

**STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT FOR:**  
**Environmental Studies (ENVS)**

**1. Imperatives:**

1. Preserve, strengthen, and extend NIU's teaching and learning setting in preparing highly qualified effective professionals who are focused on environmental issues as well as sustainable technologies and energy.
2. Develop a strategy for investing in multi-disciplinary (CEET and CLAS) scholarship and research. The activities include and are not limited to: obtaining external funding support from federal, state, and regional grants; increased publication rate; international recognition of program; and development of undergraduate and graduate degrees in ENVS.
3. Strengthen and extend NIU's global/regional impact by preparing students ready to meet careers in industry, small business, federal, state and local government, and academic research that focus on ENVS issues. Collaborate with the external stake holders to conduct a needs assessment and be responsive to the needs of the region in the areas of environment.
4. Assist NIU in being an institution of "first choice" for faculty, students, and staff for their academic and training needs in ENVS related fields.

**2. Goals:** The goal is to address societal and scientific needs for a greater understanding of the environment, sustainable technologies, and energy issues. Recognizing the complexity of environmental issues, a holistic approach will be taken that connects foundational and applied environmental science, technology and energy, and societal and policy issues.

**Rationale:** It is now widely agreed that environmental issues, from climate change to land and water usage, to energy conservation represent critical challenges for our society. NIU is developing a new program in Environmental Studies that will allow our students to develop careers in diverse and rapidly developing field. The ENVS undergraduate major will be an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary program that will draw from existing and new curricula in the natural sciences, engineering, technology, law, humanities, and social sciences. These programs will be designed to provide a broad, but rigorous education in environmental issues and problem-solving. The programs in energy will focus on green technologies and green manufacturing with a focus on facilities planning and energy auditing.

**3. Champions:** Melissa Lenczewski, Interim Director (GEOL); Mark Cordes (LAW); David Goldblum (GEOG); Richard King (BIOS); Cliff Mirman (TECH); Eric Mogren (HIST); Reed Scherer (GEOL); Brendon Swedlow (POLS); Kendall Thu (ANTH); Carl Von Ende (BIOS).

**4. Strategies and Action steps:**

*Strategy 1. Development of interdisciplinary undergraduate degrees with subsequent graduate program in ENVS.*

a. Action Steps: Establish working group of faculty from across NIU that will establish an undergraduate degree program with subsequent graduate program. This development will include several areas of study from natural sciences, engineering, technology, law, humanities, and social sciences.

b. Timeline

FY 10:

- 1) Develop undergraduate curriculum with new ENVS core courses
- 2) Perform gap analysis of current faculty to fulfill the needs of the ENVS program
- 3) Redefine current environmental studies minor to include the new ENVS core courses
- 4) Obtain university approval for new degree authority

FY11:

- 1) Hire new faculty members, including a Director
- 2) Obtain IBHE approval for new degree program
- 3) Expand ENVS curriculum to incorporate the new hires

c. Requisites: Establish of an ENVS office with classroom and laboratory space; Hire new faculty members

*Strategy 2. Develop a research program in ENVS related fields.*

a. Action Steps: Develop collaborative proposals to Federal agencies to fund grants in support of interdisciplinary research on ENVS related fields.

b. Timeline: Establish needs in FY 10 and create cost centers by FY 11. Once the hiring needs have been determined from the gap analysis, we will investigate the possibility of synergies with Argonne National Laboratory, to see if any of the faculty hires might productively be pursued as joint hires with ANL.

c. Requisites: Identify key facilities, hire new faculty, provide initial funding to bring them to full capacity, and establish them as cost centers.

**5. Evaluation Plan:**

*Strategy 1. Development of interdisciplinary undergraduate degrees with subsequent graduate program in Environmental Studies.*

1. Milestones:

- a. Development of undergraduate curriculum and subsequent graduate program
- b. Hire new faculty with ENVS focus
- c. Recruit a diverse student body from existing NIU students, transfer students and high school students

2. Performance Indicators:

- a. Approval by university of the minor and then the full degree with subsequent IBHE of degree programs
- b. Development of new courses in ENVS and other allied departments.
- c. Increase number of majors and graduation rates of native and transfer students in all of the programs within the realm of energy and the environment.

3. Summary process: A summary report will be assembled showing the full development of the undergraduate curriculum and impact on students.

*Strategy 2. Develop a research program in ENVS related fields.*

1. Milestone:

- a. Hiring new faculty and director with ENVS focus
- b. Increase in number of graduate students with ENVS focus
- c. Identify internal and external potential research collaborations
- d. Identify potential funding sources

2. Performance Indicator:

- a. Increase in research and scholarship related to energy and the environment
- b. Development of graduate program in ENVS
- c. Increase funding and attending of meetings/conferences

3. Summary Process: The new director will assemble a report of activities of all faculty associated with the ENVS program.

**6. Priority (immediate, high, long term):** All goals/strategies are high priority and have started in FY10.