PROPOSED NEW DEGREE PROGAM IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

Workforce Training for the Green Economy:
The Science, Policy, and Technology of Renewable Energy

Introduction

Renewable energy is the key to future economic power, global strategic advantages, and rising standards of living. In response, Huxley College of the Environment at Western Washington University (WWU) proposes to establish a new degree program in renewable energy that will establish WWU as a center for renewable energy education.

Beginning with a pilot project in the near term, Huxley College envisions a nationally recognized program in renewable energy education that will serve to train the leaders of the green economy while expanding the status of WWU as a leader in environmental education. This premier program will keep the University and Washington State on the cutting edge of this emerging field, helping to ensure that the region leads the way, producing the next wave of national leaders in a sector that will shape the future.

The program will focus on the applied science, policy, and technology of renewable energy by weaving together several threads of energy-related curricula that range across departments and colleges throughout the University. The program will combine basic science with technology and policy in a way that is inherently interdisciplinary and a natural fit for the curricular approach within Huxley College. This emphasis, added to the outstanding reputation that WWU enjoys for engineering technology and environmental education, will strengthen University's ability to provide a clear leadership advantage to its graduates.

Pilot Project Activities

Engage Private Sector:

- work with the private sector to explore existing expertise
- determine skills and attributes sought after in bachelor's trained employees
- assess existing job market and trajectory of the renewable energy industry

Review of Current Programs:

- evaluate the structure of other renewable energy programs, which are interdisciplinary to some extent, but typically focus on *either* policy or technology
- determine the optimal balance of science, policy, and technology to better meet the demands of this emerging industry

Survey of Existing Campus Resources:

- survey existing resources at WWU
- determine what classes have been taught on energy-related topics
- determine what classes need to be developed
- create a database of student learning objectives, skill sets, and credit hours

Energy Experts Think Tank:

- convene an assessment workshop involving the nation's most creative minds in the energy field

- use this diverse group of academics, government officials, administrators, and industry professionals to review and revise the vision and implementation plan for the new degree program

PROPOSED PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTERS

Huxley College of the Environment, in collaboration with College of Business & Economics, is developing a new program, Professional Science Masters. Slated for delivery fall 2010, the initial offerings will be within the existing Huxley College graduate degree programs, MS Geography (planning and policy emphasis) and MS Environmental Science (science emphasis). The degrees will require an internship and research project rather than a thesis. In addition to WWU approval routing, a Notice of Intent will be submitted to HECB to offer the non-thesis option of the program only at off-campus locations: Port Angeles as the main site connecting Bremerton/Poulsbo and Everett via ITV. Program admission will be an every two-year cycle.

In two years, WWU Graduate School intends to present for HECB approval the new Professional Science Masters (PSM) degree which will be the umbrella for several new PSM programs: Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and Environmental Studies.