



# Self-Study Design

Submitted to the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
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State University of New York  
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

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Accredited Since: 1952

Reaffirmation of Accreditation: March 1, 2012

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## ***Self-Study Design***

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### **I. Institutional Overview**

The State University of New York College of Environmental Science (ESF or the College) is one of the 64 institutions in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. It was created by an act of the New York State legislature in 1911 as the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University. With the formation of the State University of New York in 1948, the College became recognized as a specialized college within the state university system, having been state-supported from the very beginning. The name was changed to the State University College of Forestry at Syracuse University. In 1972, the College's name and focus were changed yet again, to better reflect the tradition and grounding of forestry in the environment, and the capabilities of our academic programs. By special act of the New York State Legislature, the College became the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). The College's Basic Carnegie Classification is Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity, and ESF offers programs primarily in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields. The objectives of the College include research and education related to engaging with and demonstrating solutions to a wide range of environmental problems, while taking into consideration human and economic implications as well as scientific - understanding. Sustainable practices have been embedded within the College from the beginning.

Carrying this history through to our present institutional mission, we have honored the initial focus of the College and expanded our scope to protect and curate environmental consciousness in a variety of contexts. The ESF Mission reads: "The mission of the College of Environmental Science and Forestry is to advance knowledge and skills and to promote the leadership necessary for the stewardship of both the natural and designed environments." The institutional priorities the College has identified share a common underpinning of a commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion, environmental stewardship, and fiscal responsibility. We recognize the vitality of these principles to being successful in our delivery of an exceptional academic experience, and outstanding student experience, and commitment to investing in human resources and physical infrastructure at ESF.

ESF offers a variety of challenging, primarily STEM-oriented, undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Over the past three reporting years, ESF has an average retention rate of 86% (Fall semester of first year to Fall semester of second year) and an average graduation rate of 76%. Approximately 20% of ESF's student body qualifies as First-Generation College Student, which is calculated by Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) using Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) data. Undergraduate majors include programs in Biological and Life Sciences, Forest and Natural Resources Management, Sustainable Energy Management, Engineering, Sustainability Management, Chemistry, Landscape Architecture, and Sustainable Construction Management.

Admission of first year applicants is based on the review of their high school transcript, results of either the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) examination, information provided in the application, and their response to an essay question regarding their interest in the College and their intended program of study. Freshman admission is based on selective criteria with emphasis placed on the rigor of their high school program, especially in the areas of mathematics and science. High school students may apply for either Early Decision or Regular First-Year Admission consideration for first-year entry, or Guaranteed Transfer admission for future entry as a sophomore or junior. A transfer student's eligibility is based primarily on their academic performance in all college coursework completed and the applicability of the coursework toward meeting the lower division requirements of their intended program of study at ESF. The Office of Admissions has established articulation agreements with a number of New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania cooperative transfer colleges to facilitate the transfer process, with transfers from other colleges being evaluated on an individual basis.

Admission to graduate studies is conditional upon review and acceptance of an applicant's credentials by appropriate faculty members and upon the recommendation of the appropriate Department Chair or Program Director to the Associate Provost for Instruction and Dean of the Graduate School. Faculty seek graduate students who are well prepared for rigorous study, responsive and receptive to constructive feedback, and a good fit with their programs. Graduate students are required to submit academic transcripts, an application, GRE test scores, three letters of recommendation, a resume or CV, a personal statement, and a \$60 non-refundable application fee. Graduate enrollment is disbursed between MPS, MS, and PhD programs in Biology (32%), graduate programs in Environmental Studies and

Environmental Science (14%), Engineering (16%), Sustainable Resources Management programs (12%), Chemistry (11%), and a Master's in Landscape Architecture program (5%).

A complete ESF organizational chart has been included as Appendix A. Currently, we have an interim President and an interim Provost, with a Presidential search scheduled to begin in Spring 2020. Since this leadership change will happen in the midst of our self-study, we view it as an important opportunity to not only provide information, but to share the viewpoint of a broad section of the campus community with those interested in the open leadership positions at the College. Furthermore, this self-study report document is a valuable assessment of prior strategic planning processes, in order to inform and refine how ESF sets institutional priorities in a manner that is data driven, sustainable, and focused on continuous institutional improvement. Of course, these tangential outcomes are anticipated to be in addition to a re-affirmation of accreditation from MSCHE.

## Responses to Commission Recommendations

### Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

The Commission has requested that ESF “Provide further evidence of learning experiences that are characterized by rigor, coherence and instructional quality in all program, certificate, and degree programs, regardless of instructional modality” each year as part of the Annual Institutional Update (AIU).

Late in Spring 2019, the First Year Experience Task Force proposed recommendations to improve delivery of campus programs toward improving coherence and instructional quality to support student success without sacrificing rigor. In addition to these recommendations, the First Year Experience Task Force identified interventions that would be lower cost and easiest to implement rapidly. Examples included: coordination of first-year course exam dates, posting faculty office hours conspicuously, posting syllabi on the College website, and enrolling students in the “Recommended” math course to enhance student achievement. Some higher cost, longer term initiatives included: providing first-year and second-year students professional advising and increasing the cultural diversity of the ESF faculty.

ESF has also been granted funding beginning in the 2019-2020 Academic Year through the SUNY PRODiG program, which is designed to improve inclusion and representation in STEM education by encouraging participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the academic pipeline. The purpose of this program is to attract and retain culturally diverse early career faculty members, as well as to support training for the campus-community around issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity. This included campus participation in the University of Southern California (USC) Race & Equity Institute program as well as campus climate surveys around issues of equity and inclusion for faculty, staff, and students. This work is ongoing, but ESF has been able to strategically engage with a variety of recommendations the First Year Experience Task Force provided in their report.

Online education at ESF was implemented in 2017, following a substantive change approval from MSCHE. In Fall 2019, we enrolled our first six students in the online AS to BS completion program in Sustainability Management. Due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, all instruction has been temporarily moved online for the remainder of the Spring 2020 academic semester and for all Summer 2020 courses. Instructional designers have worked closely with faculty to ensure the coherence and alignment of online program level learning outcomes with course level learning objectives; course objectives with module level learning objectives; and course and

module objectives to the course materials, learning activities, and assessments in this new learning platform.

### Educational Effectiveness Assessment

The Commission also requested that ESF “Provide further evidence of implementation of an organized, systematic, and sustained assessment process which evaluates the extent of student achievement of institutional and program level learning goals, including in general education and graduate programs, and is used to improve teaching and student learning” annually.

In addition to numerous undergraduate and graduate degree programs at ESF accredited by professional societies, under the leadership of the Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research a periodic Program Review process has taken on a more structured approach; for example, the undergraduate Environmental Studies program underwent a successful external peer review in fall 2019. In order to ensure equity for non-accredited program reviews and demonstrate institutional commitment to programs that engage in five-year external program reviews without a professional accrediting agency, the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research has committed up to \$3000 per program to support the department’s invitation of colleagues from other institutions to assist with their program review efforts. The Division of Environmental Science is currently engaged in writing a program review report for the BS degree in Environmental Science and anticipates inviting external reviewers in fall 2020.

While our assessment practices have improved for the degree programs offered at ESF, the College has also demonstrated a commitment to enhanced general education assessment and improvement by creating a Division of General Education in Fall 2018. This change to the College’s organizational structure was intended to enhance leadership and effectiveness of the General Education program, as well as to facilitate ongoing assessment of General Education at ESF. Beginning in Fall 2020, the leadership for General Education will be combined with the College’s Office of Assessment to ensure the purpose of General Education at ESF is clear and consistent with the institutional mission, as well as providing a strong foundation for student success and continuous improvement. From fall 2018 through spring 2019, the Division of General Education was temporarily housed in the Department of Environmental Studies. In fall 2019, this structure was assessed and the resulting shift in leadership is in response to perceived limitations of locating the Division of General Education within the academic Department of Environmental Studies. Concerns over access to appropriate faculty development opportunities for General Education faculty, promotion and tenure guidelines specific to the scope of General Education faculty activities, and the effective



assessment of the General Education program as an academic program separate from Environmental Studies prompted the separation of the Division of General Education from Department of Environmental Studies.

