**The State University of New York**

**College of Environmental Science and Forestry**

**Position Description**

**President**

**Challenges for the New President**

The president of ESF reports jointly to the College’s 15-member Board of Trustees and to the Chancellor of the SUNY system. The president oversees a faculty and staff of approximately 410 FTEs and an operating budget of approximately $28 million.

Many of the challenges for ESF’s next president involve enhancing the College’s remarkable strengths. These include—but are not limited to—its compelling public mission; its strong academic standing; the caliber and loyalty of its faculty, staff, alumni and students; the high level of its research funding; its strong ties to Syracuse University; its positive relationships with SUNY, the Legislature, and the Governor’s office; an unusually strong working relationship among its administrators, faculty and staff; and the warmth of its organizational culture. Building upon this solid foundation the core challenges for the new president are as follows:

**Articulate a Vision**

The new president will be expected to work closely with faculty, staff, trustees, and other colleagues to craft, communicate, and implement a unified vision for ESF in the coming years. This vision should reinforce ESF’s tradition of excellence, broaden its status as a widely recognized leader in its fields and in the global effort to promote sustainable development, and build upon its recent recommitment to create a College community that celebrates a diversity of individual and cultural identities. The vision should galvanize the ESF community around a commonly understood direction and, thereby, set the stage for meeting other key institutional challenges.

**Enhance the Visibility of the Institution**

The president should lead the effort to raise the public profile of ESF. Already well known in academic circles, the College has the potential to become more generally recognized as one of the finest environmental science and forestry programs in the country, if not the world. To do so, it has to be more communicative and reach wider and more diverse audiences.

This effort will call for a sustained, coordinated, multi-pronged approach encompassing marketing, communications, publications, public and media relations, and government and community affairs. Increased visibility will, in turn, enhance faculty and student recruitment, fund raising, alumni relations, and government relations.

**Lead and Inspire the Resource Development Effort**

ESF’s president should inspire and lead the institution’s fund raising, both through personal involvement and by building an integrated, well-coordinated institutional advancement capacity.

Like all public institutions, in recent years ESF has had to step up its’ fund raising from private sources because state support—as a percentage of the total College budget—has decreased. The new president will play a key role in private fund raising by reaching out to alumni and other individuals, broadening ESF’s partnerships with industry and increasing support from foundations.

State support will always be critical to ESF, however, and the president must continue to cultivate ESF’s already strong relations with SUNY, the state Legislature, and the Governor.

The College’s excellent track record in attracting sponsored research funds must also be continued with the president’s demonstrated support and encouragement.

**Strengthen Recruitment and Increase Enrollment**

The new president must ensure that ESF invests in an aggressive, effective recruitment program, paying particular attention to upholding its high academic standards and increasing the diversity of the study body. For most of its history, ESF has not had to worry about attracting students or increasing enrollment. As a small, well-regarded specialized college, it always had a large pool of qualified applicants. That pattern has shifted in recent years. The combination of demographics and increased competition as other colleges initiated environmental studies programs has meant that ESF has recently faced a downward drift in undergraduate applications. At the graduate level, enrollment has flattened as ESF replaced a large number of retiring senior faculty with newer faculty members who have not yet fully developed their research programs and reputations, which are essential to graduate student recruitment.

An additional factor driving ESF’s enrollment initiative is the new resource allocation model recently instituted by SUNY. In the past, SUNY campuses received allocations of funds on a formula basis with only an indirect relationship to the tuition which each campus generated. Under the new model, more of a campus’s operating budget will depend on revenue from tuition, which increases the incentive to expand enrollment. ESF has, accordingly, raised its enrollment targets while reasserting its determination to maintain its quality standards.

**Ensure the Strongest Possible Administrative and Management Structure**

As ESF takes advantage of its impressive potential, the demand for effective administration and management will only increase. The need to reengineer, gain efficiency, manage carefully, and invest effectively will be ongoing. Over time, the president will want to assess the College’s organizational and administrative structure and ensure that there is the strongest possible senior staff team in place working well and efficiently together.

**Qualifications and Experience**

The ideal candidate for this position will be an enterprising leader who can embody the standards of teaching, scholarship, and public service that have characterized ESF for nearly 90 years. The new president must be deeply committed to and excited by the College’s mission and must have the skills to help refine and communicate its vision. The president must demonstrate the drive, ingenuity, and grace to promote the enterprise, raise funds, and engage the College community in charting its future. ESF’s president must be able to operate successfully within a dynamic political environment where planning must take place in the midst of ambiguity. Public presence, strong communications skills, and the experience and inclination to be an effective, outgoing spokesperson for ESF and its mission are also required.

The search committee will consider candidates from a range of backgrounds and prefers professional experience and achievement that is as broad-based as possible. Academic credentials must be sufficient to earn the respect of the academic community and foster excellence.