## SUNY Excels 2015 Performance Improvement Plan

### Attachment 1: Narrative

### CAMPUS INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus:</th>
<th>SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President:</td>
<td>Quentin D. Wheeler, PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Academic Officer:</td>
<td>Valerie A. Luzadis, PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Financial Officer:</td>
<td>Joseph L. Rufo</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1: CAMPUS ALIGNMENT WITH SUNY EXCELS

A Unique SUNY College

The College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) is a specialized doctoral-level campus of the State University of New York. Founded in 1911, and recognized as one of America’s top-ranked environmental colleges, ESF is located in Syracuse, New York, where the College shares its main campus with Syracuse University. ESF students and faculty also study at seven field stations and regional campuses, which provide more than 25,000 acres of forest and wetlands for research and applied learning. ESF enrolls approximately 1,750 undergraduate and 475 graduate students in 53 degree programs offered at the associate, baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral levels. New York residents total 79% of currently enrolled students. The College is classified in SUNY’s highest selectivity group for admission, and student quality is very high. Nearly 40% of all undergraduates have transferred to ESF. ESF is a Carnegie classified Doctoral/Research University, and is the only such institution in the U.S. that is also classified as “small.” ESF faculty are among SUNY’s most productive researchers, and their research provides much needed solutions to environmental problems.

Mission and Strategic Plan

ESF’s “Vision 2020” strategic plan (www.esf.edu/vision2020/) was approved by the College Board of Trustees in February 2003. It defined the College mission as follows:

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 Vision 2020 plan includes many objectives that align closely with system-wide priorities and our SUNY Excels Plan. A partial list of these aligned objectives would include:

- Enrollment growth to 3,500 students (Access and Completion).
- Achieve most selective admission level (Access).
- Increase faculty and student diversity (Access).
- Achieve an 80% graduation rate for undergraduates (Completion).
- Increase experiential learning options (Success).
- Develop international study options and appreciation of diversity (Success).
- Strengthen support services for at risk groups (Success).
- Increase research visibility and funding (Inquiry).
- Encourage economic development in Central New York (Engagement).
- Increase alumni, corporate, and foundation giving (Engagement).

ESF President Quentin Wheeler is now leading the College in a new strategic planning process, with the goal of completing a new strategic plan by the end of the 2015-16 academic year. The goals, strategies, and metrics included in ESF’s new strategic plan are expected to align even more closely with SUNY’s system-wide goals. The strategies and metrics included in this Performance Improvement Plan will provide a basis for ESF’s ongoing strategic planning and assessment efforts.


Academic Program Mix

ESF’s academic programs are uniquely focused on sustainability and the science, design, engineering, and management of our environment and natural resources. Faculty and programs are organized within seven academic departments and a Division of Environmental Science, including:

- Chemistry
- Environmental and Forest Biology
- Environmental Resources Engineering
- Environmental Science
- Environmental Studies
- Forest and Natural Resources Management
- Landscape Architecture
- Paper and Bioprocess Engineering

The College offers 57 registered degree and advanced certificate options in a full range of associate, baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral programs. Several ESF programs were among the first to be offered in their fields of study, and all are highly regarded. New degree programs in Environmental Health, Sustainable Energy Management, and Bioprocess Engineering have been developed to meet emerging societal needs with funding support provided by SUNY. ESF is currently ranked #89 among National Universities by U.S. News and World Report, and ranks #41 in the magazine’s “Great Schools, Great Prices” list for quality and affordability. ESF was the top-ranked SUNY campus in the U.S. News rankings for 2015.

Research Orientation

Student and faculty research aimed at understanding and solving environmental problems has always been one of the hallmarks of an ESF education. A government-supported study to identify firms using wood in New York State, and the species and quantities of lumber used, was completed in 1912, just one year after the College opened. Countless research projects have been conducted since then, and faculty members at ESF are highly engaged in both teaching and research.

Relationship with Syracuse University

ESF was founded in 1911 as the State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, and joined the SUNY system in 1948. The College maintains a unique public-private partnership with Syracuse University that provides ESF students with opportunities to complete “accessory instruction” classes at the University, to utilize many academic and student life facilities, and to participate in student clubs and organizations under the provisions of an annual contract approved by SUNY.

