



January 8, 2010

TO: Dr. Eric Hellgren  
Chair, Graduate Council

SUBJECT: Geosciences PhD Proposal

The Faculty of the Department of Geography and Environmental Resources is concerned about the impacts of the proposed addition of a new PhD in Geosciences on the viability of the existing interdisciplinary Environmental Resources and Policy (ERP) program which facilitates doctoral-level research in our Department. The main areas of concern are:

1. Ten years ago, we merged the PhD programs in Geography and Geology to create the interdisciplinary ERP program. The ERP is now based in the Graduate School and serves faculty from departments in three Colleges. If the inter-college ERP program does not survive, the Department of Geography and Environmental Resources will have to make an attempt to bring back our PhD program.
2. The name "geosciences" covers several disciplines and sub-disciplines including four geographic fields that are covered by the Faculty in our Department, namely, climatology, meteorology, water resources and geographic information science (GIS). The existing concentrations of the ERP program do not accommodate the two geographical areas of atmospheric science. We hope that the geosciences faculty in our Department will obtain access to a new concentration in the ERP and possibly a modification to the name of the ERP program to accommodate their PhD level research and recruitment of doctoral students. In our view, this is preferable to proposing a new PhD program in Geography. However, the proposed Geology program, if approved, would preempt the use of the name "geoscience" in the revised name of the ERP or in the proposal for a new PhD program by our Department.

In summary, the Department of Geography and Environmental Resources does not wish to object to the aspirations of the Faculty in Geology Department provided that the impact of the proposed PhD program on the ERP program and thus on graduate research in our Department is minimized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "B. Dziegielewski".

Benedykt Dziegielewski, Acting Chair and Professor  
Department of Geography and Environmental Resources