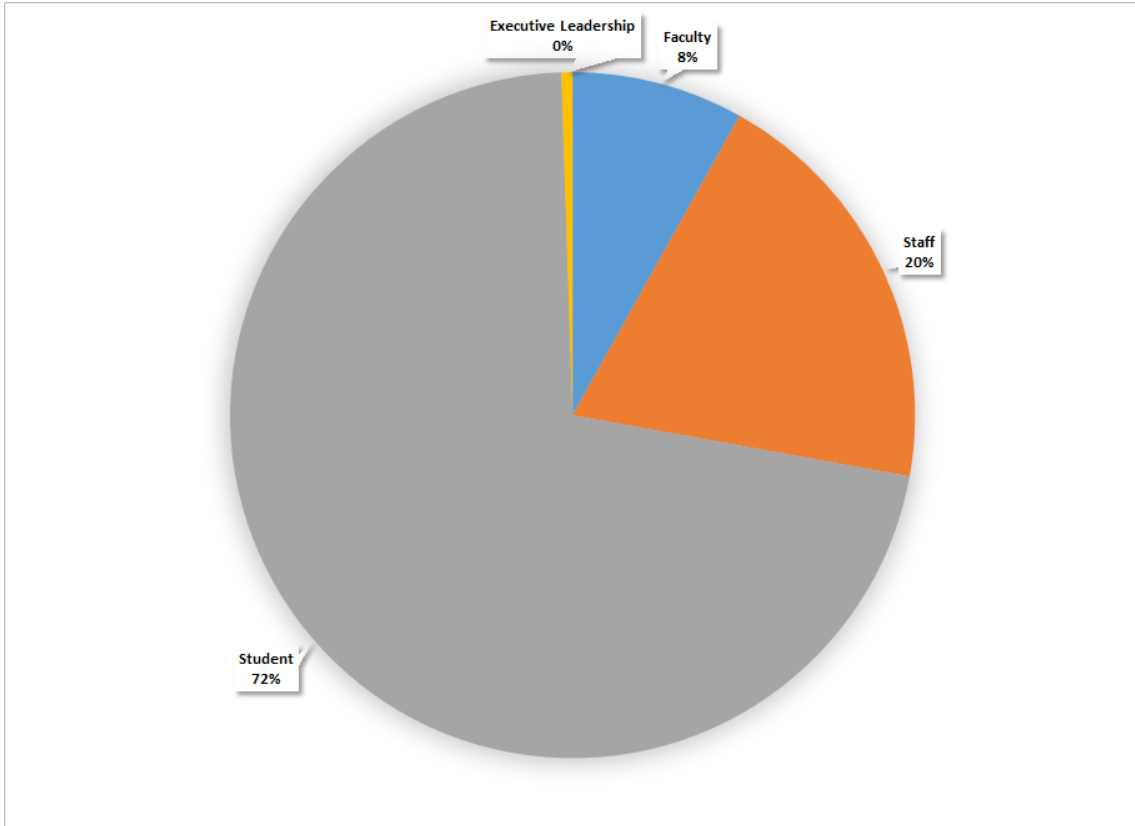
Graduate programs are systematically refining their assessment practices beyond traditional measures for graduate success (research, publication, time-to-degree) to include assessment of program quality and student satisfaction. While research based graduate programs (MS and PhD) and the Master of Professional Studies degrees still involve traditional graduate program assessment metrics, the Graduate School has enhanced the program assessment activities across both research-based and professional graduate programs in the past year.

## II. Institutional Priorities to be Addressed in the Self-Study

In early Self-Study Steering Committee meetings, we began by examining the existing documentation of SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry's institutional mission and strategic planning documents that had been made available since the previous self-study process in 2011-12. In addition to the institutional mission (<https://www.esf.edu/welcome/mission.htm>), we also consulted the *Vision 2020* strategic plan as well as the *Vision 2020 Update: Bridging Document* (<https://www.esf.edu/strategicplan/>), in order to identify our current institutional priorities.

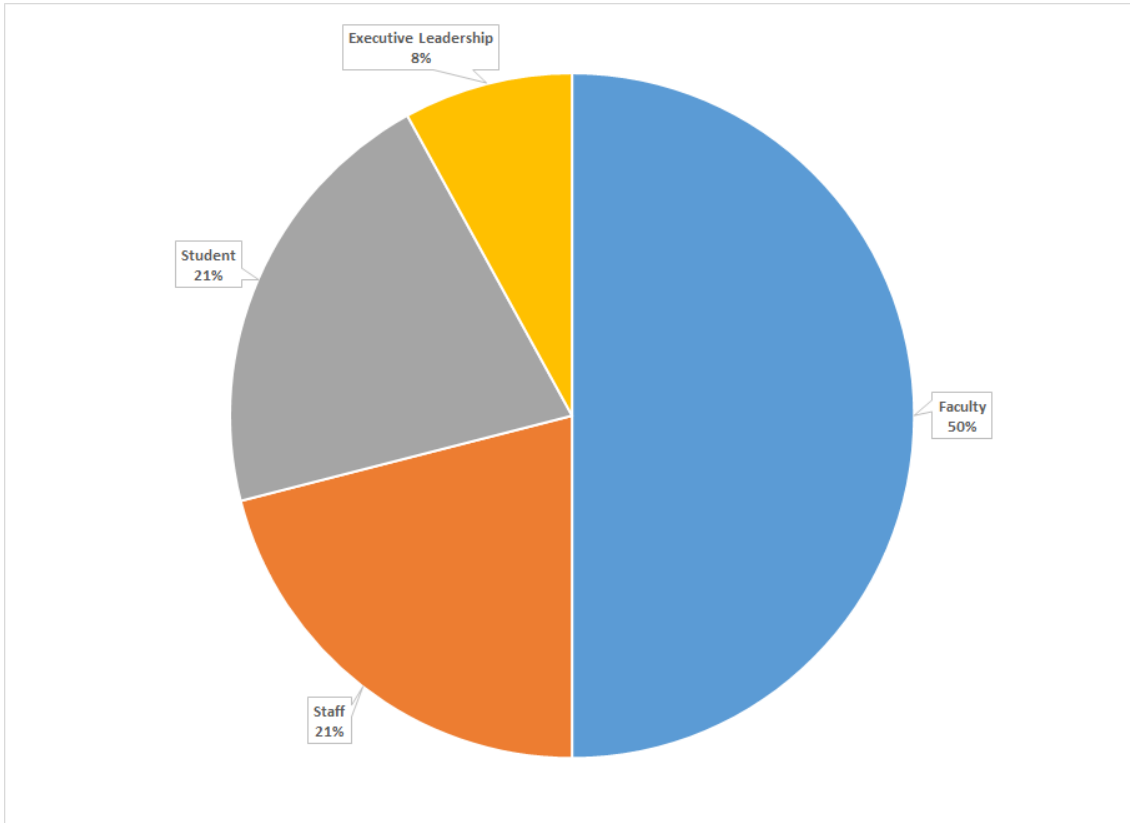
The steering committee engaged in a process of summarizing the institutional goals and targets contained within those documents in order to create a survey to distribute to all campus stakeholders via the Qualtrics online survey platform. We collected responses beginning November 8, 2019 and data collection ended on December 31, 2019. In this survey, we asked students, faculty and staff colleagues, and the President's Executive Leadership to rank the eight institutional goals in order from most important to least important, and to identify the three most important "targets" associated with each goal, as expressed in the existing strategic planning documents. The survey resulted in 187 full and partial responses, with 89 participants identifying their role at ESF (student, faculty, department chair, executive leadership, staff, etc.). In order to better understand the campus representation reflected by this survey effort, we also examined the distribution of faculty, staff, students, and Executive Leadership by percentage: Executive Leadership comprises the smallest campus constituency group we included at less than 1%, next faculty represents 8% of the campus population, Staff 20%, and students comprise 72% of the campus population (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Total ESF Campus Community Composition**



In this survey effort, Students are somewhat underrepresented, at 21% of the survey respondents, and faculty make up 50% of the survey respondents who self-identified their role at ESF. Staff representation (21%) nearly matched the overall campus representation, and Executive Leadership comprised the remaining 8% of survey responses (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. MSCHE Standard 1 Survey Response Composition**



Finally, 45% of the survey responses were either partial completions, or the participant chose not to self-identify their role at the College.