Online Learning and Open SUNY

ESF has offered a small number of online-enabled classes in recent years, and these have been offered most often as part of a recently developed summer session initiative. The College is now setting more ambitious goals for offering courses and certificate programs online, and will develop an ESF Open Academy as a new organizational unit responsible for advancing online learning at ESF. The College has initiated The Open SUNY Institutional Readiness Assessment process and is committed to active participation in Open SUNY. ESF has also submitted a SUNY Expanded Investment and Performance Fund proposal to acquire a portion of the resources needed for this initiative.
SECTION 2: SUNY EXCELS PRIORITY AREAS AND METRICS

The College of Environmental Science and Forestry is committed to achieving high standards of excellence in the five SUNY Excels priority areas of **Access, Completion, Success, Inquiry, and Engagement**. These system-wide priorities fit ESF’s college-level priorities very well, and the metrics used in the SUNY Excels process will provide a strong framework for ongoing institutional assessment and continuous improvement at ESF.

**EXCELS PERFORMANCE GOAL 1: ACCESS**

SUNY-ESF will contribute to the State University’s efforts to improve access by attracting and serving a larger and more diverse number of enrolled students, maintaining a high level of student quality, and increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff. Specific strategies and metrics for improving access are outlined in sections 1.1 through 1.8 below, including important observations concerning ESF’s past performance and the current context for institutional improvement.

1.1 Fall Enrollment Headcount and AAFTE (Table 1)

- Fall 2015 enrollment counts at ESF show a continuation of recent trends towards increased undergraduate headcount and AAFTE coupled with declining graduate student headcount and AAFTE. ESF’s plans for additional enrollment growth will focus heavily on increasing graduate student enrollment and our enrollment of part-time students studying online.

- Our Fall 2015 headcount enrollment of 1,755 matriculated undergraduate students is the highest in ESF’s history. Additional growth in campus-based undergraduate certificate and degree programs is limited by the current capacity of our Syracuse campus academic facilities and on-campus residence hall housing (currently only 549 beds). Undergraduate enrollment in campus-based programs will reach capacity limits with our plan to increase enrollment to 1,900.

- ESF’s recent growth in undergraduate enrollment has been driven by increased recruitment of out-of-state U.S. and international students, who now total 17.5% of ESF’s full-time undergraduate population. Projected increases in full-time undergraduate headcounts will continue to be driven by recruitment focused on markets outside New York State. A “3+1” Bachelor of Science program offered in cooperation with the Beijing University of Chemical Technology will bring an estimated 50 full-time undergraduates to ESF each year beginning Fall 2018.

- ESF’s graduate student enrollment peaked in Fall 2013, with 323 full-time and 228 part-time graduate students (551 total). For Fall 2015, ESF has enrolled 290 full-time and 184 part-time graduate students (474 total). We hope to reinvigorate our graduate program by adding new professional (non-thesis) master’s degree programs, and by encouraging additional recruitment of full-time doctoral level students. The planned construction of a new Academic Research Building at ESF (with anticipated completion in 2018-19) will facilitate increased faculty research and increased graduate student enrollment. The College is examining its graduate program enrollment goals, program capacity, and related staffing needs as part of an ongoing strategic planning process.
ESF has set ambitious goals to enroll undergraduate and graduate level students in online-enabled courses, certificates, and degree programs. We are working to establish an “ESF Open Academy” to facilitate the development and delivery of online-enabled courses and programs. Our goal is to enroll 600 students online by Fall 2018 and to enroll 1,000 students online by Fall 2020. ESF has submitted a proposal through SUNY’s Expanded Investment and Performance Fund to secure the funding required to launch our Open Academy initiative.

The table below shows baseline (Fall 2015) and projected (Fall 2018 and Fall 2020) headcount enrollment for six separate market segments of ESF students. While new access and completion initiatives are expected to increase the College’s campus-based enrollment by 145 undergraduate and 126 graduate students over this five-year period, a much larger increase in enrolled students will come from attracting a new population of online learners enrolled in ESF’s Open Academy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Segment</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
<th>5 Yr Count</th>
<th>5 Yr %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Based students</td>
<td>2,229</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>+271</td>
<td>+12.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time Undergraduate</td>
<td>1,733</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>1,845</td>
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<td>+6.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time Undergraduate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>+33</td>
<td>+150.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time Graduate</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>+70</td>
<td>+24.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time Graduate</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>+56</td>
<td>+30.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online-Enabled Students</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>+870</td>
<td>+669.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time Undergraduate</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>+495</td>
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<td>Part-time Graduate</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>+375</td>
<td>+1500%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total ESF Enrolled (for credit)</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>+1,141</td>
<td>+48.4%</td>
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</table>

