

2002-2003 Annual Report of Institutional Progress

Warnell School of Forest Resources

A. HIGHLIGHTED ACHIEVEMENTS

1. **Graduate enrollment reached an all-time high of 146 students.** -- Growth has been engendered by an increase in the number of graduate assistantships and by the growing popularity of the non-thesis master's degree (MFR) in Forest Business. Faculty research contracts and grants and endowment funds have been the financial engines fueling the increase in graduate student assistantships.
2. **New Core curriculum under development to enhance learning outcomes** -- Two major steps were taken in the School's comprehensive review and revision of its undergraduate majors. First, a concentrated effort was made to contact recent graduates to determine their post-graduate career paths, and to obtain their thoughts on the quality and relevance of their undergraduate programs. Nearly 85% of the graduates from the past three years responded. Of these, 23% had gone to graduate school. Most of the remainder were employed in natural resources positions covering a wide array of organizations and job responsibilities, demonstrating the broad utility of their educational program. Their thoughts on the relevance of the curriculum reflected the diversity of positions they had assumed.

Second, with this information and input from alumni and other external partners, the School's faculty created a revised list of learning outcomes for graduates of all four of the School's undergraduate majors. A new WSFR "Core" curriculum is now under development to ensure these learning outcomes are realized.
3. **UGA organizes one CESU and is a charter member in another** -- The Warnell School of Forest Resources provided leadership in gaining membership on behalf of the University of Georgia (UGA) in two Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU). UGA, through the auspices of the University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc., is a partner in the Gulf Coast CESU, and is the host (organizer) of the new Piedmont – South Atlantic Coast (PSCA) CESU. These two units are part of a national network of 17 federally sponsored cooperatives that conduct research and provide technical assistance and education in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences. Each CESU is focused on a biogeographical region, with emphasis on landscape scale science and adaptive management. Though they are called "ecosystem studies" units they cover topics from Anthropology to Zoology.

CESUs are based at a "host university," and typically have several federal agencies, a number of other universities, and often private, non-government

organizations as partners. With multiple federal agencies working together, and with the breadth of faculty/scientists available via the host and partner institutions, the potential for cost sharing, improved efficiency, and cooperative activities is significantly enhanced.

The Dean of the Warnell School of Forest Resources is the lead contact for UGA's participation in both CESUs. In addition, the School is host to PSAC CESU, provides administrative support for the CESU, and houses the federal cooperating scientist(s). The PSAC CESU has 5 federal agency partners, 6 university partners, and 3 private partners.

4. **The Warnell School of Forest Resources organizes the Southern Forest Research Partnership** – In response to suggestions from its External Advisory Board, and to fulfill objectives of its strategic plan, the Warnell School of Forest Resources organized the Southern Forest Research Partnership (SFRP) as a new way to conduct forest resources research in the new millennium. The SFRP is a legally established and incorporated, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, and is currently made up of nine universities, seven forest products companies, two federal agencies, and two foundations. Through its growing network of scientists across the southeast, it is structured to facilitate research on ecosystem-level, biologically complex issues facing forest management. Through its administrative/legal structure it facilitates funding support from a much broader base of public and private institutions than has been traditional for forestry research. The SFRP's mission is to coordinate and support forest resources research to build the foundations of knowledge necessary for the development of new or revised integrated forest management practices that are both economically viable and environmentally sound. Such practices will enable Georgia, and the southern United States to remain competitive in the global forestry market while enhancing the forest landscape and assuring that this natural resource will be sustained indefinitely.

5. **Warnell School of Forest Resources extends to south Georgia** -- Through the Mary Kahrs Warnell Forest Education Center in Effingham County, Georgia, 129 forestry-related educational programs were conducted by center staff for a variety of audiences totaling over 4,100 people, and earning 212 CEUs. Program participants learned about the benefits of Georgia's natural resources. The Center also cosponsored a Walk in the Forest program with the Society of American Foresters and American Forest Foundation. Over 225, 4th grade students, teachers and parents from Bryan, Chatham, and Effingham counties were educated on tree growth and development, longleaf pine - wiregrass ecosystems, radio telemetry and wildlife management, forested wetlands, forest products, and logging equipment.

