

SEBS Governing Council Undergraduate Program Director Report

Current Academic Issues

1. Although EPIB is intended to encompass various fields of study to make majors more well-rounded, some students have expressed their desire for specific major tracks or options within the major that would allow them to graduate with a more focused understanding of a given area.
2. Having more classes that expand on different and non-conventional ways to formulate solutions to environmental justice was a concern.
3. According to the opinions of different students, the Careers in EPIB class professor was perceived as needing room for some improvement. While they appreciated the invitations of speakers from a wide variety of environmental careers, other aspects of the teaching style in class felt unnatural in regards to overall flow (i.e. feeling a bit disconnected and strictly adherent to the syllabus). In terms of lessons learned, it could have included some discussions on environmental policy.

Degree Navigator Course Requirements

The EPIB degree is a 57-credit major with 10-course requirement sections. The first section involves the foundation courses which must all be taken (15 credits). They are: Introduction to Human Ecology, Population, Resources, and Environment, Politics of Environmental Issues, Environmental History, and Environmental Law and Policy. Next is the Methods section (9 credits) which requires students to take Theories & Reasoning in Human Ecology, Research Methods in Human Ecology, and a statistics course. All students are required to place into Precalculus through the math placement test or take Intermediate Algebra. In the Skills section (9 credits), students take both Theories & Reasoning in Human Ecology and Research Methods in Human Ecology, and a communication course. The Experience-Based Learning requirement is 3 credits and is typically taken by upper-class students. In the next section, there are cluster class sections that allow students to pick one class from multiple options to count toward the major. The first is the Policy, Governance, and Management cluster which is followed by the Food, Health, and Disease cluster. The last two clusters are the Globalization, Development, and Sustainability and People, Communities, & the Environment clusters. From the cluster list, students are required to take two 300-400 level courses that aren't being used to fulfill any other requirement. The Readings & Practicum in Human Ecology and the Environmental Studies Internship are not permitted to be used for that requirement. Lastly, seniors have three capstone courses to choose from--Capstone in Human Ecology, George H. Cook Honors Paper, and the Capstone Independent Study.

Things I Would Like to Know About the Program

1. I'm curious about the origins of the EPIB major--as in, which individual(s) believed it was a needed field of study, and what were some obstacles faced by its founders?
2. Why did the major's name change from Human Ecology to EPIB? Were there new social contexts that warranted it?
3. I'd like to learn about different internship opportunities related to the major that aren't canvassing, and don't involve over-used environmental issues without attention for the less mainstream ones.
4. Having more hands-on experiences for the students would be nice.

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- I. There are no official major options currently available, but students can decide to take cluster classes that closely match their personal interests best.
- II. The total number of students is currently not known as Ms. O'Neill hasn't gotten back to me yet.
- III. The goals and expectations of students post-graduation are to "understand and analyze the varied perspectives offered by the social and natural sciences regarding the causes and consequences of social, ecological, and environmental change. This includes interactions among natural resources, climate, population, energy use and technology, health, forces of globalization, social institutions, and cultural values." (Department of Human Ecology)
- IV. The goal of courses in the program is to deal with differences in all levels of government concerning resource use. Students learn a multitude of things such as different approaches to the governance and management of human activities that affect the environment. Understanding the characteristics of human populations, how technological trends affect well-being and researching hot-topic issues in health, including race, gender, and economic status. Students should also learn about what causes development and globalization, and explain how social forces affect the way people interact with their environment. They will conduct ethical research using fair and effective methods while considering community-specific norms that may affect results. Lastly, students learn how to understand their own values, analyze evidence, work well in teams, and to speak in ways that are meaningful and relevant to specific audiences.
- V. The primary concerns of students involve having specific tracks to follow and opportunities outside or inside the classroom that allow them to explore other areas in environmental justice and nature. Having a 1.5 credit gardening class option or something similar will allow them to take a step out of the classroom to see what they're learning about protecting. In addition, creating specific major options in EPIB will allow students to pursue their preferred interests.
- VI. There are different things currently going on in the major. Some examples of faculty research include nutrition policy, climate, economy, risk perception, and natural resource management. Specific projects are examining the vulnerability of communities in Asia to climate change and the general management of watersheds. Research sites exist in New Jersey, New York, Vietnam, Ecuador, and others. Researches can offer their expertise in museums and in other countries. In the Experience-Based Learning section of the major, there are different research options that include writing monthly publications on current environmental issues for credit like The Trail Newsletter. There are currently no upcoming seminars. Past visitors have held events on specific case studies and

energy usage like the one hosted by Heather Payne from Seton Hall Law School on November 8th, called "*A Conversation on Governance of Offshore Wind: Where Ocean and Energy Governance Meet.*"

- VII. Students can work with faculty members in different areas mentioned above for meaningful research opportunities.
- VIII. Graduates of the EPIB major have gone on to become agricultural brokers, environmental consultants, environmental lawyers, policy analysts, farm realtors, investigators, quality control specialists, and plant sanitation managers. They work private sectors, nonprofits, and government agencies. Some companies and agencies include the EPA, Terracycle, the FDA, the Department of Environmental Science, environmental consulting firms, insurance companies, seed corporations, and food businesses. Joining professional organizations on campus like the fraternity Alpha Zeta allow students to get in contact with alumnae in different companies to get connections and to narrow their focuses.
- IX. There are no known changes happening in the major in the upcoming year.
- X. I have no further suggestions.