Program to test colleges' chemistry
LeMoyne, SUNY ESF to collaborate on summer class in chemistry-research ethics.

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By Nancy Buczek
Staff writer
LeMoyne College and the State University College of Environmental Science and Forestry are partnering to offer undergraduate students the chance to be scientists for the summer while exploring the ethics of research.

"The collaboration aspect is great," said John Smarrelli, LeMoyne's academic vice president. "The colleges have different missions, but we're able to create a real synergy."

College officials are awaiting final approval of a $187,500 grant from the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates program. The grant will fund three 10-week summer chemistry research programs in which students will stay free on the LeMoyne campus while working alongside chemistry researchers at SUNY ESF.

A science foundation official said last week that the grant should get final
approval this week. Anticipating that approval, college officials wanted to get the word out about the program, said Ted Dibble, who co-wrote the grant with Smarrelli.

During the program, 13 students will split their time between the LeMoyne and SUNY ESF campuses. They will stay in one of the residence halls at the LeMoyne campus, which is about four miles from SUNY ESF. The students will spend most of their time participating in research at SUNY ESF.

The students will take part in seminars on research careers and applying to graduate school. They will also take trips to see chemists at work in industry. At LeMoyne, one of its faculty members will lead seminars on ethics.

"We thought this would be a nice marriage between the institutions," Smarrelli said.

The NSF grant will cover costs associated each summer for 10 students to participate. Each student will receive a $3,000 stipend, $200 toward travel expenses and reimbursement for some meals.

The grant requires that LeMoyne pay for one student's participation, about $4,550, for each year of the grant. SUNY ESF will pay for two students to participate each year, about $9,100. SUNY ESF will also pay Dibble $5,800 to coordinate the program.

The first summer program is expected to be offered this year.

The grant guarantees that at least three of the students each year will be from LeMoyne. Smarrelli said he wanted students at his college to have an opportunity to use the facilities at SUNY ESF.

The program is geared toward exposing undergraduates to research careers in chemistry. But it also exposes them to SUNY ESF's facilities for those who might further their education at a graduate level.

SUNY ESF President Cornelius "Neil" Murphy said he is pleased that the grant creates a bridge between the two institutions.

"I was ecstatic when I heard," he said.

Dibble expects that about 15 SUNY ESF faculty members will volunteer to be mentors for the students. They will not receive payment out of the grant or a salary from the college for participating in the program.

Smarrelli, who received his undergraduate degree in biology from LeMoyne in 1975 and a doctorate in chemistry from SUNY ESF in 1980, was looking for opportunities in which the two colleges could partner when he found out Dibble was planning to submit the chemistry research grant. It seemed natural for LeMoyne to offer an ethics component, he said.

Smarrelli is already pursuing a similar partnership between the two schools that would focus on a summer research program in biology, with LeMoyne again teaching the ethics portion.

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