

Wright State University – Lake Campus
Associate of Science degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences

Executive Summary/Recommendation

**This program clearly meets Regent’s standards for associate degree programs.
There were no serious concerns raised in this review.**

Request: Wright State University-Lake Campus proposes an Associate of Science degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences in response to the growing need for trained professionals in the earth and environmental sciences field. Lake Campus faculty worked collaboratively with the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences faculty at the Dayton (main) Campus to ensure this 2+2 degree articulates to the University’s baccalaureate program in Environmental Sciences. Wright State University’s Environmental Sciences program has the designation of being ‘one’ of only twenty-six (26) environmental programs in the country accredited by the National Environmental Health Services and Protection and Accreditation Council. The University, in addition to addressing the growing concern of the earth’s changing environment, is also researching ways to sustain and conserve the more than 900 inland lakes throughout the United States, including the 19 inland lakes in Ohio. Wright State University-Lake campus is located on Grand Lake St.Marys, the largest inland body of water in Ohio. Grand Lake St.Marys gives the campus an outdoor interactive hands-on learning and training environment for students. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Department are currently conducting a study on the 900 inland lakes to identify which lakes are impaired and to determine ways they can be restored. Students enrolled in this program will have the opportunity to be involved in the study’s research findings and to impact the outcome.

Mission/Program Purpose: The Lake Campus mission statement asserts that, “As part of Wright State University, Lake Campus will be the focal point for the educational and cultural advancement of the residents in this region of Ohio.” For many students in this five county region, Lake Campus is the most accessible and affordable option for higher education.

The campus has built strong alliances with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Lake County Improvement Association, the Environmental Protection Agency and Chambers of Commerce to ensure that the natural environment of Grand Lake St. Marys is preserved. The program strengthens these alliances and contributes to meeting the region’s need for additional professionals in the environmental sciences.

Enrollment: The campus anticipates an initial enrollment of 12 full-time students and 10 part-time students for 2008-2009. Over the next three years the program is expected to grow to 24 full time students. The region’s high school science students, College Tech Prep students, STEM students and returning adults will be attracted to this program.

Curriculum: The curriculum incorporates a cognitive learning environment for the general education requirements, and an outdoor interactive learning and training environment for the technical core courses. All coursework in the program presently exists and meets the curriculum standards and expected outcomes as offered at the Dayton (main) campus. Meeting the general education requirements for a two-year degree, credits earned in this program will transfer seamlessly to other universities within the State of Ohio.

Students in the program will have the opportunity to interact with national and state environmental agencies, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources where professional job opportunities or career pathway positions maybe forthcoming after graduation.

Faculty/Resource Needs: Lake Campus has the appropriate qualified faculty needed to teach the general education and technical science courses, reducing the need to hire additional faculty for this program.

Lake Campus plans to conduct an \$8 million renovation and expansion project in the coming months that includes several new state-of-the-art science labs for students. Project funding of over \$4 million for the building was raised through local donations, and the remainder was through state appropriated funds. The College is financially prepared to support the cost of implementing this new program.

Program Duplication: The proposed Associate of Science degree in Earth and Environmental Sciences is not offered at any other two-year institution within the five county regions. The Dean and faculty at Lake Campus have expressed their willingness to share “best practices” and explore opportunities for collaboration with other institutions interested in offering a similar degree program.