**Name of proposed new unit:** Earth and Environment Consortium

**Contact person:** Lisa Graumlich, School of Natural Resources, lisag@cals.arizona.edu, 621-7255

**Proposal team:**
Malcolm Hughes, Regents’ Professor, Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research
Lisa Graumlich, Director, School of Natural Resources
Eric Betterton, Head, Atmospheric Sciences
Stephen Cornell, Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy
Karl Flessa, Head, Geosciences
Charles Hutchinson, Director, Office of Arid Lands Studies
Katie Hirschboeck, Chair, Global Change GIDP
Thomas Maddock, III, Head, Hydrology and Water Resources.
Stuart Marsh, Chair, ALRS GIDP
Barbara Mills, Head, Anthropology
Paul Robbins, Acting Head, Geography and Regional Development
Jeff Silvertooth, Head, Soil, Water and Environmental Science
Tom Swetnam, Director, Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research
Robert Varady, Director, Environmental Policy Programs, Udall Center

**Current Units to be reorganized/consolidated:**
We propose a campus-wide Earth and Environment Consortium (EEC). The consortium would be made up of units and programs from across the whole university, and would be governed by a Council of the Earth and Environment Consortium (CEEC). Its charge would be to make the most efficient and effective use possible of faculty and staff in teaching, research and outreach on Earth and Environment matters. The consortium could generate initiatives in pursuit of these ends, or indeed agree on targets and rewards for their achievement with the Provost.

We envision that the Earth and Environment Council (CEEC) would consist of heads of units and programs (or their designees) involved in the broadly defined earth and environmental scholarship. The CEEC would meet regularly to share information and develop initiatives through coordination provided by a rotating chair, elected from among the members.

This proposal does not address re-alignment of UA’s departments, schools or colleges, nor does it preempt the role or function of disciplinary or school-specific functions. Rather, it provides a mechanism for them to make better use of the resources at their disposal, by agreement with other units across campus. The Earth and environmental themes represent particularly fertile ground for this kind of collaboration, because of the degree to which research, teaching and outreach on them is dispersed across many colleges and departments, and is likely to remain so, even though there is much overlap of interest, background and skills between these far-flung faculty members.

We give some examples of ways this likely broad range of units (possibly as many as 40) could work together through the consortium:

- Identifying unnecessary duplication of classes at all levels, graduate and undergraduate, and negotiating productive and mutually acceptable solutions to obviate this.

- Addressing environmental literacy for non-STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) students through coordinated general education offerings that highlight UA’s strengths in interdisciplinary science.
• Engaging pre-service K12 teachers with unique education and research opportunities that are related to climate, environment, water and energy sustainability.

• Actively collaborating on the recruitment of undergraduate majors into existing departments and new schools by effectively aligning their skills, talents and interests with appropriate majors. Many freshmen arrive with a strongly and sincerely expressed interest in earth and environmental matters, but are likely bewildered by the multiplicity of options offered by dozens of departments and multiple colleges. We can do better together.

• Working to advance the collective undergraduate program by matching students with undergraduate research opportunities, leadership training and internships that will lead to high quality employment opportunities when they graduate.

• Supporting existing opportunities for graduate student education, including earth-and-environmental-themed GIDPS, and exploring new opportunities, including joint professional graduate degree programs.

• Further enhancing the campus-wide climate for collaboration in research, teaching and outreach through jointly run seminar speakers, graduate seminars, and workshops.

**How the reorganization will raise the unit’s and the University’s ranking or reputation.**

The University of Arizona has already-formidable strengths in the natural and social sciences directly related to research, teaching and outreach in the areas of climate, water, energy, sustainability and environmental sciences (including human and ecological impacts). These encompass the UA’s Strategic Plan priority in “Climate, Environmental, Water and Energy Sustainability”. In the days leading up to the October 13, 2008 deadline for White Paper Proposals, a number of broadly integrative plans have been put forward in this arena. As heads of units and programs involved in one or more of these White Papers, we aspire to work together to create a concrete, readily identifiable mechanism for ensuring the most efficient and effective use of faculty and staff in promoting teaching, research and outreach on Environmental and Earth Science matters.

More efficient and effective use of faculty and staff will facilitate new and imaginative initiatives in all aspects of our work, and thus contribute to raising the rankings and reputations of the units and individual’s involved. To the extent that the rankings and reputations of the units and programs joining the consortium are uneven, practical cooperation in teaching and research can be a valuable mechanism for the dissemination of best practices, role models and effective mentoring.

**Description of the process of consultation with deans, heads, faculty, staff, appointed personnel and students and the extent to which this proposal has the support of those affected.**

An informal meeting of units heads involved in environment (sensu lato) was held October 1, and approximately 17 attended. The meeting was called by Malcolm Hughes (Regents’ Professor, Tree-Ring Lab), Lisa Graumlich (Director, SNR), Charles Hutchinson (Director, OALS), Tom Maddock (Dept head, HWR), Tom Swetnam (Director, Tree-Ring Lab), Karl Flessa (Dept head, Geosciences) and Eric Betterton (Dept head, Atmospheric Sciences). This draft was circulated to all those originally invited to the October 1 meeting, who then had the opportunity to indicate their support. This proposal’s emphasis on student majors and curricular needs emerged in part from concerns of students which have been expressed to the unit heads at various points during the transformation process as it has evolved.
Budget page

- Pooled faculty teaching responsibilities among the units joining the consortium will reduce spending on temporary teaching support and permit more rational and productive use of faculty time. In addition, the units and programs joining the Earth and Environment Consortium could, for example, accept responsibility for together designing, and teaching classes yielding an annual target of Student Credit Hours to be agreed with the Provost. In return, requests from those units for faculty lines would receive specifically favorable consideration if it is shown that they will directly and substantially contribute to the fulfillment of this target.

- A shared mission will lead to creative new curricula at undergraduate and graduate levels, helping insure continued relevance of the UA to the State of Arizona, hence the willingness of public (the Legislature) and private sectors to offer support. Several courses already being taught within likely consortium units exemplify the effective use of online course management systems, collaborative learning, and the use of undergraduate preceptors in the classroom. Under the sponsorship of the EEC, this expertise could be disseminated broadly to transform and expand course offerings in the Earth and Environmental sciences without sacrificing quality or diminishing student-centered learning.

- Reduction of unnecessary duplication of class offerings could release faculty time for the development of funding proposals for research, teaching and outreach activities.