff Review**

This section is not applicable at this time.

## **VIII. Governance**

A. The Director shall be the only officer of the Program.

1. The Director shall be selected and appointed by the Dean of the College of Liberal Studies.

2. Administrative duties of the Director:

a. Shall preside over program meetings

b. Shall prepare agenda for meetings, and announce their time and place of occurrence.

c. Shall supervise the preparation of schedules and recruitment of personnel to staff ENV courses; shall work with departments in which courses counting toward the ENV minor are taught regarding the regular staffing and offering of such courses.

d. Shall represent the needs, views, and assessment of the state of the program to the administration.

e. Shall exercise leadership in all matters concerning the academic responsibilities and welfare of the Program.

f. Shall oversee the Program budget and approve expenditures; shall prepare requests for budget increases and submit to the College of Liberal Studies and the Joint Budget and Planning Committee as appropriate.

g. Shall perform all additional relevant functions designated in the Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article ~~VI~~, **IV**, H.

h. Shall provide leadership for strategic planning, assessment, curriculum development, and special event programming in collaboration with Program staff.

i. Shall promote the Program and recruit students to it.

#### B. Standing Program Committees

There are no standing committees of the program at this time.

#### C. Programmatic Assessment Plan (see Appendix A)

### **IX. Search and Screen Procedures**

The department will follow hiring procedures prescribed by the University's Office of Human Resources (HR) in conjunction with AAOD and UW System and WI state regulations. The UWL Search and Screen Policy and Procedures are to be followed for all faculty and staff recruitments at UWL:

<https://www.uwlax.edu/human-resources/services/talent-acquisition-and-employment/recruitment/>

### **X. Student Rights and Obligations**

#### A. Complaint, Grievance, and Appeal Procedures

The Complaint Process will be handled in accordance to the student handbook guidelines found at <https://www.uwlax.edu/student-life/student-resources/student-handbook/#tm-faculty-or-course-grievances> and stated below.

### 1. Informal Complaints:

If a student has a concern or a complaint about a faculty member or course, the general process for making **informal complaints** is outlined in steps 1-3 below. Students are welcome to bring a friend or a UWL staff member with them during the following steps. Students who report concerns/complaints/grievances, whether informally or formally, will be protected from **retaliation** and have the right to expect an **investigation** and the option to have regular updates on the investigation:

- A. The student should speak directly to the **instructor**.
- B. If the student is uncomfortable speaking with the instructor, or they are unsatisfied with the solution, they should go to the **chair of the faculty member's home department**.
- C. If the student is uncomfortable speaking with the department chair, or the chair is the faculty member in question, or they are unsatisfied with the solution, the student should speak with their **college dean**.

Depending on the specifics of the student's concern, it may be helpful for them to reach out to additional offices:

- Complaints/concerns/grievances about grades, teaching performance, course requirements, course content, incivility, or professional ethics should follow the process outlined above. Students may also wish to seek support from the Student Life Office.
- Complaints/concerns/grievances related to **hate/bias** and **discrimination** may follow the process outlined above, and in addition or instead students may contact the Campus Climate office and/or submit a hate/bias incident report.
- Complaints/concerns/grievances related to **sexual misconduct** may begin with the process outlined above, but will need to also involve the Equity & Affirmative Action and Violence Prevention offices, and/or the Title IX Team. Students should know that faculty members are mandatory reporters of sexual misconduct, but that confidential resources are available to them.

### 2. Formal Complaints:

If the student is unsatisfied with the solution of their informal complaint, they have the right to file a **formal institutional complaint** with the Student Life office.

### 3. Additional Information related to Grade Appeals

This appeal should follow the Informal Complaint steps outlined above and must take place before the end of the semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was recorded. As stated in the process above, the student should first discuss this difference with the instructor. If a student-instructor meeting is not possible, or if such a meeting does not result in resolution of the difference, the student should contact the Program Director. After meeting with the student, the Director will discuss the student concern with the instructor, if possible. Following these meetings, the Director will make a recommendation to the instructor regarding the grade change. Any decision to change a grade remains that of the instructor, unless the instructor is no longer available, in which case any decision to change a grade is made by the Program Director.

## B. Expectations, Responsibilities and Academic Misconduct

### 1. Expectations and responsibilities

Students who enroll in courses offered by the Environmental Studies Program are expected to attend and participate in these classes. They are expected to devote sufficient non-class time to the study of course material and to complete all class assignments in a timely manner and to undertake additional study as necessary to demonstrate satisfactory mastery of the material.

### 2. Academic and Nonacademic Misconduct Policy:

See University of Wisconsin System policy at:

<https://www.uwlax.edu/student-life/our-services/student-conduct/academic-misconduct/>

<https://www.uwlax.edu/student-life/our-services/student-conduct/nonacademic-misconduct/>