The steering committee met with Executive Leadership to present the preliminary survey results and to propose a plan for using these findings to inform Standard I as well as to guide our approach to Standards II – VII, with an emphasis on connecting these institutional priorities not only to the ESF mission but also to the MSCHE Requirements for Affiliation. Given the results of the survey and working with the Executive Leadership we established three major institutional priorities from the eight goals and three principles to serve as a framework for analysis and discussion of each priority in terms of institutional mission as well as MSCHE Standards for Accreditation. The three priorities are

**Goal 1: Enrich academic excellence in both undergraduate and graduate education**

**Goal 2: Provide an outstanding student experience**

**Goal 7: Invest in ESF's human resources and physical infrastructure**

The three previously identified principles serving as an analytical framework we will use to explore our achievement of the identified institutional priorities include: i) institutional commitment to diversity, ii) financial responsibility, and iii) our role as a premier environmental college to engage in collaboration with external stakeholders and to enhance our visibility as an authoritative source on environmental stewardship and sustainability efforts nationally and internationally. Using the survey data, input from Executive Leadership, and reflecting on the text of the strategic planning documents, it became clear to us that our most important institutional priorities cannot be realized without a commitment to diversity, financial responsibility, and visibility.

ESF's institutional priorities to:

- ✓ enrich academic excellence,
- ✓ provide an outstanding student experience, and
- ✓ invest in human resources and physical infrastructure

each play a role in supporting Middle States' Standards for Accreditation. In order to achieve compliance with the Standards for Accreditation and to pursue our stated institutional priorities, it is essential that the College operates in a way that is true to the institutional mission (environmental stewardship principle), welcomes a variety of perspectives and lived experiences (diversity and equity principle), and deploys College resources appropriately and ethically in pursuit of these goals (financial responsibility principle). The convergence of our institutional priorities, the principles that inform them, and the seven MSCHE Standards for Accreditation are detailed in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Beyond the evidence of academic excellence, outstanding student experience, and investment in human resources and physical infrastructure directly supporting ESF's institutional mission, we will also demonstrate that these institutional priorities support the ethical operation of the College, rigorous and coherent student learning experiences, effective support for student achievement, ongoing assessment of student learning for continuous improvement, responsible planning to deploy institutional resources, and effective governance and administration. Each of our identified institutional priorities support all seven Standards for Accreditation, as demonstrated in the following tables:

**Table 1. Institutional Priorities and MSCHE Standards Crosswalk for the Environmental Stewardship Principle**

	<b>Goal 1: Academic Excellence</b>	<b>Goal 2: Outstanding Student Experience</b>	<b>Goal 7: Invest in human resources &amp; physical infrastructure</b>
<i>Standard 1: Mission &amp; Goals</i>	Through its mission, ESF is committed to developing knowledge and skills to support responsible environmental stewardship	An outstanding student experience is vital to developing future leaders who will promote effective stewardship in natural and designed environments	It is important to have the proper people and facilities in order to effectively deliver excellent academic programs and to support students who are pursuing them
<i>Standard 2: Ethics &amp; Integrity</i>	Academic freedom is vital to a STEM research institution, and part of that is encouraging inquiry into a variety of fields with integrity, particularly fields concerned with stewardship of natural and designed environments	An outstanding student experience at ESF includes supporting students as they navigate the social and political factors surrounding environmental stewardship	Human resource functions and the improvement of physical infrastructure rely on ethical deployment of institutional resources and should likewise reflect ESFs commitment to the protection of environmental resources
<i>Standard 3: Student learning</i>	In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Academic Excellence, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent student learning experiences that reflect an overall institutional commitment to environmental stewardship	In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Outstanding Student Experience, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent co-curricular learning experiences that reflect an overall institutional commitment to environmental stewardship	In order to attract and retain a high caliber of professional educators and staff who can support academic excellence and deliver an outstanding student experience, it is vital to support this standard with an overall institutional commitment to proper stewardship of all resources, including natural resources

<p><i>Standard 4: Student success</i></p>	<p>In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Academic Excellence, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent student learning experiences, in order to prepare students to be strong and knowledgeable advocates for environmental stewardship</p>	<p>In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Outstanding Student Experience, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent co-curricular learning experiences that reflect an overall institutional commitment to environmental stewardship</p>	<p>In order to attract and retain a high caliber of professional educators and staff who can support academic excellence and deliver an outstanding student experience, it is vital to support this standard with an overall institutional commitment to protecting the natural and designed environments that surround us</p>
<p><i>Standard 5: Assessment of learning</i></p>	<p>In order to ensure that programs of the highest quality are delivered in a consistent manner, and that these programs are nimble enough to respond to evolving needs, it is vital to commit to assessment of student learning</p>	<p>To provide an outstanding student experience, it is vital to assess academic programs to ensure that the content and delivery are appropriate and that the delivery is continuously improving to support the highest levels of student achievement</p>	<p>Investment in human resources and physical infrastructure supports the assessment of student learning by ensuring that the spaces in which programs are delivered, and the people delivering the curriculum, are adequately qualified and skilled in supporting the needs of a diverse student body</p>

<p><i>Standard 6: Planning &amp; resources</i></p>	<p>Academic excellence is dependent upon data driven, responsible, and equitable planning and resource allocation at all levels of the College, including planning and responsible use of natural, financial, and capital resources available to the College</p>	<p>Delivery of an excellent student experience is dependent upon data driven, responsible, and equitable planning and resource allocation that models responsible environmental stewardship for ESF students experiences forward as representatives of ESF</p>	<p>Delivery of an excellent student experience is dependent upon data driven, responsible, and equitable planning and resource allocation that demonstrates a commitment to the environmental stewardship portion of the ESF mission statement</p>
<p><i>Standard 7: Governance &amp; Administration</i></p>	<p>In order to deliver an excellent academic experience, it is vital for governance and administration to be committed to ESFs mission, including but not limited to, the responsibility to be dedicated to environmental stewardship</p>	<p>In order to deliver an excellent student experience, it is vital for governance and administration to serve as models of environmental stewardship as they are often the most publicly visible members of the College community</p>	<p>Governance and administration set the tone for how resources are allocated and what is important to invest in relevant to human resources and physical infrastructure; this should be approached with the environment as a primary concern in order to support the College mission of environmental stewardship</p>

**Table 2. Institutional Priorities and MSCHE Standards Crosswalk for the Diversity and Equity Principle**

	<b>Goal 1: Academic Excellence</b>	<b>Goal 2: Outstanding Student Experience</b>	<b>Goal 7: Invest in human resources &amp; physical infrastructure</b>
<i>Standard 1: Mission &amp; Goals</i>	Through its mission, ESF is committed to developing knowledge and skills to support responsible environmental stewardship so that members of all communities can feel welcome in the diverse natural and designed environments that surround us	An outstanding student experience is vital to developing future leaders who will promote effective stewardship in natural and designed environments ensuring that those from diverse backgrounds and experiences experience welcoming and	It is important to have the proper people and facilities in order to effectively deliver excellent academic programs and to support students who are pursuing them; part of this commitment is to ensure broad and equitable representation of visible and invisible diversity
<i>Standard 2: Ethics &amp; Integrity</i>	Academic freedom is vital to a STEM research institution, and part of that is encouraging inquiry into a variety of fields with integrity and ethical instruction and assessment of those fields of study in a way that welcomes all identities and lived experiences	An outstanding student experience is characterized by a deeply engrained ethical commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equity	Human resource functions and the improvement of physical infrastructure rely on ethical deployment of institutional resources and inclusive engagement with employees and candidates throughout the process of hiring and employment



