Dear

SUMMARY

“It [Sustainability] must also guide decision-making in operations through the adoption of sustainable practices and the continued care for this special place—the land and physical plant that have been cherished by generations of Luther students, faculty, and staff for nearly 150 years.” (Luther College Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan) The unique place in which Luther is situated allows for a special connection to the land by the people who call Luther home. In order to maintain this special connection to this place we are proposing an environmental perspective as an addition to the Luther Curriculum. The Luther College Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan commits to making sustainability through education and decreased emission a top priority to show Luther’s commitment to preserving our beautiful landscape. Also, effective in 2007, President Torgerson signed the President’s Climate Commitment, acknowledging the impact humans have on the environment. Taking all of this into account, an environmental perspective will be fulfilling these two plans with one requirement to better the Luther College Community.

PROPOSAL

We are proposing the addition of an environmental perspective to the Luther College Curriculum. Currently Luther requires an intercultural, historical, and quantitative perspective in order to graduate. The addition of an environmental perspective would give Luther students a better environmental background pertaining to environmental issues and problems. The specific language of our perspective would be:

Environmental: Focused on the dynamic connection between humans and the natural world. This perspective helps students to create a better relationship with the environment and see themselves as part of the larger global ecosystem rather than as people who dominate the land. A strong sense of place and awareness of the surrounding landscape allows students to become enlightened to our sustainable philosophy on campus. Courses fulfilling this requirement will emphasize the environmental outreach seen in Luther’s Mission Statement and enhance the campus atmosphere towards our long term goal of sustainability.

RATIONALE

We feel as students it is our moral obligation and duty to know about the natural world and our surroundings. Luther College is unique in the fact that we are a stroll away from the Upper Iowa River
and a part of the great Mississippi Watershed which connects us to many other wonderful states and people. It is this physical connection as well as a connection of stewardship that allows us to notice that our decisions on this campus affect the greater community.

When President Torgerson signed the President’s Climate Commitment (PCC) he acknowledged the example that Luther was setting in the community about Climate Change and took action on this crisis. With an environmental perspective we will be broadening our horizons and be more aware of the effects on the environment our actions have. We will also be more adaptive to changes in the environment in the future as climate change is not a stagnant problem, but a dynamic issue that changes throughout time. Through this we will be pushing students to realize their individual contribution and impacts and be compelled to take action on the sustainability practices on campus and beyond. Furthermore, this perspective will be implementing one of the strategies of the PCC through Energy Conversation Education. We believe that by requiring an environmental perspective we will be pushing students to deal with these issues, and they will no longer be able to turn away from the abuses which our beautiful planet is undergoing.

In The Luther Sesquicentennial Strategic Plan it is recommended that we should, “Make environmental sustainability a part of every student’s learning experience.” This perspective would put this recommendation into action. The Environmental Perspective nurtures the connection to the land of this area and allows Luther to become a leader and example for other communities struggling with the same universal issues of global warming, fossil fuel usage and pollution.

We realize that another perspective seems like a challenge at first given the four other perspective requirements, but there is a wide range of 35+ classes which we feel cover this and few to no additional classes will be need to be established for students to fulfill this requirement. It turns out that many of the natural world lab and non-lab class requirements would also cover the environmental perspective requirement and therefore would not conflict with Luther’s commitment to graduating students within four years. It is true that some might find this new requirement to be of little significance but it will have immeasurable importance down the road when choosing how to live life after Luther.

Sincerely,

Sarah Czechowicz        Leah Ehret        Tiffany Kruse        Jamey Meyer
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Students of Environmental Philosophy, Prof. Jon Jensen