

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS IN THE ACS: SHARING IDEAS**

Furman University, Greenville, SC April 4-6

This meeting was attended by 16 ACS faculty representing 12 schools. The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the growth of nascent programs and to help other schools develop new programs. Representatives from Davidson College and Rhodes College attended and got numerous ideas for developing an Environmental Studies major. Anne Lubbers from Centre College described her new(y approved program and received feedback on its structure, as well.

The first session was an overview of programs, and the major conclusions from the evaluations (appended to this section after meetings summaries) were that bottlenecks in recruitment needed to be avoided by keeping programs flexible with multiple entry points for students from different backgrounds. Most attendees said they would use the information gathered here to report back to their program committee with comparisons and contrasts to improve their own program.

The second session was on the structure of introductory courses. Most attendees said that the information was very helpful, particularly for those schools designing a intro course or redesigning it. For example, our 'capstone course' here at Furman was designed to be the last experience in the program. However, it's structure is similar to most introductory courses, so we have decided to allow students to take it at any time in their curriculum, and we may have an independent research project as a capstone experience (although that is only a consideration at this point).

The third session on fundraising was also well-received. Most attendees said that, although they were not great grant-writers, that this session gave them some encouragement to seek funding and also provide some information on suitable supporters.

The most common suggestion was to create a web site for the syllabi to be posted. This is in the works.

In conclusion, this was an effective meeting that brought our programs into clearer focus. By seeing all the programs at once, we could compare our own program against others and incorporate good ideas and new strategies. In addition, the meeting was very important for three schools (Davidson, Rhodes, Sewanee) who are either building redesigning their environmental programs. The only negative comment was that the meeting was a bit "over-planned" and that more down time would be valuable at these meetings for one-on-one conversations.