

DePauw University Environmental Fellows Program

Lateral Entry Applications Fall 2013

Overview of the Lateral Entry Process

Lateral entry is the process students use to apply to honors and fellows programs after they have started classes here at DePauw. The Environmental Fellows Program is excited to offer lateral entry this fall to students from the Class of 2017. Interested students will submit applications electronically by December 20: DePauw transcript, interest statement, critical essay, and recommendation letters. The Environmental Fellows Steering Committee will review completed applications, select applicants to interview, and then choose Environmental Fellows (by early in the spring semester).

Lateral Entry Application Checklist

A complete application includes:

- Two recommendations from DePauw faculty or staff members. Ask your recommenders for their permission to submit their names to envfellows@depauw.edu and then we will give them access to a Google form to solicit their comments.
- One statement of interest. Explain in 200 - 300 words why you would like to become a DePauw Environmental Fellow. The best statements of interest will be as specific as possible about your personal and intellectual interest in the environment, how participation in the program will help you explore those interests, and the strengths and experiences you would bring to the Environmental Fellows Program.
- One critical essay, chosen from the prompts below.
- A copy of your DePauw transcript. E-mail envfellows@depauw.edu and ask us to request an "office purpose" copy of your transcript. If you do this, we can obtain one at no charge from the registrar's office.
- Recommended minimum DePauw GPA is 3.2.

Submit your application electronically to envfellows@depauw.edu by **December 20, 2013**.

Critical Essay (Choose One)

Please respond to **one** of the following prompts in an essay of 600 - 750 words. The committee will read your essay with a keen interest in the way you think about environmental issues and may ask about your essay if you are selected for an interview. You are welcome but not required to consult outside resources as you develop your answer. If you do, be sure to cite them appropriately. We are more interested in your considered response to the question than the breadth of your factual knowledge.

Essay Prompt #1

The Yale Project on Climate Change Communication was created in 2005, out of concern that "the gap between climate science and climate policy remains huge." The group researches public knowledge, risk perception, and decision-making processes related to climate change and policy. Anthony Leiserowitz (director of the Yale Project) recently presented his group's research at DePauw as part of the symposium

entitled "Cool Talk about a Hot Topic: The Ethics of Communicating about Climate Change", which was cosponsored by the Environmental Fellows Program. You can view his presentation at:

http://www.depauw.edu/academics/centers/prindle/programs/symposia/climate_change/lectures/

Leiserowitz points out (roughly between the 23 and 29 minute marks of his talk) that politically conservative media outlets have been active opponents of climate policy. However, he also suggests that -- wittingly or not -- the news media in general have contributed to the current gap between climate science and policy. How have they done so? How do you respond to Leiserowitz's claims? Can you think of any concrete steps that media organizations might take to do a better job covering this issue?

Essay Prompt #2

The photographic mosaics in Chris Jordan's *Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait* offer a striking representation of the statistics of mass consumption and waste. In Jordan's own words: "This project visually examines these vast and bizarre measures of our society, in large intricately detailed prints assembled from thousands of smaller photographs. Employing themes such as the near versus the far, and the one versus the many, I hope to raise some questions about the roles and responsibilities we each play as individuals in a collective that is increasingly enormous, incomprehensible, and overwhelming."

View the mosaics in *Running the Numbers* (<http://chrisjordan.com/gallery/rtn/#car-keys>) and *Running the Numbers II* (<http://chrisjordan.com/gallery/rtn2/#maya>). Choose one mosaic, and comment on the relation between the smaller photographs and the larger image they comprise. In the image you have chosen, how does the correspondence between the near and the far, the one and the many, prompt us to reconsider individual responsibility in consumer society?

Essay Prompt #3

Hybrid electric vehicles and wind turbines are two technologies that are more efficient when created using powerful magnets made from so-called "rare earth" elements such as neodymium and yttrium. Mining of rare earth elements is challenging in part because they are found in combination with naturally occurring radioactive elements such as thorium and uranium. The rare earths must be separated in a refining process that leaves behind waste products laced with the unwanted radioactive elements. Recently, China (now the world's chief supplier of rare earths for industry) has moved to increase control of the supply of these elements, offering preferential treatment to domestic industries and curtailing exports. Moreover, forecasts of rising demand have led to predictions of severe shortages of rare earths within just a few years. As a result, manufacturers are seeking to re-open old mines and develop new ones, in the US and elsewhere. This has raised concerns about impacts of mining and the refining process. For instance, Malaysian activists are protesting plans to refine ore from a new Australian mine. Industry sources say their waste storage plans are sound and pose no threat to the community.

How do you think the interests in developing energy and transportation technologies such as wind power and hybrid vehicles should be balanced against concerns over the impact of industrial processes supporting those technologies? What additional information would you like to have in thinking about the particular case introduced above?