<p><i>Standard 3: Student learning</i></p>	<p>In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Academic Excellence, rigorous and coherent student learning experiences must reflect an overall institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Outstanding Student Experience, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent co-curricular learning experiences that reflect an overall institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>In order to attract and retain a high caliber of professional educators and staff who can support academic excellence and deliver an outstanding student experience, it is vital to support this standard with an overall institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>
<p><i>Standard 4: Student success</i></p>	<p>In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Academic Excellence, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent student learning experiences that reflect an overall institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>In order to fulfill our institutional priority of Outstanding Student Experience, it is vital to commit to rigorous and coherent co-curricular learning experiences that reflect an overall institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>In order to attract and retain a high caliber of professional educators and staff who can support academic excellence and deliver an outstanding student experience, it is vital to support this standard with an overall institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion</p>
<p><i>Standard 5: Assessment of learning</i></p>	<p>In order to ensure that programs of the highest quality are delivered in a consistent manner, and that these programs are nimble enough to respond to evolving needs, it is vital to commit to assessment of student learning in a manner that is reflective of diverse identities and lived experiences.</p>	<p>To provide an outstanding student experience, it is vital to assess academic and co-curricular programs to ensure that the content and delivery are appropriate, and that the delivery is continuously improving to support the highest levels of student achievement inclusive of diverse identities and lived experiences</p>	<p>Investment in human resources and physical infrastructure supports the assessment of student learning by ensuring that the spaces in which programs are delivered and the people delivering the curriculum, are adequately qualified and skilled in supporting the needs of a diverse student body</p>

<p><i>Standard 6: Planning &amp; resources</i></p>	<p>Academic excellence is dependent upon data driven, responsible, and equitable planning and resource allocation, while maintaining a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity at the College</p>	<p>Delivery of an excellent student experience is dependent upon data driven, responsible, and equitable planning and resource allocation that is reflective of ESF’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity</p>	<p>Delivery of an excellent student experience is dependent upon data driven, responsible, and equitable planning and resource allocation in terms of both human and physical resources and infrastructure that provide equity for community members from all identities and backgrounds</p>
<p><i>Standard 7: Governance &amp; Administration</i></p>	<p>In order to deliver an excellent academic experience, it is vital for governance and administration to be committed to diversity and inclusion and that all identities receive equitable representation and support</p>	<p>In order to deliver an excellent student experience, it is vital for governance and administration to be committed to diversity and inclusion to support the student experience for community members from all identities and backgrounds</p>	<p>In order to deliver an excellent student experience, it is vital for governance and administration to be committed to diversity and inclusion, fiscal responsibility, and visibility in order to recruit and retain students, faculty, and staff representative of diverse identities and lived experiences</p>

**Table 3. Institutional Priorities and MSCHE Standards Crosswalk for the Financial Responsibility Principle**

	<b>Goal 1: Academic Excellence</b>	<b>Goal 2: Outstanding Student Experience</b>	<b>Goal 7: Invest in human resources &amp; physical infrastructure</b>
<i>Standard 1: Mission &amp; Goals</i>	In order to create, deploy, and sustain excellent academic programs, financial resources must be invested carefully to support the mission and goals of the College	Providing an outstanding student experience in support of the institutional mission and goals requires careful investment in supports and resources to ensure students receive the co-curricular opportunities that will	Investment in human resources and physical infrastructure necessarily requires responsible use of the College’s financial resources to attract and maintain excellent educators, support staff, and physical resources at the
<i>Standard 2: Ethics &amp; Integrity</i>	The College is responsible for ethical representation and maintenance of advertised academic programs and other opportunities that require responsible financial investment	The College is responsible for ethical representation and maintenance of advertised student support and co-curricular activities, and must be nimble enough to respond to the diverse needs of an evolving student body, which requires responsible financial investment	ESF has an ethical responsibility to faculty and staff to ensure safe working conditions and compensation in order to support and reflect ethical practices at all levels of the organization

<p><i>Standard 3: Student learning</i></p>	<p>A commitment to student learning is vital to ensuring academic excellence, and in order to support academic programs and opportunities, ESF must demonstrate responsible financial investment in these programs</p>	<p>A commitment to student learning is vital to ensuring an outstanding student experience, and in order to support academic programs and opportunities, ESF must demonstrate responsible financial investment in these supports</p>	<p>It is vital for all faculty and staff to be committed to supporting outstanding student learning opportunities, which holds the College responsible for ensuring responsible investment of resources in maintaining campus facilities and retaining exceptional talent</p>
<p><i>Standard 4: Student success</i></p>	<p>A commitment to student success is vital to ensuring academic excellence, and in order to support academic programs and opportunities, ESF must demonstrate responsible financial investment in these programs</p>	<p>A commitment to student success is vital to ensuring an outstanding student experience, and in order to support academic programs and opportunities, ESF must demonstrate responsible financial investment in these supports</p>	<p>It is vital for all faculty and staff to be committed to supporting outstanding student success, which holds the College responsible for ensuring responsible investment of resources in maintaining campus facilities and retaining exceptional talent</p>

<p><i>Standard 5: Assessment of learning</i></p>	<p>A commitment to student success is vital to ensuring academic excellence, and in order to support academic programs and opportunities, ESF must demonstrate responsible financial investment in these programs. It is the responsibility of the College to invest in effective assessment of learning in order to deploy resources in an equitable manner.</p>	<p>A commitment to student success is vital to ensuring an outstanding student experience, and in order to support academic programs and opportunities, ESF must demonstrate responsible financial investment in these supports. It is the responsibility of the College to invest in effective assessment of learning in order to deploy resources in an equitable manner.</p>	<p>It is vital for all faculty and staff to be committed to supporting outstanding student success that holds the College responsible for ensuring responsible investment of resources in maintaining campus facilities and retaining exceptional talent. It is the responsibility of the College to invest in effective assessment of learning in order to deploy resources in an equitable manner.</p>
<p><i>Standard 6: Planning &amp; resources</i></p>	<p>The College is responsible for ethical representation and maintenance of advertised academic programs and other opportunities that requires responsible financial investment. Governance and administration set the tone and expectations for these investments.</p>	<p>The College is responsible for ethical representation and maintenance of advertised student support and co-curricular activities and must be nimble enough to respond to the diverse needs of an evolving student body, which requires responsible financial investment. Governance and administration set the tone and expectations for these investments.</p>	<p>ESF has an ethical responsibility to faculty and staff to ensure safe working conditions and compensation in order to support and reflect ethical practices at all levels of the organization. Governance and administration set the tone and expectations for these investments.</p>

<p><i>Standard 7: Governance &amp; Administration</i></p>	<p>The College is responsible for ethical representation and maintenance of advertised academic programs and other opportunities that require responsible financial investment. Governance and administration set the tone and expectations for these investments.</p>	<p>The College is responsible for ethical representation and maintenance of advertised student support and co-curricular activities and must be nimble enough to respond to the diverse needs of an evolving student body that requires responsible financial investment. Governance and administration set the tone and expectations for these investments.</p>	<p>ESF has an ethical responsibility to faculty and staff to ensure safe working conditions and compensation in order to support and reflect ethical practices at all levels of the organization. Governance and administration set the tone and expectations for these investments.</p>
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### III. Intended Outcomes of the Self-Study

Engagement with the self-study process will provide a clear and data driven assessment of the College, and through that assessment, highlight opportunities for recognition of strengths and challenges. The Self-Study Steering Committee will use both the design process and the final self-study for the general understanding of the state of ESF and the continuous improvement of the institution. We will identify how ESF has met its mission and key institutional goals. More specifically, the Self-Study Steering Committee has identified the following four intended outcomes of the self-study:

1. Reaffirm our accreditation from MSCHE by demonstrating how ESF meets the Middle States Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.
2. Engage the ESF community in an inclusive and transparent process that allows for contribution, comments, and critiques from all ESF community members as we reflect on College priorities as a community. For the purpose of the self-study, we have defined ESF community members as students, staff, faculty, and Board of Trustee members. That being said, we will not be limiting our engagement to just these groups and where possible, will also engage other extended community members such as alumni and external partners.
3. Continuously improve the institution through the self-study process by analyzing how ESF's practices have been aligning with its core mission, priorities, and principles. We are equally excited for the recommended areas of improvement that emerge through the data driven self-study process as well as the identification of the areas of strength for the institution.
4. Provide a strategic document to guide a new college president in their transition to ESF.

### IV. Self-Study Approach

Examining the institution through a Standards-Based Approach to the self-study report, the steering committee will be able to discuss institutional achievements and challenges, while simultaneously providing space for new leadership to establish goals and initiatives within the context of MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation. Employing a Standards-Based Approach also allows the steering committee and working groups to examine institutional achievements and

challenges within the context of MSCHE expectations, rather than embarking on a new strategic planning exercise, which is not the purpose of the self-study design, report, or evaluation visit. A Standards-Based Approach will illuminate ESF's areas of institutional improvement and provide a model that allows us to most directly present evidence of continuous improvement at the College.

