NREM 105: Environmental Service Learning I

New Course Justification

1. What is the objective and purpose of the new course?
   This course is a partnership with the Hawaii Youth Conservation Corps (HYCC), a summer program offered by Kupu. Most participants are high school seniors or college undergraduates. Team members and leaders work at different sites on a single main Hawaiian island, spending one week at each of five sites. These sites represent important native ecosystems and cultural sites where active conservation and restoration projects are ongoing. Students undertake routine work or special projects with a site manager and other staff related to conservation or restoration of the site. There is a strong Hawaiian cultural component to most, if not all, of the locations. Students are expected not only to complete the work duties but also learn about the natural and cultural history of each site, the importance of the site for various ecosystem services, the threats to the integrity and sustainability of the site, and of course the kinds of conservation or restoration activities being employed to maintain or enhance the site. To provide students an opportunity to receive academic credit for their efforts, NREM has partnered with Kupu to develop a service learning course, enhancing the instructional content of the experience. The objectives of NREM 105, which is intended for first-year HYCC team members and leaders, are:

   **Members**
   - Become familiar with Hawaii’s ecosystems, historical changes, and common flora
   - Understand major conservation issues and threats to native ecosystems
   - Demonstrate competence in conservation and restoration practices

   **Leaders**
   - Enhance leadership abilities and encourage development of environmental stewardship
   - Understand teaching components required for environmental education
   - Facilitate service learning for team members and provide support and motivation

2. How will the content be organized?
   As a service learning course, the content is organized by different partners. Kupu provides basic safety training as well as the expectations all participants must meet to successfully complete the program. Site managers provide background information orally and sometimes in written documents. They also introduce and train students on conservation and restoration practices specific to their site. The instructor provides readings on conservation and restoration in Hawaii that the team leader discusses with students once a week. Team leaders are taught basic leadership and team management skills to support and supervise team members. For participants enrolled in NREM 105, there are readings related to their work sites (for members) and to environmental leadership (for leaders). Team members keep a daily journal that is submitted for evaluation as part of the course. Both members and leaders write a report and make a presentation on either environmental conservation or environmental leadership at the end of the program.
3. What other courses at UHM closely parallel the proposed course and in what way will the latter make a distinct contribution?
   For team members, there are a number of Hawaiian Studies courses that cover natural resource issues, including conservation and land management, but these are at the 300 and 400 level. Credit for BOT 105 used to be offered for HYCC team members, but the Botany department no longer offers this. NREM 210: Introduction to Environmental Science covers similar natural resource issues but does not have a field component. For team leaders, HRM 353: Leadership and Group Dynamics covers theory and research on entrepreneurial leadership. FAMR 350: Leadership and Group Processes also covers theories and application of leadership development. EDEF 686: Environmental Education is a graduate course on developing an environmental consciousness through teaching and learning. None of these, of course, is appropriate for HYCC summer program students, so this course makes a distinct contribution to service learning for these students. Thus, NREM 105 will make a distinct contribution to environmental service learning at the introductory level.

4. Where or how does the proposed course fit into the current and future curriculum?
   This course serves as a recruiting tool for the NREM department and the college as a whole. It introduces a number of concepts and issues relevant to NREM and CTAHR, such as the major ecosystem services from natural resources, land management practices, the biological and ecological legacy of past land management and use, and the role of Hawaiian culture and practice in the management of natural resources. It also strengthens the service learning offerings of the university.

5. Why is the number of credits and level justified? Explain the prerequisites and the absence thereof.
   Student will spend 5 weeks working 40 hours per week at each site. This equates to 200 contact hours in the field. In addition, students will have written material to read, written assignments based on that material, a journal to keep, and have to prepare a report and oral presentation (see syllabus). This is analogous to the work requirements and assignments associated with NREM 492L: Internship Experience. Because students can participate in the HYCC summer program in multiple years, NREM 105 can be taken for credit twice: once as a team member and once as a team leader. As an introductory service learning course, there are no prerequisites.

6. How will the course assist students to achieve the critical skills and competencies expected of CTAHR graduates?
   1. Written communications: reading assignments, journal, and report
   2. Oral communications: give an oral presentation on their report
   4. Personal characteristics: field work will require perseverance and dependability
   5. Human relations: field work will require professional attitudes and teamwork
   8. Leadership: manage the team, give instructions, communicate, take initiative
7. How will students be evaluated?
The syllabus describes how students are evaluated. Team leaders grade the performance of team members in the field (“participation”). Program coordinators grade the performance of team leaders in the field and the oral presentations. The instructor grades the written assignments.

8. What are the minimum qualifications for teaching this course? Is a qualified instructor now available?
Someone with sufficient academic training and work or research experience in natural resource management, especially conservation or restoration, is necessary to instruct this course. Dr. Travis Idol meets these qualifications and will serve as the instructor for this course, although many of the faculty members in NREM could serve as instructor.

9. How will the course be financed, assuming no further cutbacks?
Since this course is offered through the Outreach College, tuition paid by the students will cover the costs of the course. The department will attempt to obtain funding for a teaching assistant to reduce or eliminate the need to cover faculty salary and thus reduce the tuition cost to students.

10. Has the course been offered before? Is there a demand for it?
As mentioned previously, the course was offered by the Botany department. NREM offered the course as a special topics class in Summer 2011 and 2012. The combined enrollment (team members, leaders, and Hana Hou) has averaged 20 students.

11. Is the course cross-listed with another department?
No, but the department is open to cross-listing with Botany or Hawaiian Studies.