



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Environmental Studies Program

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To: Su Swarat, Senior Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning, Accreditation Liaison Officer, and Jessica Stern, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

From: Elaine Lewinnek (coordinator), Nicole Seymour (graduate advisor) and the Program in Environmental Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Subject: Program's Response to Dean's Evaluation of the Master of Science in Environmental Studies

Date: September 12, 2024

We appreciate this thoughtful feedback from our Dean's office and our PPR reviewers, highlighting the ways that our nimble program prioritizes high-impact practices, interdisciplinary community, and career relevancy.

We look forward to enacting the Dean's suggestions about reducing bureaucratic barriers in both admissions and hiring, deepening faculty involvement across colleges, and improving our recruitment plans. We have already begun implementing some of the PPR reviewers' suggestions: our AY 24-25 course offerings include faculty from NSM, HHD, and COE as well as HSS, and both our fall 24 welcome-back-hike and fall 24 advisory board meeting included more faculty from more colleges than in recent memory. We have a new recruitment committee, consisting of faculty from multiple colleges, and we have had great success with our pilot Grad Ambassadors program, sending our own diverse graduate students to address undergraduate CSUF classes in NSM, ECS, HHS, and local sustainability nonprofits, to encourage more students to consider a graduate degree in environmental studies. One of our grad ambassadors took the initiative to contribute impressive reels to [our social media](#). We have already worked with our Dean's office to find ways to hire our students to continue these successful programs, something that also helps increase our students' sense of belonging, while also fulfilling the PPR reviewers' suggestion to try to reduce the burden on program leadership. We have also begun working with our Dean's Office to offer a study-away Intersession course in January 2026, studying environmental change at the CSU Desert Studies Center in Zzyzx.

Recently, both Arizona State University and the University of California San Diego instituted [a requirement that undergraduates take a climate change course](#), following the recommendations of the Aspen Institute's [Higher Ed Action Plan](#). As we prepare our students for the workforce in a changing climate and also help address students' eco-anxiety, we are working with the GEOG department to explore ways to institute an undergraduate certificate in Sustainability here at CSUF, to increase the pipeline of students for our program. We also plan to extend our recruiting efforts to Arizona State as well as UCSD and other colleges who are now requiring an undergraduate course in climate change.

Ours is an increasingly relevant program and we look forward to continue supporting its excellence.

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