



*TOJ Notes With Interest:*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXPLORATIONS

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*by Fay Hansen and Mark Severson*

The College of Arts and Sciences has chosen “Environmental Explorations” as its’ third annual “Celebrating the Liberal Arts” theme for the ’05–’06 year. A campus-wide committee, consisting of students, staff, faculty, and administration, has been planning for months to bring a wide variety of Environmental Explorations to the OU campus, including internationally known speakers, special classes, discussions, films and interdisciplinary programs. You can expect to see events associated with this theme throughout the year, starting with welcome events for returning students and culminating in an Earth Day program in the spring.

**Who are the “big names” ?** Robert F. Kennedy Jr, one of the most well-known environmentalists, and whose environmental activism led to the Clean Air and Water Act, will speak on Oct 5<sup>th</sup>. Sponsored by the Student Life Board, his campus appearance will also include class visitations. In a program co-sponsored by the Honors College, Professor Don Henderson will speak on the links between the global environment and disease control. He is an internationally recognized epidemiologist who led the effort that successfully eradicated small-pox, a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and an

advisor on bioterrorism. In November, the Presidential Lecture series will showcase the environmental work of OU Biologist, Dr. George Gamboa. His internationally recognized work on social wasps serves as a model for studying and controlling environmentally damaging invasive species. The inaugural Richard Burke Lecture in February will feature ethicist and conservation activist, Holms Rolston. Known as the “father of environmental ethics”, he will discuss the issues societies face while trying to promote culture and also conserve nature.

**What are the academic components to this theme?** Edward O. Wilson’s “The Future of Life” was selected for the College’s “Community Book”, which is used by numerous classes for interdisciplinary reading and writing. The author, an eminent Harvard scientist, discusses the roles of science, economics, and ethics in the stewardship of earth’s biodiversity and our own futures. More than 25 classes partly or completely related to environmental studies and issues will be available to students during the ’05–’06 academic year through six or more departments and the Honors College. In addition, many departments plan to invite seminar speakers and guest lecturers for their classes.

**Are there any special activities planned?** Lots! Many are still in the planning stages by various campus groups and departments. However, one of special note is a world-class photography exhibition to be held in Meadow Brook Art Gallery between October 29<sup>th</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup>. Environmental problems will be portrayed by eight internationally recognized artists at the exhibition, entitled “Imaging a Shattering Earth: Contemporary Photography and the Environmental Debate”. Numerous gallery events, including small lectures, are planned during that time. The role of the natural world in Native American culture will be explored on Native American Awareness Day in November. Interdepartmental planning is under way for environmental writing awards and other arts competitions and exhibitions by students. Tours of OU’s Biological Preserve will be featured for campus groups and the public. Events such as films, exhibitions, and local speakers

will abound in the Oakland Center and elsewhere, so that students, staff, and faculty can drop in during lunch breaks to learn more about the environment. Student groups of all kinds will be offered environmental activities, ranging from special tours to service activities for local land conservancies and environmental groups. SPIN, a new student group (Students Participating in Natural Preservation), and Green Connect, a newly established campus-community coalition, have many activities planned, starting with a fall environmental fair.

**Where will the schedule of activities be posted?** Environmental Explorations has established a website to keep you posted. Click on Environmental Explorations on the College of Arts and Sciences main webpage (<http://www2.oakland.edu/cas>) and watch your email, campus, and local news media.