B. STRATEGIC PLAN CHANGES

The 2000 – 2010 Strategic Plan for the Warnell School of Forest Resources did not change in FY03. Its primary objectives remain:

1. New Opportunities in Education

Enhance current programs while fostering growth in graduate education. Employ new technologies to attract and serve greater numbers and diversity of learners to UGA for professional education

2. Partnerships to Enhance National and International Stature

True excellence will involve mutually beneficial partnerships with sister academic institutions, public agencies, private industry, non-governmental organizations, and foundations to multiply our faculty strengths and leverage funding.

3. New Funding Sources and Approaches

New approaches to funding must be developed to maintain our growth in grants, contracts, and endowments from traditional sources, as well as to reach out and involve non-traditional sources for support of teaching, research and outreach programs in natural resources.

C. STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS (Unit Level)

1. New Opportunities in Education

- a. Enhancement of student learning environment – Undergraduate

- Received an annual pledge commitment from International Paper Company for a full scholarship targeted to increase diversity in forest resources
- Renovation of Building One (which houses most of the classrooms) of the Forest Resources complex was completed this year. The renovation was accomplished over a six-year period.
- Instructional technology equipment was updated in three classrooms. These now have instructor tables with built-in consoles that control the arsenal of A-V equipment placed in these rooms.
- An instrument for assessing student satisfaction with academic advising was developed (in conjunction with similar efforts by the Academic Coordinating Council).
- Substantial improvements were made in WSFR career and placement services. The career web page was expanded to assist students in finding internships and employment after graduation. With UGA Career Planning and Placement, a career fair in natural resources and agriculture was conducted for the first time. The number of employers conducting interviews for interns and permanent employees was increased. A semester-long seminar on preparing for professional employment was instituted.

- b. Enhancement of student learning environment – Graduate
 - Graduate student office space was increased through renovations to Building Three of the Forest Resources complex.
 - Upgraded graduate student computer lab.
 - Increased graduate student travel stipends.
 - c. Steps to increase graduate enrollment
 - The number of graduate assistantships was increased through faculty research contract and grants, and through the use of Foundation funds.
 - Advertising of the School's non-thesis master's degree (MFR), especially the Forest Business program was increased.
 - Offers of graduate assistants were made two months earlier than in the past. As a result, almost all students offered assistantships accepted our offers.
 - d. Steps to enhance international learning experience
 - A student exchange program between UGA (and UFL) and the University of Vicosa (Brazil), funded by NSF, was consummated. The first participating UGA students departed for Brazil in May.
 - A semester-long program in Australia and New Zealand, jointly created by Forest Resources and Anthropology, was approved. It will be offered for the first time in spring 04. This includes five courses that can be used toward the Regents' Core. It is intended for freshmen and sophomores. The science course in the cluster is a natural resource conservation course.
 - A new Maymester international forestry course was approved. It will be offered for the first time in summer 04, and will take place in Australia.
 - The Maymester program to New Zealand (in its third year) had an enrollment of 66 students, up from 32 in 2002. This is an introduction to natural resource conservation issues, appropriate for, and utilized by students from all schools and colleges.
 - A wildlife conservation and management Maymester course to South Africa was offered for the third year and continues to be popular.
2. Partnerships to Enhance National and International Stature
- a. The Warnell School of Forest Resources has significantly raised the presence and stature of both the School and University by securing membership in the Gulf Coast Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU), by organizing and hosting the new Piedmont – South Atlantic Coast CESU, and by organizing and chartering a not-for-profit corporation, the Southern Forest Research Partnership. These are all multi-partner organizations involving federal and state agencies, other universities, private industry, and non-government organizations. Their mission includes research, education and outreach,

primarily in the southeast, with some national and international activities as well.