1.2 Student Enrollment Beyond Fall Census (Table 2)

ESF enrolls a significant number of non-matriculated students who are not counted in SUNY’s Fall Census in state-aidable courses. In 2013-14, ESF registered 6,753 students in credit and non-credit courses, while only 2,229 of those (33.0%) were counted. Course registrations beyond ESF’s Fall Census come from: (1) non-credit/continuing education courses offered through ESF’s Outreach Office, (2) credit courses offered to 600-700 New York State high school students annually through our ESF in the High School program, and (3) cross-registered Syracuse University students enrolled in credit courses at ESF through an accessory instruction agreement.

We are projecting only a small increase in non-matriculated student registrations. Enrollment planning for 2018 and beyond will place greater emphasis on increasing enrollment in credit-bearing courses leading to certificate and degree completion. Non-credit courses offered online through ESF’s proposed Open Academy will provide new opportunities to attract continuing education enrollments and new options for non-matriculated students to enter degree programs.
1.3 First-time Undergraduate Admission and Selectivity (Table 3)

- ESF has seen a small drop in first-time undergraduate applications since 2009 (-4.9%), coupled with an increase in acceptance rates (+8.1%), but the College’s 2014 class was 16% larger than 2009 and entered with higher mean SAT scores. ESF’s 51.3% first-year acceptance rate is only slightly higher than SUNY’s doctoral sector average (49.3%), while ESF’s 40.2% enrollment yield is much higher than SUNY’s doctoral sector average (18.1%) and comprehensive sector average (18.4%). These differences in acceptance and enrollment rates are partly due to ESF’s Early Decision Admissions option.

- Admission and selectivity data must also be placed in the context of ESF’s specialized mission and STEM-based programs. ESF has achieved SUNY’s highest selectivity level, but we continue to enroll 10% of first-year students through EOP/Risk admission to encourage access. ESF will soon launch a branding and visibility campaign to expand market reach and increase applications, but acceptance rates and student quality may not change significantly due to plans for 8.2% growth in campus-based undergraduate enrollments by 2020.

- ESF enrolls more than 225 new undergraduate transfer students each year (approximately 40% of our entering undergraduates). This enrollment metric is not measured in the SUNY Excels process, but it is an important measure of ESF’s commitment to undergraduate student access and to higher degree completion rates for transfer students who begin their education at other SUNY campuses.

1.4 Geographic Diversity of Students (Table 4)

- ESF currently enrolls 1,745 New York resident students (Fall 2015) who comprise 79.0% of the College’s undergraduate and graduate student population. This percentage of in-state students is higher than SUNY’s doctoral sector average of 75.5% (Fall 2014).

- ESF’s capacity to increase campus-based enrollment to generate additional tuition revenue is limited. ESF will continue to increase out-of-state recruitment to attract additional students and additional net tuition revenue. Recruitment of students from beyond New York State also: (1) helps to ensure sufficient enrollment in ESF’s specialized programs as we deal with a declining number of high school graduates in New York State, (2) promotes greater student diversity, (3) positions ESF to attract a wider variety and number of donors, sponsors and partnerships, and (4) extends the College’s mission to provide solutions to environmental problems that are often regional, national and international in scope.

- ESF is implementing a “3+1” Bachelor of Science in Bioprocess Engineering with the Beijing University of Chemical Technology that will bring 50 full-time undergraduates to ESF each year beginning Fall 2018. ESF’s enrollment of international undergraduates will double by Fall 2018 and triple by Fall 2020.

1.5 Student Diversity – Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Pell (Table 5)

- The SUNY Excels process does not ask campuses to propose specific race/ethnicity metrics, but the SUNY system and SUNY-ESF value diversity and are committed to providing increased access for students from underrepresented groups.
ESF’s student enrollment is significantly less diverse in race/ethnicity than SUNY’s other doctoral campuses. The doctoral campuses enrolled an average of 29.7% of their total students from minority groups, and 17.3% from underrepresented minority groups in Fall 2014. The comparable percentages for ESF were 10.4% and 7.2% respectively. ESF is implementing targeted recruitment and retention strategies and making steady progress in increasing student diversity. ESF’s total enrollment for Fall 2015 now includes 11.9% minority student enrollment, with 8.8% from underrepresented groups.

ESF will implement a number of targeted recruitment strategies to meet increased minority student recruitment goals over the next five years. We will:

- Increase student recruitment in the New York metropolitan area, including the possible addition of a minority recruitment specialist based downstate.