## V. Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee and Working Groups

Three representatives from the Self-Study Steering Committee and the Assistant Director for Assessment and Institutional Research attended the November 2019 MSCHE Self-Study Institute. The Self-Study Steering Committee will be responsible for the several supportive tasks throughout the two-year design, development, submission, and on-site review for re-accreditation.

In order to determine an appropriate organizational approach to the self-study report, the steering committee assisted with the development of the Self-Study Design throughout Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. Part of this design document included planning and ongoing implementation of the Self-Study Timeline and Communications Plan.

An ongoing responsibility for the Self-Study Steering committee is to consult with institutional stakeholders and identify areas of strength and opportunity associated with achieving the institution's mission. This includes to establish, charge, and oversee the working groups and coordinate their work and to ensure that the institutional priorities are adequately addressed in the working groups' analysis. To ensure collaboration and continuity, the co-chairs and the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) have selected a knowledgeable campus representative to serve as Working Group Co-Chairs to review interim reports that will be used to write the final Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Steering Committee will also identify the most important opportunities for improvement and innovation that will be included in the final Self-Study Report and arrange for institution-wide review of and responses to a draft of the Self-Study Report. Oversee the completion of the final Self-Study Report, including the refinement of the Evidence Inventory and completion of the Verification of Compliance materials and arrange for institution-wide review of and responses to a draft of the Self-Study Report. Finally, the Self-Study Steering Committee will oversee arrangements to host the Evaluation Team visit.

### **Committee Membership**

The co-chairs, in cooperation with the ALO, worked to balance three broad characteristics when inviting members of the steering committee: procedural knowledge, institutional



knowledge, and communication skills. While each member of the steering committee reflects these qualities, it was important to invite those with the greatest familiarity with institutional mission and goals, are committed to the self-study process and the institutional priorities, and reflect a broad institutional perspective that transcends that of their own. We were able to gather a strong group from campus to achieve this representation that is also able to engage students, staff, and trustees in the self-study process as appropriate.

The co-chairs and the initial steering committee members who participated in the Self-Study Institute (SSI) were recruited from the existing ESF Accreditation Committee early in Fall 2019. Members of the Accreditation Committee who elected not to co-chair the committee or participate in the Fall 2019 SSI agreed to assist with engaging students and colleagues to enhance participation in the self-study process as appropriate.

#### Steering Committee:

1. John Wagner, Co-Chair, Professor and Associate Chair Sustainable Resources Management
2. John Turbeville, Co-Chair, Sr. Asst. Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Career Services
3. Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, ALO, Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research
4. Tom Carter, Director of International Education
5. Matt Smith, Director of College Libraries and ESF Chapter UUP President
6. Daniel Collins, Graduate Student Representative
7. Kimberly Armani, Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs
8. Maureen Fellows, VP for Government and External Relations & Director of Institutional Research
9. Joe Rufo, CFO and VP for Administration
10. Joanne Mahoney, Chief Operating Officer
11. S. Scott Shannon, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
12. William Fisher, ESF Board of Trustees

Each working group is comprised of a combination of ESF faculty, staff, administrators, and students in order to:

- assess and document the quality of programming,
- student experiences,
- administrative functionality,
- ethics, and

- ensure alignment of institutional ESF’s mission and institutional priorities with MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.

Evidence contained in College documents will allow the self-study working groups, and ultimately the steering committee, to determine whether the criterion have been met. Each working group will be organized with 2 co-chairs from the Steering Committee and 5-7 additional working group members (faculty, staff, and/or students) from the campus community who will be responsible for identifying and providing evidence for criterion within the scope of their daily duties at ESF. All evidence will be cataloged in Kintone, managed by the Director of College Libraries, and cross-referenced where appropriate to provide evidence for other working groups. The final report will provide a narrative of the alignment of the ESF mission with MSCHE Standards for Accreditation, Requirements of Affiliation, and ESF’s three identified institutional priorities and the principles that guide each of these priorities (diversity and inclusion, financial responsibility, and environmental stewardship). The Self-Study Steering Committee will assist by providing guiding questions to help focus the working group’s analysis of a given standard; these are included at the end of this charge.

Participation in any and all working groups will present opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of regional accreditation expectations and an opportunity to have a voice in how ESF documents the quality of education and support available. This commitment will require active involvement in working groups of the Self-Study Steering Committee with activities beginning in Fall 2019 and culminating with the Spring 2022 MSCHE self-study site visit.

All aspects of the self-study should connect to ESF’s institutional mission: “The mission of the College of Environmental Science and Forestry is to advance knowledge and skills and to promote the leadership necessary for the stewardship of both the natural and designed environments.”

### General Working Group Charge

Each working group is responsible for targeted documentation and assessment of the assigned MSCHE Standard for Accreditation and the relevant Requirements of Affiliation. Included in this work is to consult with institutional stakeholders and identify areas of strength and opportunity that demonstrate the institution’s compliance with the specified standard for

accreditation; to ensure that the three institutional priorities and underlying principles (diversity and equity, financial responsibility, and environmental stewardship) are adequately addressed in the working group's analysis; reviewing interim reports that will be used to write the final working group report; identifying the most important opportunities for improvement and innovation that will be included in the final working group report.

### Committee Membership

Characteristics considered in selecting working group membership included many of the same considerations for the Self-Study Steering Committee as well as having a sense of commitment to the self-study process and to the institutional priorities and representing an area within the scope of the criterion for the specified standard for accreditation. In order to frame the responsibility of each working group in the context of the self-study report, each group is given a broad set of "Guiding Questions" to prompt their discussion and analysis of the assigned Standard.

### Guiding Questions

1. How do the College's particular institutional priorities support the achievement of each Standard?
2. What evidence demonstrates this compliance with the Standard and its criteria, where is it documented?
3. Are there gaps in policies (What?), procedures (How?) or structures (Who?) that may suggest that we are not in compliance with the Standard and its criteria?
4. In what ways can the Institution strengthen college or university -wide efforts related to the Standards and its criteria, particularly for student oriented key performance indicators?
5. Are there opportunities to improve student learning, institutional effectiveness, and progress toward our strategic plan, the mission and goals and can all of this be supported by assessment?

**Standard I: Mission, Vision, and Goals:** The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

### Working Group

1. John Wagner, Co-Chair, Professor and Associate Chair Sustainable Resources Management
2. John Turbeville, Co-Chair, Sr. Asst. Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Career Services

3. Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, ALO, Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research
4. Tom Carter, Director of International Education
5. Matt Smith, Director of College Libraries and ESF Chapter UUP President
6. Executive Leadership Representative, waiting for volunteer/designee
7. Douglas Daley, Academic Governance Executive Chair, Professor, Environmental Resources Engineering

**Standard II: Ethics & Integrity:** Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to policies, and represent itself truthfully.

**Working Group**

1. Maureen Fellows, Co-Chair, VP for Government and External Relations
2. Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, Co-Chair, ALO, Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research
3. Sue Sanford, Director of Admissions and Inter-Institutional Relations
4. Daniel Collins, Graduate Student Representative
5. OIDE Representative (waiting for volunteer/designee)
6. Tom Carter, Director of International Education
7. Timothy Blehar, Director of Human Resources or designee
8. Matt Smith, Director of College Libraries and ESF Chapter UUP President
9. Stephanie Specchio, Associate Vice President, Marketing and Communications
10. Ranger School Representative, to be determined following leadership change

**Standard III: Curriculum:** An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

**Working Group**

1. Kim Armani, Co-Chair, Assistant Dean, Office of Instruction and Graduate Studies
2. John Wagner, Co-Chair, Professor and Associate Chair Sustainable Resources Management
3. Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, ALO, Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research
4. Matt Smith, Director of College Libraries and ESF Chapter UUP President
5. Greg McGee, Associate Professor, Dept. of Environmental and Forest Biology

6. Gary Scott, Professor and Director of the Division of Engineering
7. Doug Johnston, Professor and Chair, Department of Landscape Architecture
8. David Newman, Interim Provost & Chief Academic Officer
9. Simone Antich, Undergraduate Student Representative
10. Shumaila Bhatti, Graduate Student Representative

