

Kevin Klein:

### **Environmental Studies – An Interdisciplinary Approach**

In recent years, more students have chosen to channel their interest in the environment into an undergraduate major in environmental studies. Undergraduate programs in environmental studies have often had heavy emphasis in the studies of the natural and physical sciences. Although studying the environmental sciences as an undergraduate may be necessary, the ability to develop solutions to environmental problems remains limited unless the student has a broader understanding of the social, economic, and political systems in which the environment exists.

The Illinois College Environmental Studies program is an interdisciplinary program which, when designed, acknowledged that environmental issues are a result of complex human interactions. The program was thus designed to integrate several social science disciplines into a program of study that also has heavy emphasis in study of natural and physical sciences. The program designers believe that only through such an interdisciplinary approach is it possible for students to develop solutions to important environmental problems. This paper will discuss the interdisciplinary program design of Illinois College's environmental program along with the rationale of the design.