- Encourage ESF’s minority undergraduates to continue in ESF graduate programs by providing special funding and mentoring. Only 7.5% of ESF graduate students come from minority groups, while 13.0% of ESF undergraduates do.

- Increase direct mail marketing to minority prospects identified through the National Hispanic Recognition Program, GRE Search and other sources.

- Raise additional scholarship funds to ensure that ESF can meet the higher levels of financial need often shown by minority students and families. Undergraduates from minority groups qualified for an average of $4,636 in ESF-funded scholarship support for the 2015-16 academic year, while white undergraduates qualified for an average of $3,225.

- Double undergraduate enrollment in ESF’s Educational Opportunity Program (from 32 to 64 students) if requested funding for a pre-college EOP summer program is provided by SUNY.

- Work to increase enrollment in ESF’s Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) as an important strategy for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students from New York State.

- Partner with SUNY comprehensive campuses with large minority enrollments to encourage student applications for ESF graduate programs. Explore development of joint BS/MPS or BS/MS degree programs with selected campuses, along with targeted scholarships for graduate study. Also explore potential partnerships with CUNY and HBCU campuses.

- Continue to grow the “STEM pipeline” through partnerships with schools and community organizations to introduce students to the environmental sciences (see www.esf.edu/outreach).

- Include these strategies and others in a diversity recruitment plan, as recommended by the SUNY Diversity Task Force (2015).
ESF will also work to increase its enrollment of international students to provide greater cultural diversity and cultural competency. International students currently make up 26.8% of ESF’s graduate students, but only 1.8% of undergraduate students. A 3+1 program will bring 50 Chinese undergraduates to ESF in 2018, and the College is pursuing more international partnerships.

ESF is moving steadily toward a campus that will enroll equal numbers of male and female students by Fall 2020. Female students represent 51.7% of ESF undergraduates in STEM majors, and 50.8% of all graduate students. Forbes magazine has ranked ESF the third best college in the nation for women studying science and engineering.

Pell recipients represent 27.2% of ESF’s undergraduate enrollment and represent 32.6% of undergraduate enrollment at SUNY’s doctoral campuses (Fall 2014). ESF will work to move closer to the sector average with strategies to increase recruitment in New York State’s major cities. We will also double EOP enrollment. Reaching the sector average will be difficult due to ESF’s reliance on out-of-state enrollment from higher income groups and our difficulty in providing adequate financial aid for Pell eligible students from outside New York State (charged non-resident tuition).

1.6 Faculty and Staff Diversity (Tables 6 and 7)

ESF’s full-time faculty headcount has increased slightly in recent years while part-time faculty have increased more. ESF currently employs a higher percentage of full-time faculty (74.8%) than the average at SUNY’s doctoral campuses (69.6%). Faculty headcount will likely grow by Fall 2020 to serve planned growth in enrollment and research output.

ESF must address a serious lack of diversity in faculty and staff as hiring opportunities occur. Minority faculty represent 14% of full-time faculty at ESF (less than SUNY’s average 19%), while minority staff members make up only 5% of full-time staff (well below SUNY’s 24%). ESF must also address underrepresentation of female faculty and staff. Recent hiring has moved ESF’s percentage of female faculty to 31% of the full-time faculty, but SUNY’s doctoral sector average is 37% and ESF should aspire to exceed that metric.

ESF will appoint a Chief Diversity Officer and implement additional recommendations from the recent SUNY Diversity Task Force report to improve faculty and staff diversity.

1.7 Program and Course Capacity

ESF is planning for a transformative expansion of online teaching and online program capacity through establishment of an ESF Open Academy. Open Academy courses will increase access by enrolling 600 students in credit-bearing online courses by Fall 2018 and 1,000 students by Fall 2020. ESF will expand its successful ESF in the High School program to enroll additional high school students in environmental science courses online through the Open Academy.

ESF will develop online certificate programs to fit the needs of part-time and adult learners who wish to build credits towards a degree or add degree competencies. Non-credit courses also will be offered online, but ESF’s focus will be on credit courses. ESF will award
up to 2,000 online-enabled certificates and degrees each year by 2020-21. ESF is partnering with Open SUNY staff to conduct an institutional readiness assessment and to launch the ESF Open Academy. Funding has been requested through SUNY’s Expanded Investment and Performance Fund to develop a new Teaching and Learning Center to help faculty develop online teaching skills and courses. Online courses will reduce time to degree, increase degree completion, and dramatically increase certificate program completion.

