Proposal for a General Education Learning Community (Cluster)
Thinking Globally
April 4th, 2014

1. Theme and Relevance
The theme of this proposed General Education Learning Community (Cluster) is an interdisciplinary investigation of environmental problems, politics, and ethics. Environmental problems such as global warming, water quality and biodiversity represent some of the most pressing issues faced by society today. Students who make up the incoming freshman class at Cal State East Bay may belong to the first generation that will face large scale loss of human habitat due to rising seas, shifting climate zones, and environmental disasters involving radioactive contamination. This cluster investigates scientific, ethical and political issues related to the environment and prepares students to make informed choices as citizens and professionals.

2. Courses
- ENSC 2801 - Global Environmental Problems (4 units)
- PHIL 1104 - The Philosophy of Environmental Science and Policy (4 units)
- POSC 1171 - Environmental Politics (4 units)

3. Integration of Course Content
This cluster is an interdisciplinary examination of environmental issues- the three content courses represent courses from the three major GE learning areas: Area B - Natural Sciences (ENSC 2801), Area C - Humanities (PHIL 1104), and Area D - Social Sciences (POSC 1171). During Fall Quarter, students will investigate the science behind important environmental issues affecting California and the entire Earth in ENSC 2801. This course integrates physical and life science content and provides the background for students to have meaningful discussions about environmental ethics and policy in the subsequent quarters. In PHIL 1104, students learn the about social issues (e.g., environmental racism) related to the environment and learn to construct logical arguments based upon various ethical frameworks (e.g., precautionary theory). Finally, in POSC 1171, students gain an understanding of the history, ideologies and institutions of modern environmental politics and policy. The approach of this cluster is interdisciplinary and comprehensive - it provides students with the scientific background of environmental issues, enables them to create ethical arguments, and challenges them to consider the social and political implications of environmental policies.

4. Learning Outcomes and General Education Requirements
ENSC 2801 (B5), PHIL 1104 (C2, C3), and POSC 1171 (D) have been approved for lower division General Education. GE course approval forms are attached. ENSC 2800 and was approved for GE before the adoption of the current GE course approval form; we have also included a reworded GE course proposal for using the current form to make review easier.
Attached is the current GE course proposal form for (Area C2 or C3) with statements addressing issues related to the cluster variant of this course.

5. Course Outlines and Integrative Activities

The focus on environmental issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives will unify the proposed cluster. Although faculty have not decided on specific assignments, we will use the summer meeting on cluster integration to develop assignments and/or readings that will span the freshman year. For example, one proposed assignment consists of students writing a series of papers during each quarter - each student would choose a specific environmental issue. During each course in the cluster, students would write papers on the science, ethical issues, social implications and a summary of the political issues for their chosen environmental issue for a portfolio. Alternatively, students may work in groups to develop mini-conferences on a limited number of environmental issues.

Course syllabi are attached.