- b. The School's External Advisory Board, and the science committees of the 501(c)(3) partnership and the two CESUs provide enhanced input on research needs from a broad representation of our stakeholders, helping the School set future priorities. We continue to emphasize the breadth of our faculty and research beyond the traditional forest products subject area. The scope of the CESUs further highlights the School and University's strength and ongoing research in a broad array of environmental and ecological research.

3. New Funding Sources and Approaches

- a. The legal agreement under which the two CESUs (see above) operate, make them the most efficient mechanism by which to transfer federal funds to cooperating universities. As such our membership in the CESUs enhances both the School and University's competitive stature with the 13 federal agencies in the CESU network.
- b. The organization of the Southern Forest Research Partnership as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, along with its broad membership base has enhanced the School's ability to attract funding for natural resources research from traditional supporters like the forest products industry, as well as from new funding sources like the larger environmental foundations.
- c. The Warnell School of Forest Resources continued its upward trend in extramural funding for research for the fifth successive year, reaching a combined level of federal, state, and private grant expenditures of \$4.7 million for FY2003, or \$217 thousand per research FTE. There were 94 contracts and grants obtained or renewed in the School in 2002, and the faculty produced 193 publications, 111 of which were peer reviewed.

D. STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS (Institutional Level)

1. Building the new learning environment by enhancing the undergraduate experience
2. Maximizing research opportunities
See notes above (A.3., A.4., C.2., and C.3.) on the GC CESU, PSCA CESU, and SFRP; and the School's continued increase in research extramural support and productivity despite a downturn in the state and national economy (see C.3. above).
3. Increasing global awareness and expanding international opportunities.

E. PUBLIC SERVICE AND OUTREACH CONTRIBUTIONS

The Warnell School of Forest Resources has eight faculty members whose principal responsibilities are in the area of public service and outreach. This includes two with

expertise in Forest Management (Tifton and Statesboro), one in Forest Economics, one in Community / Urban Forestry, one in Wildlife Management, one in K-12 Teacher Education, one in fisheries, and one in Continuing Education and timber harvesting. Additionally, an Education Program Specialist is stationed at the Mary Kahrs Warnell Forest Education Center in Southeast Georgia. Some of the major accomplishments of the School's public service and outreach programs for this period include:

- Total number of adult people served by unit programs 15,488
- Total number of young people served by unit programs 7,824
- Total number of educational programs sponsored by the unit 785
- Total number of non-CEU contact hours 21,232
- Total extramural funding generated \$693,125
- Total number of service publications 14
- Number of new partnerships 50
- World Wide Web - 1.88 million users spending 2,696 5-day work weeks on School sites

1. Enhancing the Learning Environment at UGA (selected examples):

- a. *Students teaching students* --Twelve programs were delivered to 137 public school students by WSFR students trained as Project Learning Tree instructors.
- b. *Using the County Extension Agent Network* -- Forestry Area Specialty Advanced Training (FASAT) in wildlife management was conducted for 67 county extension agents having an assigned work focus in the area of forest resources. The impact of this training will be multiplied by the FASAT Agents in turn holding an estimated 50 stakeholder meetings during the coming year teaching landowners the benefits of wildlife use and management in forest resources.
- c. *Reaching South Georgia* – See A.5. above.

2. Enhancing the Research Investment at UGA (selected examples):

The Warnell School of Forest Resources service faculty generated \$487,895 in 12 research / service grants. They gave 33 professional presentations, and published more than 72 articles in professional journals, WSFR and Cooperative Extension bulletins, fact sheets, newspapers, and magazines.

3. Enhancing the International Dimensions of UGA (selected examples):

- a. The School's affiliated Bugwood Network (<http://www.Bugwood.org>) consists of 15 educational websites and 4 image archive websites dealing with forest health, entomology, silviculture, invasive species, resource management, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) including international projects in East Africa and the South Pacific Islands. Over the last 12-month period these sites served more than 7.5 million pages of information to 1.2 million users worldwide. On average there were 2.3 users every minute of every hour of every day on Bugwood Network sites.
- b. School faculty members are involved in two exchange programs with Brazil through the Fund for Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE).