- ESF has some capacity to increase campus-based undergraduate enrollment in under-enrolled programs and is planning to add 145 students by Fall 2020. ESF has added new undergraduate programs in Sustainable Energy Management and Environmental Health since 2009. We are confident that we are meeting demand (capacity) in our fields of study.

- Campus-based graduate enrollment has dropped by nearly 100 students since enrollment peaked in 2012. Full capacity will be reached if ESF enrolls 600 campus-based graduate students by 2020. New faculty hires and a new Research Building will support growth.

- The College will improve course scheduling to gain optimal use of campus facilities in Syracuse, and explore opportunities to optimize the use of ESF’s regional campus facilities.

1.8 Affordability

- Affordability is a key factor in access, and ESF ranks as the 63rd most expensive public four-year institution in the nation according to a recent analysis published in The Chronicle of Higher Education (August 21, 2015; Volume LXI, Number 43; p. 47). No other SUNY campus ranks in the top 100. ESF’s high costs are driven by housing and meal plan costs that total $14,520 per year, while the SUNY average is $11,472 (state operated campuses 2014-15). ESF has no campus dining hall, and students must purchase meals plans from neighboring Syracuse University. ESF is currently exploring funding options for construction of a campus dining hall and projecting that student meal plan costs could be reduced by $1,000 per year or more through an ESF campus auxiliary operated dining service.

EXCELS PERFORMANCE GOAL 2: COMPLETION

SUNY-ESF will work to increase its number of students completing degree and certificate programs, and encourage additional students to complete non-degree courses for credit. We will strengthen support services in key areas to help a greater number of students achieve their goals. The College has increased completion of undergraduate degrees by 33% and graduate degrees by 30% since 2009.

2.1 Retention and Graduation of First-Time and Transfer Students (Tables 8, 9, 10)

- ESF can achieve a first-year retention rate of 90% by implementing new completion strategies (see below). This would exceed the average retention rate at SUNY’s doctoral campuses, and would be significant in ESF’s STEM-dominant programs. ESF’s first-year retention rate for full-time transfer students in the 2014 entering cohort is expected to match the SUNY doctoral sector average of 80.0% and our goal will be to improve to 83.0%.
ESF’s six-year graduation rate for first year URM students in the 2008 cohort was 66.7% and the rate for the entire cohort was 66.8%. First-year retention for URM students (2014 to 2015) was 78.3% compared to 85.0% for all students.

Improvement in first-year retention rates will help improve degree completion rates. ESF’s goals are to reach a 75.0% six-year graduation rate for entering first-year students and a comparable four-year graduation rate of 75.0% for entering transfer students. Accomplishing these goals would place ESF well beyond SUNY’s doctoral sector rates.

ESF’s strategies to improve first-year and transfer student retention and completion include:

- Implement Degree Works academic advising software and develop additional strategies and models for improving academic advising. Fully adopt SUNY’s “Seamless Transfer” policies to award additional credits.
- Provide online courses to provide additional course scheduling options, opportunities to repeat required courses when necessary, and encourage full-time attendance. Develop online certificate programs to encourage credential completions.
- Increase on-campus housing to meet existing demand. ESF currently houses less than 35% of its undergraduates on campus, while retention studies suggest higher graduation rates for full-time students who live on campus.
- Explore the potential to offer a “flexible” bachelor’s degree that would allow undergraduates to pursue a self-designed degree plan and reduce time to graduation. All self-designed plans would require faculty approval. Also explore the potential to offer accelerated BS/MS or BS/MPS programs to encourage undergraduates to complete both degrees and accelerate time to degree.

2.2 Time to Degree and Credits at Graduation (Table 11)

- Associate degree programs are offered at our Ranger School campus in Wanakena, New York. These unique programs offer only the second year of a two-year AAS curriculum. All students “transfer” into the AAS program after completing a set of first-year credits at a transfer college. Metric information provided by SUNY for “native” and “transfer in” students do not reflect this. Ranger School associate degree programs are being modified as part of SUNY’s Seamless Transfer initiative, to require only 64 credits.

- Time to degree and credits earned for baccalaureate students are impacted by our large percentage of transfer students, and by our 150 credit (five-year) Bachelor of Landscape Architecture requirements. Time to degree will improve due to seamless transfer initiatives. ESF has no plans at this time to implement a “finish in four” guarantee.

