DATE:     August 10, 2010

TO:        Tih-Fen Ting, Chair
            Campus Senate

CC:        Harry Berman, Provost

FROM:      Undergraduate Council (Harshavardhan Bapat recused himself, so the letter is written on behalf of the Council as a whole)

RE:        Science of the Environment Concentration

In Spring 2010, the Undergraduate Council met and discussed the Science of the Environment Concentration proposed by both Biology and Chemistry. The concentration would be available in both majors. The Council voted 6 to 0 (with one member absent) to recommend approval of the Science of the Environment Concentration.

The Council applauds the collaborative efforts to establish a cross-department and interdisciplinary concentration. The Council finds the proposal sound from an academic standpoint, and the subject matter is relevant and timely. The courses currently proposed are courses that are already offered, so the concentration does not seem to strain existing resources. The proposal indicates that the departments hope to develop three new courses in the next few years, but only if resources of money and faculty availability exist.

The only concern raised was the need for catalog copy language to distinguish major core courses from major electives (where the concentrations would occur), but this issue is a concern regarding implementation rather than a substantive concern about the proposal.