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SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

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Policy on Faculty Membership in the Graduate Program in Environmental Science

The Graduate Program in Environmental Science (GPES) is a unique response to emerging institutional and analytical challenges of developing environmental problems. The program, which draws upon faculty from throughout the College, emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach to environmental understanding and stewardship. It maintains a strong academic orientation, facilitating student and faculty engagement of fundamental environmental challenges such as resource utilization and sustainability, the uses and limits of scientific prediction, risk and sustainability, and a systemic concern for the health of the environment.

The mission of GPES is to provide interdepartmental training to graduate students to prepare them to address environmental concerns and problems, investigate practical solutions to them and foster effective environmental stewardship. The program provides for the following:

1. Multidisciplinary approach: recognition of the necessity to approach environmental problems with input from several disciplines and professions,
2. Holistic perspective: awareness of and deference to the interdependence of elements within broadly defined ecosystems, including physical, biological, social and economic systems,
3. Topical grounding: competency to understand and apply the principles of a particular subject of environmental inquiry in sufficient depth to interact with other disciplines and professional fields,
4. Realistic experience: internships, focused projects, theses, and dissertations provide opportunities to apply skills obtained in graduate training to problems of societal and scientific importance.

Faculty membership in the GPES program is offered to SUNY ESF Faculty having interdisciplinary activities and responsibilities. These responsibilities include (1) establishing and maintaining high quality graduate education and research programs within the GPES areas of study, (2) developing and teaching of graduate level courses and curricula, (3) advising graduate students, (4) serving on doctoral examination committees as a member, major professor, or chair, (5) participating in governance of GPES.

With regard to responsibilities 3 and 4, GPES fosters the following standards:

1. GPES faculty will foster the development of excellence in every graduate student.
2. GPES faculty are responsible for all phases of graduate education and will be accessible to students who are under their guidance.
3. GPES faculty will conscientiously supervise, encourage, and support students in their academic endeavors and assist them in securing research support and seeking professional employment.
4. In relations with students, GPES faculty will be candid, fair, and committed to the students' welfare and progress.
5. GPES faculty will not discriminate among graduate students on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, ethnic background, disability, religion, national origin, or any other factor unrelated to competence or performance.

6. GPES faculty will be objective in the evaluation of research and academic performance and will communicate that evaluation fully and honestly to their students. GPES faculty will report accurately on the competence of students to other professionals who require such evaluations.
7. GPES faculty will not permit personal animosities or intellectual differences with colleagues to impede student access to those colleagues or interfere with students' research or progress toward a degree.
8. When engaged in teaching, research, or supervision, GPES faculty will recognize the power they hold and will avoid engaging in conduct that exploits or demeans students or that could be construed as an abuse of that power.

The GPES program recognizes that the standards of academic excellence must remain at the highest level consistent with SUNY and ESF standards. Standards shall be maintained without discriminating against a faculty member on unlawful grounds and without limiting the institution's guarantee of academic freedom and equal opportunity.

Faculty Membership Policies

Per Article 3.1 of the GPES bylaws, Faculty are admitted to GPES by application to specific Areas of Study, subject to approval by the GPES Committee. Appointments are for 3 years, contingent on satisfactory performance, and may be renewed for any number of additional 3-year appointments. Faculty must meet the definition of "graduate faculty" as described in the SUNY ESF Bylaws.

Termination Policies

- a. A GPES Faculty member may resign from GPES voluntarily by submitting a letter of resignation to the Director of GPES.
- b. A faculty member who resigns or retires from the College is automatically terminated from membership in GPES unless the unit in which the faculty member holds tenure asks that the faculty member continue for a specified period of time.
- c. A member may be removed from GPES if the member has been grossly neglectful of or grossly inefficient in the performance of responsibilities as a GPES member (as listed in the responsibilities and standards above). A written request for removal must be made to the GPES Director and must state reasons for the requested termination. The faculty member under consideration for removal may provide a written statement (to the GPES Director) addressing the concerns raised in the termination proposal.

The removal request and the faculty statement, if submitted, will be considered by the GPES Committee, which shall forward a recommendation to the Provost for approval by the President to remove the faculty member from GPES.