

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, POLICY, AND GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT**  
**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 3, 2011**  
**12:40 pm – 1:50 pm.**

**Present:** Deby Cassill, Barnali Dixon, Joseph Dorsey, James Krest, Armando Hoare, Madhu Pandey, Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore, Donny Smoak

**Absent:** Henry Alegria (leave of absence), Erika Asano, Kathy Carvalho-Knighton, Chris Meindl (on sabbatical leave).

The meeting began with an overview of the QEP and announcements concerning the upcoming SACS site visit. There was faculty discussion on the limited role of Math faculty in the various stages of QEP development. There was a brief presentation of current SLO for general education courses, and ALCs for ESP undergraduate and graduate programs. The chairperson noted that the faculty and departmental curricular review committees for the undergraduate and graduate programs will need to determine ALCs for the 2011-2012 academic year.

The second item on the agenda was to discuss the comprehensive exam for the M.S. in Environmental Science and Policy degree. There was dialogue regarding the current format of the comprehensive exam, recent issues regarding content and scheduling, and the overall purpose of the exam. The Graduate Committee recommended that the format be changed, and indicated that, depending on the extent and scope of the change, it might be considered minor, and might not require approval by college or university-level committees. A motion was made by Donny Smoak to replace the existing exam with a new format, which would include a written thesis research proposal and an oral defense of the proposal. The oral defense would be similar in format to the current thesis defense. The thesis committee would evaluate both the proposal and the oral defense of the proposal. This would become effective Fall 2011. Deby Cassill seconded the motion. There was discussion regarding having a rubric for the proposal, whether the defense should be open or closed to students and other faculty, whether the thesis proposal should be posted online, and whether this option should be open to students currently in the program who have not yet taken their comprehensive exam. The general sense of the faculty in attendance was that the oral proposal defense should be open to departmental faculty only. No specific decisions or recommendations were made on the other issues. The motion was unanimously approved.

The last item concerned a thesis defense announcement and room reservation form that was created and presented by the Graduate Committee. Donny Smoak made a motion to approve the form and the use of the form in scheduling the thesis defense. Armando Hoare seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Draft minutes submitted by Melanie Riedinger-Whitmore