**Standard IV: Student Experience:** Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

Working Group

1. Anne Lombard, Co-Chair, Vice Provost and Dean for Student Affairs
2. John Turbeville, Co-Chair, Sr. Asst. Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Career Services
3. Tom Fletcher, Associate Director of Admissions
4. Mark Hill, Director of Financial Aid
5. Lindi Quackenbush, Professor and Chair, Department of Environmental Resources Engineering
6. Monica Blaisdell, Professional Academic Advisor, Division of Environmental Science
7. Amelia Hoffman, Academic Success and Community Service Coordinator
8. Daniel Collins, Graduate Student Representative
9. Riley Stedman, Undergraduate Student Representative

**Standard V: Assessment of Student Learning:** Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institutions mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

Working Group

1. Scott Shannon, Co-Chair, Associate Provost & Dean of the Graduate School
2. Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, ALO, Co-Chair, Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research
3. Laura Crandall, Director of Student Leadership and Involvement
4. Daniel Collins, Graduate Student Representative
5. Brandon Murphy, Coordinator of Continuing Education
6. Terry Ettinger, IQAS Representative, Greenhouse Manager

7. Ranger School Representative, to be determined following leadership transition

**Standard VI: Planning and Resources:** The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

Working Group

1. Joe Rufo, Co-Chair, Chief Financial Officer and VP for Administration
2. Sophie Gublo-Jantzen, Co-Chair, ALO, Assistant Director of Assessment & Institutional Research
3. Joanie Mahoney, Chief Operating Officer
4. Matt Smith, Director of College Libraries and ESF Chapter UUP President
5. Timothy Blehar, Director of Human Resources or designee
6. Katherina Searing, Assistant Dean of Online, Public, and Professional Education
7. Ranger School Representative to be determined following leadership transition
8. Faculty Representative

**Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration:** The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituencies it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, other educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Working Group

1. Joanie Mahoney, Co-Chair, Chief Operating Officer
2. John Turbeville, Co-Chair, Sr. Asst. Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Career Services
3. Brenda Greenfield, Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of the ESF College Foundation
4. Joe Rufo, Chief Financial Officer and VP for Administration
5. Malika Carter, Chief Diversity Officer
6. Kimberly Soltzick, Undergraduate Student Representative
7. Douglas Daley, Academic Governance Executive Chair, Professor, Environmental Resources Engineering
8. William Fisher, ESF Board of Trustees

## VI. Guidelines for Reporting

The working group responsibilities and expectations outlined under Section V form the basis for assessing the working groups' reports. The working groups will submit interim, draft reports by the end of September 2020. These reports will include identifying and compiling the evidence demonstrating compliance with the Standards. In addition, each Standard report will contain a brief SII analysis – Strengths (S), Areas for Improvement (I), and Insights (I). Strengths will identify the ways in which ESF has demonstrated success clearly relative to a Standard's criteria, and why each identified strength is a strength in the context of ESF's mission. Areas for improvement will recognize strengths and how to continue to enhance these strengths moving forward. Areas for improvement will also recognize any concerns and how changes could be implemented to address these concerns moving forward. Insights identify significant discoveries and/or understandings – strengths or problems – that were gained from writing the self-study report. Insights, if done correctly, will provide guidance allowing ESF to continue realizing its mission, the three identified institutional priorities, and the three principles of diversity and inclusion, financial responsibility, and our role as a premier environmental college.

Working group reports will be structured as follows:

- Each group will complete an internally developed rubric/outline/method describing how they will assess each Standard for compliance given the accreditation standards by July 2020. This will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and amended as necessary.
- Each group will submit a draft report to the Steering Committee by February 2021
- Each report will begin with an overview that (1) lists the group's co-chairs and membership and provides a narrative of the working group's procedures, actions, and methods.
- Each report will summarize and provide evidence that ESF can demonstrate compliance with the Standard
- Each report will provide the SII analysis.

The Steering Committee will compile submitted reports into a stylistically consistent final draft of the Self-Study Report by July 2021. This draft report will then be sent to the campus community for review and input until September 2021.

The Steering Committee will revise the Self-Study report based on campus/community reviews during October 2021 and submit this draft to the identified Visiting Team Chair no later than November 2021.

The Visiting Team Chair will provide comments to the Steering Committee within two-weeks of receiving the draft Self-Study Report. The Steering Committee will revise the Self-Study report based on the Visiting Team Chair's comments. A final draft of the Self-Study report, Evidence Inventory, and Requirements of Affiliation will be uploaded to the MSCHE Portal by February 1, 2022.



## VII. Organization of the Final Self-Study Report

### Organization of the Report

#### I. Executive Summary

- i. Synopsis of Work Plan
- ii. Narrative of Concept Map (input)
- iii. Summary of relevant conclusions and recommendations (output)

#### II. Table of Contents

- i. List of figures

#### III. Introduction

- i. Institutional Profile/Context
- ii. Institutional Priorities and Underlying Principles
- iii. Intended Outcomes
- iv. Approach

#### IV. Chapters by Standard

- i. Mission and Goals
- ii. Ethics and Integrity
- iii. Student Learning
- iv. Student Success
- v. Assessment of Student Learning
- vi. Planning and Resources
- vii. Governance and Administration

#### V. Conclusion

- i. Institutionally Relevant Conclusions and Recommendations

#### VI. References/Evidence Inventory

#### VII. Glossary of Key Terms

Per Middle States Commission on Higher Education guidelines, the Verification of Compliance document will be submitted under separate cover prior to the Spring 2022 Self-Study on site peer evaluation.

#### Formatting Conventions:

- The Report will use College-approved Times New Roman Font: 12-point normal font, 14-point bold section heading, 1” margins, and will be double-spaced;
- The Report will include a Table of Contents that references major sections and subsections;

- The Report will support evidence and examples with reference to the Evidence Inventory;
- The Report will be formatted so that it is navigable in Adobe Acrobat using bookmarks and, as needed, internal hyperlinks to other sections of the document;
- The Report will not use any external hyperlinks to websites;
- Steering-Committee and working group membership will include names, academic titles, and institutional positions of those involved in the work of the Self-Study;
- The title page will follow the conventions for Middle States Self-Study Reports;
- The body of the report will include documentation of evidence and examples using in-text citation in APA style

### VIII. Verification of Compliance Strategy

The ALO will be responsible for managing and completing the Verification of Compliance process.

Process:

- communicate with the working groups and Steering Committee regarding needed resources, updated documents,
- to inform the Steering Committee and working groups on the status of the completion of the Verification of Compliance portion of the Self-Study Report.

Prior submissions of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report are available for review, and the policies and procedures related to Federal Compliance are current and up to date in ESF records. The most recent submission of the Verification of Compliance submission will serve as a guide for where to access the necessary documentation and evidence of compliance with accreditation-relevant federal regulations.

### IX. Self-Study Timetable

Due to the unprecedented challenges we all face given the COVID-19 pandemic, these dates will be flexible to the degree necessary to complete required work under remote-work arrangements until it is safe and practicable to return to campus. The Self-Study Steering Committee is committed to a Spring 2022 evaluation visit and will adapt the intermediate milestones noted in this timeline as required to accomplish that goal.