2.3 Educational Outcomes (Table 12)

- ESF has submitted data for SUNY’s Student Achievement Measure (SAM) initiative and will incorporate these measures as we assess our student completion and success strategies.
EXCELS PERFORMANCE GOAL 3: SUCCESS

SUNY Administration has suggested four specific strategy areas for consideration as campuses develop improvement plans to position students for a successful launch into further education, careers, and citizenship. These strategy areas extend beyond curricula to include increased emphasis on applied learning, multicultural experiences, student support services, and financial literacy.

3.1 Applied Learning

- All undergraduate and graduate students at ESF are offered opportunities for applied learning through internships, cooperative education, community service, study abroad, and student research. Here are some of ESF’s most noteworthy achievements in applied learning:
  - ESF’s 2014 Graduating Student Survey suggests that 45-50% of undergraduates in that class completed an internship or cooperative education placement. Surveys also indicate that approximately 15% of ESF students study abroad.
  - All undergraduates studying Landscape Architecture complete a required off-campus semester program as a 15 credit “capstone” experience. More than 1,600 students have studied in over 50 countries and across the U.S. since the program started in 1970. Graduate students in Landscape Architecture have similar options for off-campus study.
  - All undergraduates studying Paper and Bioprocess Engineering are required to complete a two-credit internship, co-op placement or research program in the industry. Several other academic programs, such as Environmental Health, Environmental Education and Interpretation, and Biotechnology also feature a required internship component.
  - The Honors Program at ESF currently enrolls more than 135 undergraduates (about 8% of total). Honors students must complete an honors research project. Students may apply for funding of up to $1,000 per year to support honors research, and also compete for paid internships (of up to $5,000) to support work experiences outside ESF.
  - ESF has very strong student involvement in service learning and has established more than 160 service partnerships with community organizations. We host a Campus Day of Service each semester and students perform over 70,000 hours of service each year.

- Results from the National Survey of Student Engagement administered to ESF seniors in 2014 indicate participation in applied learning at higher rates than students at other SUNY campuses:
  - Community-based projects/service learning (24% higher)
  - Internship or Co-op placement (23% higher)
  - Worked with faculty on a research project (22% higher)

- Faculty have expressed interest in re-establishing a learning community program.
3.2 Multicultural Experiences

- ESF must increase its efforts to provide multicultural experiences to prepare students for a multicultural world. ESF will implement recommendations of the SUNY Diversity Task Force. ESF’s Office of Student Affairs has developed new diversity and inclusion initiatives. The College has appointed an Interim Chief Diversity Officer and will appoint a permanent CDO as recommended.

- ESF is actively seeking increased enrollment of international students, with a particular focus on the negotiation of “3+1” baccalaureate partnerships with international universities, and an affiliate partnership with the ONCAMPUS SUNY program at Morrisville State College.

- ESF’s Center for Native Peoples and the Environment leads several efforts to foster cross-cultural competence and understanding of indigenous perspectives among environmental professionals. Undergraduates can complete a Native Peoples and the Environment minor.

- ESF is examining general education requirements as part of the College’s ongoing strategic planning. Faculty have recommended program modifications to encourage exploration of other cultures through travel.

3.3 Student Support Services (Tables 14 and 15)

- Since its founding in 1911, ESF has shared a campus with Syracuse University and contracted with the University to provide most of the services required to support ESF students. Services for student housing and dining, health and counseling, recreation, career placement and many other needs have been provided by University staff. As contracted service costs have increased and students needs have changed, ESF will transition to providing more support services “in house.”

- SUNY’s Student Opinion Survey responses show a high level of student satisfaction with academic and student support services at ESF. Most services are rated significantly better than doctoral campus averages and are trending higher. ESF’s focus will be to continue to improve and support student completion and success as we transition towards providing additional services at ESF.

3.4 Financial Literacy

- ESF actively promotes financial literacy through its Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships. Staff members engage students in individual and small group meetings, make in-class presentations, and encourage students to pursue additional financial education online through SUNY’s Smart Track program. ESF student default rates are well below doctoral sector benchmarks.

- ESF was a featured participant in a research study by TG and NASFAA that identified eight institutions with best practices. Please see http://www.tgslc.org/pdf/Above-and-Beyond.pdf
ESF is well positioned to increase total research activity over the next five years. Our new president, Dr. Quentin Wheeler, is an award-winning research scientist, who has also served as director of the Division of Environmental Biology at the National Science Foundation (2001-2004). A new strategic plan is being developed and it is expected that this plan will strongly support an enhanced research agenda. Our goal at this time is to increase sponsored research by $4.0 million (25%) by 2020.

