MEMORANDUM

To: Beverly Wendland, Interim Dean of the Zanvyl Krieger School of Arts & Sciences, Johns Hopkins University

CC: Kathleen Burke, Associate Dean for Graduate and Professional Programs; Antoinette WinklerPrins, Program Director for AAP Environmental Studies Programs

From: Students and Alumni of the Energy Policy & Climate program, C/O EPC Student Representative Board of Directors

Date: August 7, 2014

Subject: Open Letter on the State of EPC

Dear Dean Wendland:

We, the undersigned students and alumni of the MSc in Energy Policy & Climate, write to express serious concerns about the EPC program and call for immediate action by yourself and your colleagues to address the pressing issues outlined below. In light of these ongoing problems, the student body has taken steps to organize itself through a Student Representative Board of Directors to distill and express our grievances and to work with JHU Administration to remedy the situation.

Of primary concern is the persistent lack of course offerings. Many of the courses advertised on the AAP website have never been offered and several others are rarely given. Specifically, since the inception of EPC in 2010, ten courses have never been offered (see addendum). Class options for EPC rarely exceed two or three in any given semester. This has amounted to false advertising to prospective students. All of us who have enrolled in EPC have found ourselves with a serious lack of choice. The dearth of course offerings often forces students to choose between two unacceptable options: either taking classes with limited relevancy to their academic and professional path in order to maintain minimum course loads for loan eligibility, or forgoing classes altogether. A growing number of international students have also been attracted to EPC under the false pretense of extensive course offerings and the option to be able to complete the degree faster than the typical 2-2.5 year timeframe.

Students have also found a systemic lack of faculty support for their capstone projects, the culmination of the EPC program. There is little to no help to students in identifying and securing a mentor/advisor, a fundamentally important element of the project. Furthermore, last semester no final presentation was scheduled for students to present their work to faculty and other interested parties, demonstrating a complete lack of attention to a cornerstone of the program on the part of EPC and the broader AAP faculty. Added to this insult is the injury of paying full tuition for a course in which no value has been conferred to the student from JHU.
These issues have serious implications for our academic careers, the value of our degrees, and the reputation of EPC. The name of Johns Hopkins University is synonymous with excellence. We believe that EPC has the potential to grow into a leading program in the rapidly growing energy and climate policy sphere, but the way EPC has been run does not live up to the standard of excellence that the university should uphold in any degree program, whether or not it is designed primarily for part-time students. EPC cannot succeed if it is chronically underfunded or if these problems persist so that the program acquires a reputation as a diploma mill. Without a strong signal and guarantee that the EPC program will rapidly become what was sold to us and what we believe it can be, we will find it difficult to endorse this degree to potential students we encounter in our professional fields.

We recognize that the departure of former EPC Associate Program Director Dr. Wil Burns presents a prime opportunity to air these grievances and chart a better path forward under new faculty leadership of EPC. The Student Board has had several constructive conversations with Dr. WinklerPrins, and now we seek to make the student body priorities clearly known to Krieger School leadership.

We respectfully ask for your full attention to these matters of importance and request a response without delay.

Sincerely,

Lyle Birkey, Student Board Chair
Jessica Harris, Student Board Vice-Chair
Travis Cutler, Student Board Member
Andrew Fishbein, Student Board Member
Seth Heald, Student Board Member
Taylor Jordan, Student Board Member
Corey Vezina, Student Board Member
Justin Allegro
Ehsan Bakhshi
Prateek Bansal
Nick Barbash
Paul Burman
Evan Fago
Arianna Foster
Nishtha Ghosh
Gerald Gloria
Lee Haust
Nathan Heaps
Sara Hunt
Evan Jurkovich
Nick Kasza
Meegan Kelly
Mike Maier
Joshua McClelland
Alexander Merigan
Ashley Paulsworth
Lindsey Robinett
Amber Robson
Molly Roy
Sara Schoen
Esmeralda Shkoza
Dustin Thaler
Arianna Ugliano
Dikshya Upadhyaya
Patrick Zupancic
ADDENDUM

EPC Courses Advertised but Never Offered

425.621 - Applications of Remote Sensing to Climate
425.626 - Alternative Fuels: Science, Technology & Policy
425.627 - Conventional Energy Generation and Climate Change Policy
425.631 - Ecological Impacts of Climate Change
425.632 - Water Resources and Climate Change
425.633 - Ocean Issues and Global Climate Change
425.634 - Climate Change and Human Health
425.635 - Climate Modeling Techniques
425.639 - International Institutions and Climate Change
425.641 - Carbon Capture and Storage