☒ October 28 – 29, 2019: Invitation Only MSCHE Self-Study Institute (John W, Tom C, Sophie G-J)

☒ November 7, 2019: Meet with President David Amberg to build engagement at the executive level for this 2-year process

☒ November 8, 2019: Meet with Academic Council to cover proposed timeline and expectations

☒ November 12, 2019: Academic Governance, campus update

☒ November 14, 2019: Invite AC, EC, and other campus stakeholders to assist with identifying institutional priorities through a Qualtrics survey designed around institutional strategic plan (Standard I – Mission & Goals)

- Update <https://www.esf.edu/middlestates> with current information regarding Self-Study progress, opportunities to provide input, etc.
- December 3, 2019: Academic Governance, campus update
- December 4, 2019: Conference Call with VP Liaison, Dr. Hilda Colón Plumey
- December 9-11: MSCHE Annual Conference (Sophie Gublo-Jantzen to attend)
- January 2020: Assemble Steering Committee & Work Groups
- January 21, 2020: Academic Governance, campus update
- February 18, 2020: Academic Governance, submit draft of Self-Study Design (SSD) to campus
- April 9, 2020: Full Self-Study Steering Committee virtual meeting via Zoom
- April 10, 2020: Submit draft of SSD to Dr. Hilda Colón Plumey
- Summer 2020: Dr. Hilda Colón Plumey will offer revision opportunity and accept SSD
- July 2020 – February 2021: Working groups gather and analyze data and submit reports to Steering Committee
- January 2021 – May 2021: Team Chair Chosen, Visit Date (March 2022) Chosen, SSD sent to Chair, Self-Study Report drafted and shared with campus community for comment
- July 2021 – September 2021: Self-Study Report revisions and campus review/comment period
- September 2021 – October 2021: Self-Study Report draft sent to Team Chair for feedback
- November 2021: Team Chair Visits (2 weeks after sending SS Report)
- December 2021 – January 2022: Self Study Report finalized based on Team Chair's feedback
- February 1, 2022: Self Study Report, Evidence Inventory, Verification of Compliance uploaded to MSCHE Portal (six weeks before scheduled team visit)
- March 2022: Full Evaluation Team on campus for review

## X. Communication Plan

Please see below for a timeline of expected communications regarding the Self-Study reaccreditation process. A few key groups are defined here:

1. Co-Chairs / Lead Team – this team consists of the two co-chairs and other key staff playing a central role in the management of communication of the self-study process.
2. Academic Governance – Academic Governance at ESF is a shared governance body consisting of faculty and staff from ESF. All faculty and staff are invited to attend monthly meetings. Key student leaders are also invited.
3. Executive Cabinet – this group consists of the upper administration of ESF and includes the President, Provost, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief of Staff, among others.
4. Undergraduate Student Association (USA) – this is the undergraduate student leadership body at ESF. All undergraduate students are eligible and invited to attend their meetings.
5. Graduate Student Association (GSA) – this is the graduate student leadership body at ESF. All graduate students are eligible and invited to attend their meetings.

**Table 4. Communication Timeline for ESF Spring 2022 Self-Study**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Actor(s)</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Communication Method</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>
Self-Study Steering Committee Meetings	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Self-Study Steering Committee	In-Person or virtual Meetings	Monthly starting Fall 2019 – Spring
Updates on impending self-study process	Co-Chairs/Lead Team; President	Academic Governance	In-Person Meeting	December 2019
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person Meeting	
		ESF Community	Email	
Updates on Qualtrics survey for institutional priorities	Co-Chairs/Lead Team; President	Academic Governance	In-Person Meeting	December 2019
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person Meeting	
		ESF Community	Email	
Updates on finalized institutional priorities	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Academic Governance	In-Person Meeting	January 2020
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person Meeting	
		ESF Community	Email	
Updates on first draft of SSD	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Academic Governance	In-Person Meeting	February 2020
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person Meeting	
		Undergraduate Student Association (USA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)	In-Person Meeting	
		Board of Trustees	In-Person Meeting	
		ESF Community	Email/Campus News	

Updates on final draft of SSD	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Full Steering Committee	Virtual Meeting	April 2020
Updates from working groups and call for input on Self-Study	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Academic Governance	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	September 2020 – December 2020
		Executive Leadership	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Undergraduate Student Association (USA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
Updates from working groups and call for input on Self-Study	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Board of Trustees	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	September 2020 – December 2020
		ESF Community	Email/Campus News	
Updates from working groups and call for input on Self-Study	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	Academic Governance	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	January 2021 – May 2021
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Undergraduate Student Association	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
Updates from working groups and call for input on Self-Study	Co-Chairs/Lead Team	and Graduate Student Association (GSA)	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Board of Trustees	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		ESF Community	Email/Campus News	

State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry Self-Study Design

Updates on second draft self-study report	Co-Chairs/Lead Team; President	Academic Governance	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	May 2021 – December 2021
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Undergraduate Student Association (USA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Board of Trustees	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		ESF Community	Email/Campus News	
Final updates prior to Team Chair Visit	Co-Chairs/Lead Team; President	Academic Governance	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	January 2020 – March 2020
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Undergraduate Student Association (USA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Board of Trustees	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		ESF Community	Email/Campus News	



Final updates on self-study process and team evaluation review	Co-Chairs/Lead Team; President	Academic Governance	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	March 2020 - End
		Executive Cabinet	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Undergraduate Student Association (USA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		Board of Trustees	In-Person or Virtual Meetings	
		ESF Community	Email/Campus News	

Additional Communication Notes:

In addition to the above timeline and anticipated communication strategy, the Self-Study Steering Committee has established the following additional opportunities for communicating and engaging with our campus:

- Standing Website at <https://www.esf.edu/middlestates/>
  - o The Self-Study Steering Committee aims to use this website as a repository for key updates and documents related to the self-study process. This website is public and promoted in all key presentations and emails about the self-study process to the ESF community.
  - o In addition to serving as a data source, the site also allows for anonymous comments relative to the self-study process. This comment box went live in December 2019 and will continue to be so until the completion of the self-study process.
- Standing Meetings with Executive Cabinet, Academic Governance, and the Provost’s Office
  - o The Self-Study Steering Committee will maintain standing meetings with Executive Cabinet (bi-weekly), Academic Governance (monthly), and the Provost’s Office (bi-weekly) to continue to provide updates on progress as needed. These meetings are considered above and beyond the required updates listed above.

- o The Self-Study Steering Committee began meeting with all three constituents in December 2019 and will continue to do so until the end of the self-study process.
- Access to Routine Meetings with USA, GSA, and Board of Trustees
  - o The Self-Study Steering Committee has worked to gain access to attend USA, GSA, and/or Board of Trustees meetings. While these are not standing meetings, the committee can access them if opportunities beyond that which is detailed in the timeline are found to be necessary.
- Access to Town Hall Option and Campus-Wide Email
  - o The Self-Study Steering Committee has worked to gain access to host town halls (or similar style events) and to send campus-wide emails if necessary. While these are not planned currently, the committee can access them if opportunities beyond that which is detailed in the timeline are found to be necessary.

## XI. Evaluation Team Profile

### Team Chair:

The ideal Team Chair will be from an institution that offers a broad range of degree program levels, from Associate to PhD, who understands the scope of ESF's degree program offerings. Additionally, a leader from a public institution in the MSCHE region that is familiar with the challenges and opportunities realized in fulfilling a specific or specialized mission. Other characteristics for a team chair include someone who leads an institution with a relatively small FTE enrollment. A team chair representative from a Public Land Grant institution would also be acceptable.