- ESF’s plans for increasing research expenditures will rely heavily on a recent trend towards greater faculty collaboration in SUNY-sponsored research partnerships. Examples include:
  - Faculty members are actively engaged in the Central New York Biotechnology Accelerator. ESF has been active in supporting SUNYRF Networks of Excellence in 4E and Materials and Advanced Manufacturing. Faculty have won collaborative grants and published papers through the Hill Collaboration in Environmental Medicine, and are part of an evolving NYSUNY 2020 Institute for Environmental Health and Environmental Medicine (with OCC, Oswego, and UMU).

- SUNY is investing in the construction of a new Academic Research Building on the ESF campus, and ESF and OCC have won a NYSUNY 2020 Challenge Grant to support the construction of a new Onondaga Lake Science Center. These new facilities will greatly increase available research space.

- ESF has also received funding through a “Labs to Jobs” SUNY 2020 Grant to improve information technology capacity to link the Syracuse and regional ESF campuses, and create a Biomimicry Data Center to facilitate related research and computer simulation. A successful $2.0 million NIH grant, received jointly with Upstate Medical University, brought a new 800 mhz NMR to campus in 2014, and the College is partnering with UMU and Syracuse University to fund a new $1.6 million electron microscope through NSF.

- ESF’s relationship with the NY Natural Heritage Program (26 employees of ESF via Research Foundation lines) will bring more than $2.5 million of research expenditures annually to ESF, and a productive set of collaborations in support of conservation science.

- ESF is not able to capture SIRIS data categorizing courses that include hands-on research (nor other content) due to our reliance on Syracuse University’s computing systems. We track faculty research and citations using annual reports from faculty departments, library staff, and our Office of Research Programs. Grant applications and grants received are tracked through the Office of Research Programs.

- ESF’s research expenditure level of approximately $120,000 per faculty member (2014-15) remains well ahead of all SUNY doctoral-granting units except SUNY Albany/SUNY Poly.

- ESF’s new strategic plan will set the College’s research agenda and identify faculty hiring priorities to advance that agenda. Growth in doctoral student enrollment is also planned.
EXCELS PERFORMANCE GOAL 5: ENGAGEMENT

ESF’s history and mission provide the basis for strong engagement with the communities and citizens of New York State. The first research project recorded at ESF was completed in 1912 and studied the industrial uses and related quantities of lumber required in New York State. ESF will continue to share its expertise with the business, agricultural, governmental, labor, and nonprofit sectors. We will extend our economic, social and cultural impact through education, research, outreach, and service. The engagement and support of ESF alumni will also provide opportunities for programming and partnerships.

5.1 Outreach and Economic Development

- ESF’s Outreach Office (www.esf.edu/outreach) leads the College’s efforts to provide workforce development, professional education, and K-12 outreach. Plans for 2,650 registered non-credit participants in 2020 reflect our plans to focus more heavily on credit-bearing continuing education.

- The hallmark program for K-12 Outreach is our ESF in the High School Program, which enrolls 600-700 high school students for college credit. Courses are taught by high school faculty who are trained as adjunct instructors and provide these courses in 37 high schools across the state. Future goals for this program are aimed at increasing our number of enrolled students by offering online-enabled courses through the ESF Open Academy.

- ESF was recently awarded an NSF STEM Mentoring grant to support an afterschool mentoring program in the Syracuse City School District aimed at strengthening the STEM education pipeline. ESF offers a variety of K-12 programs and will seek continued grant support for K-12 outreach.

- The Center for Community Design Research (www.esf.edu/CCDR) is an outreach program in ESF’s Department of Landscape Architecture that partners with communities, elected officials, agencies, and nonprofit organizations to provide technical assistance, educational programs, and research projects that build organizational capacity in design and planning.

- ESF is currently the START-UP NY college sponsor of Windsor Wood LLC, a start-up manufacturing company with a proprietary process for improving the use of wood in a wide variety of products. Associated research and development are closely aligned with our College mission, and the company will offer a number of paid internships for ESF students. Within five years, Windsor Wood LLC expects to add 40 jobs to the local economy. ESF will continue to look for additional START-UP NY partners as we move ahead.

