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ESF Introduces Graduate Programs in Environmental Studies

SYRACUSE — The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) has established two new graduate programs in environmental studies. These programs focus on the social and policy dimensions of environmental issues, and take an interdisciplinary approach to solving environmental problems.

“These are programs that can make a real difference in the world,” said Dr. David A. Sonnenfeld, chair of the Department of Environmental Studies at ESF.

The new programs are a master of science (MS) and a master of professional studies (MPS), both in environmental studies.

“The MS program is research-focused, offering students an interdisciplinary understanding of environmental issues, the problems that underlie them, and the paths that lead to sustainable communities,” said Sonnenfeld. It is intended for students with a wide range of undergraduate degrees.

The MPS program is a non-thesis degree aimed at professionals already working in various environmental fields and others seeking a graduate program with less emphasis on research. Those choosing the MPS track will find a more career-focused program, often including an internship that adds real-world applications to the curriculum.

Both graduate programs offer unique blends of social science, humanities and physical science, and allow students to take a hands-on approach to developing their own personal curriculum.

“Working with a graduate advisor, students establish a plan of study, learning and career objectives,” said Sonnenfeld. “Students think systematically about what they want to accomplish.”

At ESF, the environmental studies department is a well-defined, interdisciplinary academic unit with its own faculty members who are experts in their respective fields. This provides an important advantage over the more loosely defined programs found at many other colleges. The ES department is also enhanced by ESF’s diverse expertise in related

environmental fields in the natural sciences and engineering, and by the focus and mission of the entire college.

“There are few places with so many environmentally focused experts in one place,” said Dr. Susan Senecah, professor in the environmental studies program.

Students in the environmental studies graduate programs also will benefit from ESF’s relationship with neighboring Syracuse University (SU). Students can take supplemental courses from SU in closely related social science areas, including energy and climate policy, environmental history, environmental and/or ecological economics, anthropology, religion, human ecology, management methods for public agencies and non-profits, and environmental law.

In addition, environmental studies graduate students at ESF may work toward concurrent degrees at SU’s Newhouse School of Public Communications, or the Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs.

ESF’s environmental studies programs identify several core areas. These include: sustainability, policy, governance, conflict resolution, advocacy, ethics, and perception and behavior.

For further information about the environmental studies graduate programs, visit <http://www.esf.edu/es/graduate.htm>.