

Strengthening Alumnae Ties to the Curriculum and Co-Curriculum **Environmental Science and Policy**

Since its inception in 1995 the Environmental Science and Policy Program at Smith has strived to engage academics and professionals from outside the college in order to broaden the experience of students, foster an environment of learning that incorporates real world issues, and connect students to careers and opportunities that will inspire and invigorate interest in environmental fields of study. Alumnae have played a crucial role in this effort. The interdisciplinary nature of Environmental Science and Policy (ES&P) Program provides wide-ranging opportunities for actively engaging our diverse alumnae with life at Smith.

Objectives. The following initiatives would facilitate meaningful and productive ties between alumnae, students and faculty at Smith.

(1) Introductory Course in Environmental Science and Policy An introduction to core ES&P program topics with weekly alumnae guest speakers co-taught by faculty from both the sciences and humanities. The course would incorporate alumnae involved in public, private, or non-profit areas of the environmental field.

(2) Interdisciplinary January Term Field Course This course would be provide an in-depth study of an environmental sustainability issue from both the science and policy perspectives and would be co-taught by faculty from the humanities and the sciences on location. Alumnae with relevant expertise would be guest lecturers to the course.

(3) “Women in the Environment” panel event The ES&P program currently hosts a biennial panel event for alumnae working in environmental fields which students report as being most inspirational and helpful in preparing them for life after Smith. While alumnae have been willing to return to campus to participate, our current ability to expand the event by bringing more panelists, for longer visits, and from further away is limited by a lack of funding.

(4) Environmental Internship Program This program would build on the existing PRAXIS internship program by enabling students to intern at unfunded opportunities in an environmental field. Internship opportunities would be drawn from a database of alumnae contacts who work in the environmental science and policy fields who are willing to either act as contact for or who themselves are in the position to offer internships to current students.

Anticipated benefits. These initiatives directly address some of the objectives outlined in “Re-imagining a Liberal Arts Education,” including: 1.) leveraging the considerable experiences and expertise within our alumnae constituency, 2.) providing learning and research opportunities for current students, and 3.) helping students find mentors within an important scientific field in preparation for their lives beyond Smith.

Submitted on October 16, 2006 by Joanne Benkley, Coordinator, and L. David Smith, Director, Environmental Science and Policy Program