- In 2011, ESF participated in a SUNY economic impact study (“How SUNY Matters”) that concluded every $1.00 of spending by SUNY campuses in Central New York generates an additional $4.70 of economic activity. Applying this calculation to ESF’s current state operating budget of $42.8 million, ESF accounts for more than $201 million of additional economic activity.
5.2 Alumni and Philanthropy (Table 18)

- The primary goal of the ESF Alumni Association is to ensure alumni and students (future alumni) are connected with ESF to promote all objectives of the College including philanthropy. Alumni Association programming to enhance student and alumni involvement is concentrated in three areas including recognition, mentorship and awareness.

- The Alumni Association is increasing recognition of graduates who have worked in their field of study for ten years or less. The Association is also working to increase the number of student scholarships sponsored by the organization.

- The Alumni Association will increase alumni involvement in student recruitment. Alumni are trained to represent ESF at college fairs. The Alumni Association plans to begin an externship program in cooperation with the Office of Career Services. Alumni will be asked to provide externship opportunities. Alumni will mentor students with the goal of enhanced job placement.

- ESF will complete an alumni research study this year in cooperation with LinkedIn to gain new data regarding alumni placement and success.

- The ESF Office of Development works in close partnership with the Alumni Association to enhance donorship. Each Alumni event contains relationship building and philanthropic goals. ESF’s alumni giving rate (16.7%) is well beyond SUNY’s doctoral and comprehensive rates. Our goal is to reach a 20.0% giving rate by 2020.

- The Office of Development completed ESF’s first comprehensive capital campaign in 2015. The Centennial Campaign for ESF, launched in 2011 in honor of ESF’s centennial celebration, was completed 18 months ahead of schedule and topped its $20 million goal by raising $21.5 million to fund new academic initiatives, scholarships, and campus facilities. ESF alumni donated $7.5 million. The next campaign for ESF will be built around goals that emerge for our strategic planning process. Metrics for 2018 and 2020 assume a campaign.

SECTION 3: CONCLUSION AND EXPECTED IMPACT

The faculty, staff and administration at SUNY-ESF recognize the importance of continuous improvement and value the opportunity to compare our achievements to SUNY peers and align our efforts with SUNY’s system-wide goals.

Summary of Major Goals and Outcomes

- ESF will enroll 2,500 students in campus-based programs and 1,000 students in online-enabled courses. Increases in enrollment coupled with improved completion rates will result in 2,100 more students completing ESF degree or certificate programs each year (450% increase over 2015-16) prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education.

- ESF will implement the recommendations of SUNY’s Diversity Task Force and increase diversity in our student enrollment and faculty and staff. ESF is one of the least diverse campuses in SUNY and must accelerate recruitment, retention, and hiring efforts to
significantly improve diversity in gender, race/ethnicity, and income levels to properly reflect the diversity of our state.

- ESF will increase program and course capacity and serve a new population of part-time learners by establishing the ESF Open Academy to develop and offer new online-enabled courses to a planned 1,000 students by 2020-21. ESF has submitted an Expanded Investment and Performance Fund proposal to fund a related Teaching and Learning Collaboratory on campus, and the College will work closely with Open SUNY staff to align with the system’s goals for greater online enrollments.

- ESF will implement strategies to increase baccalaureate graduation rates to 75% for entering first-year and transfer students. This will place ESF well beyond SUNY doctoral sector peers and contribute to SUNY’s goals for increased degree completion and additional SUNY graduates for the betterment of our communities and our state economy.

- ESF will continue to focus on applied learning aimed at producing graduates who are well prepared for employment and leadership in the science, design, engineering and management of our environment and natural resources. We will further enhance our student’s potential for success by ensuring cross-cultural competence, financial literacy, and the student support services they may need for degree completion.

- ESF’s goal is to attract $4.0 million of additional sponsored research support by 2020 to fund appropriate investments in basic and applied research aimed at solving our most pressing environmental challenges at the local, state, national and international levels.

- ESF will increase its positive economic, social, and cultural impact by increasing its number of graduates, environment-related research, outreach and economic development initiatives, and alumni engagement for the betterment of our College, the State University, and the citizens of New York state. We lack clear metrics and processes for measuring much of what we do in the area of civic engagement, so we will seek further guidance to move forward.

ESF has earned national recognition as one of America’s premier environmental colleges. The strategies and metrics that we have committed to in our SUNY Excels Performance Improvement Plan will ensure that we are prepared to provide a second century of environmental leadership and public service, and to contribute to the continued excellence of the State University of New York.