The goal of these programs is to promote semester or year-long exchanges between Brazilian and US students to facilitate cultural understanding.

4. Enhancing the Vitality of the State:
 - a. The Warnell School of Forest Resources collaborated with Georgia Department of Agricultural Education and Georgia Forestry Commission to present a short-course designed for teachers interested in learning the technology and application of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographical Information Systems (GIS). More than 50 teachers have completed the training and now high school students are using GPS and GIS to complete their projects.
 - b. Outreach / training programs were conducted by School faculty to practicing state and private professional foresters, loggers, and landowners on stream crossings, safety, wildlife, forest productivity, urban/rural interface forestry, forest regeneration, tree competition control, property taxes, planning, and other resource topics. These courses will lead to reduced soil erosion, improved water quality, more profitable forest farming, fewer accidents and improved sustainability for forest resources in the state.

F. SHORT-TERM GOALS

1. Increase enrollment and credit hour production of professional and graduate students with an emphasis on increasing cultural diversity of the student body. Revise and make more efficient the school's graduate admissions procedures. Complete curriculum revision to ensure appeal, relevance, and endorsement by natural resources employers. Continue to improve assessment methodology.
2. Continue to expand our study-abroad programs both in number and kinds of opportunities offered. Institute a selection of Maymester field study courses.
3. Continue to focus on increasing partnerships and contracts and grants for research and service programs. Successfully charter a new research partnership involving colleges and universities, state and federal agencies, industry and private foundations. Develop outreach programs suitable for culturally diverse audiences (e.g., for Hispanic children, loggers, and professionals).
4. Revive discussions on a virtual college of forest and natural resources with a major land grant university in the southeast.
5. Initiate solicitation of prospects identified by the Capital Campaign Committee, and expand the committee's objectives to include preparation for the broader public phase. Develop public phase campaign materials. Bring to closure at least one key gift.
6. Complete the search for a new Dean.

G. ASSESSING EFFECTIVENESS

1. Adoption or Revision of Student Learning Outcomes

The School's faculty, with input from alumni and other external partners, developed a revised set of learning outcomes applicable to all four of the School's majors. Additional learning outcomes will be developed specific to each major.

2. New Methods to Assess Student Learning Outcomes

No new methods were developed in 02-03. However, creation of new assessments is an objective for the near term.

3. Specific Changes Implemented as a Result of Assessment Processes

- a. Prompted by a recommendation of the SACS Review Team, and with assistance from OSID, the faculty of the Warnell School revised its student assessment of teaching instrument. The instrument provides interpretable information that can be related to results in the published literature.
- b. In the process, the School also created a Faculty Mentoring Program to help beginning faculty members to develop their teaching abilities. Currently six non-tenured faculty are being mentored by senior faculty members with demonstrated teaching prowess
- c. Other actions taken included: development of a seminar course on preparing for professional employment, enhancement of the WSFR career web page, and renovation of student lounge (currently underway).

H. STUDENT RETENTION / GRADUATION

1. Retention and graduation rates are extremely high for undergraduate and graduate majors in WSFR. For example, more than 95% of students entering undergraduate majors in WSFR graduate. The average time to graduation once entering the major is between two and two and a half years.
2. Efforts to retain incoming freshmen that have identified forest resources as an intended major have been initiated in 2002-2003. These efforts include sending letters to admitted freshmen and offering lower-division course work.

I. UNIT HEALTH (DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS)

Significant accomplishments in addition to those noted above include:

1. 5 University Partners obtained
2. \$70,000 pledge payment in the Len Woodward Fund for Excellence (in natural resources research, education and outreach)
3. Significant progress in establishing Capital Campaign Committee and Resources; Hired Assistant to handle Alumni activities and annual giving program, releasing Director for full-time Capital Campaign involvement.
4. Continuation of on-going land gifts from several donors; and multiple proposals presented to potential donors for new land gifts of 1,000 to 4,000 acres and over \$5million value.