### Peer Evaluators:

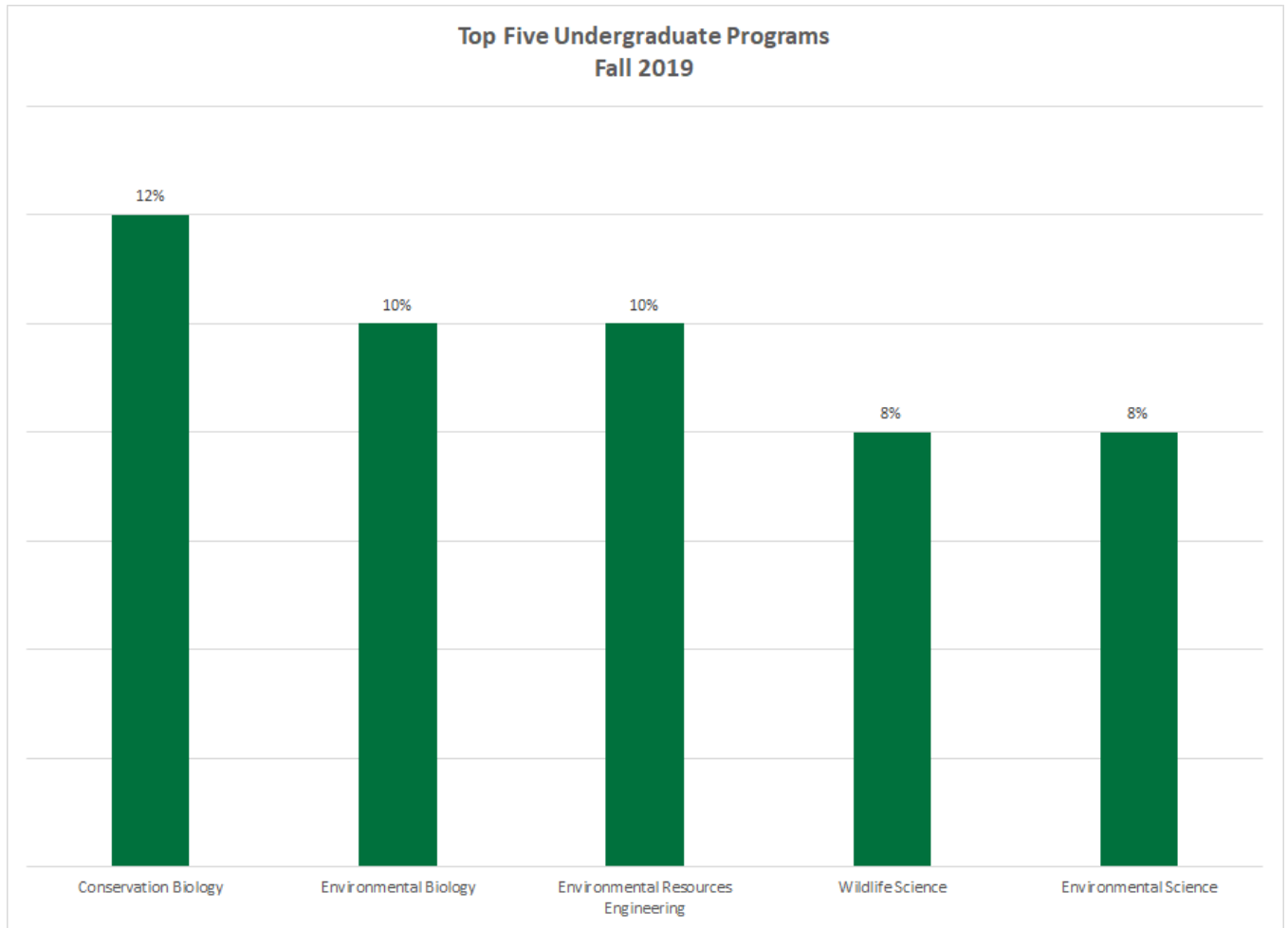
The peer evaluation team should be comprised of experienced professionals who are knowledgeable of research in environmental science and related fields, as well as curriculum, assessment, and would preferably include members who are experienced in assessing various aspects of student life and the student experience at a similarly situated higher education institution within the MSCHE region. The College has strong preference for a team largely made up of evaluators with a strong background in environmental and/or biological sciences.

Comparison Institutions/Aspirational Peers:

1. SUNY Maritime
2. University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
3. University of Vermont Rubenstein School
4. Pennsylvania State University
5. Lehigh University
6. Colorado School of Mines
7. Rochester Institute of Technology
8. Clarkson University
9. New Jersey Institute of Technology
10. University of Maryland System Central Office
11. Salisbury University
12. Mountclair State University
13. Rowan University
14. USDA State Research Service

Top Programs:

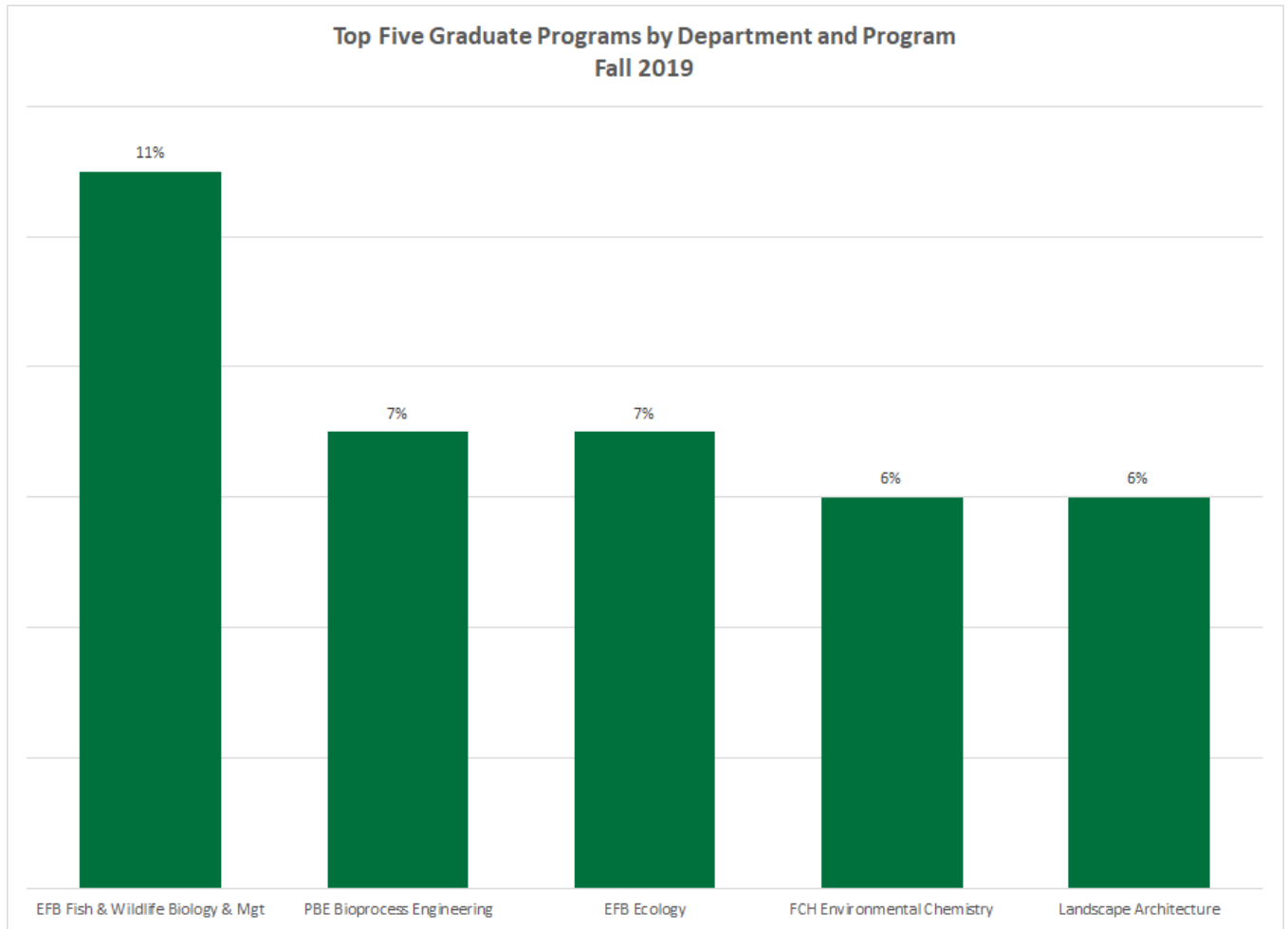
ESF's top five undergraduate programs reflect our institutional mission through a clear focus on the environment and environmental stewardship. Conservation Biology, Environmental Biology, Environmental Resources Engineering, Wildlife Science, and Environmental Science are all deeply connected to promoting leadership and stewardship of natural and designed environments (Figure 3). More than 50% of the undergraduate student population is enrolled in the top five undergraduate academic programs



**Figure 3. Top Five Undergraduate Programs of Study**

The top five graduate programs also reflect ESF’s commitment to leading environmental stewardship through providing graduate level education in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Environmental Studies, Environmental Science, and Sustainable Resources Management. The top five most popular graduate areas of study at ESF are in Fish and Wildlife Biology Management, Bioprocess Engineering, Ecology, Environmental Chemistry, and Landscape Architecture. Due to the specialized nature of graduate study, enrollment in these top five programs make up only 37% of the total graduate student population (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Top Five Graduate Programs of Study**



## XII. Evidence Inventory

Each working group will use evidence relating to the accreditation criteria of its standard to provide evidence of compliance. The Evidence Inventory will exist electronically as both a discrete file repository and as a discovery tool that is searchable via full text (where possible) and metadata. Further, it will serve as an internal communication tool. The content will be compiled by the working groups and submitted to the Evidence Inventory by Co-Chairs. Upon completion, the Evidence Inventory will be shared with the Steering Committee for review and input. Based on input received from the Steering Committee, the lead team will make needed changes and share the inventory with the campus community for comment before submission.

# Appendix A: College Organizational Chart

