The state of Florida is a bellwether state for problems and opportunities related to ecology and environment. Population growth, rapid change, and competing uses and values make Florida’s natural resources nationally and internationally important. The diversity and depth of UF’s academic expertise relating to ecology and environment is extraordinary. SNRE, through its campuswide reach, is committed to enhancing the understanding of the interaction of natural systems and society and to develop intellectual capacity to address the environmental and natural resource issues facing Florida, the nation, and the world.

**Participation**

Twelve academic colleges and units participate through 275 affiliated faculty in 56 departments (most activity*):

- Agricultural and Life Sciences*
- Business Administration
- Design Construction and Planning
- Engineering*
- Health and Human Performance
- Liberal Arts and Sciences*
- Journalism and Communication
- Law
- Medicine
- Veterinary Medicine
- Center for Latin American Studies
- Museum of Natural History

The governance structure consists of:

- Advisory Board consisting of Senior Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources, VP for Research, Deans of COE, CALS, CLAS, Provost (ex-officio)
- Faculty Advisory Council with 11 elected members from COE, CALS, CLAS and at-large
- External Advisory Council with representatives from industry, government, non-governmental organizations and academia.

**Producing Trained Professionals**

**BS/BA in Environmental Science** -- Enrollment in the undergraduate degree program in Environmental Science declined from about 180 to 80 in 2004-05, following the trend of declining enrollments throughout the U.S., as economic and geographic issues pushed environmental affairs lower on the public agenda. The trend reversed in 2005-06 and enrollment reached 112 in 2007-08.

**MS/PhD in Interdisciplinary Ecology** -- The graduate degree program in Interdisciplinary Ecology has grown steadily since inception, from 21 in fall 1999 to 145 in 2007-08. About 52 percent of current graduate students are doctoral students. A total of 128 have graduated. Affiliate faculty in CALS, CLAS and COE serve as the majority of advisors for MS and PhD Interdisciplinary Ecology students.

**Research Assistantships** -- Currently, approximately 50 percent of Interdisciplinary Ecology graduate students are provided fellowships or assistantships and tuition through the SNRE-AP budget. Many of the others receive financial support through the faculty advisors’ home departments, receive funding from other sources, or are self-supporting.

**The People and Land Use Strategies (PLUS) --** workgroup consists of faculty with diverse academic expertise who address complex issues associated with land use. SNRE and this group worked with the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida to create a vision for Florida’s future by producing a 100-page primer on policy issues facing the state. SNRE also developed a process for creating a description of the existing and potentially important conservation lands in Florida and delivered a report and data providing alternative methods for identifying Florida statewide conservation priorities and needs for enhancing future conservation assessments.

**Climate Change --** workgroup broadly addressed the issues emerging from climate change, primarily focusing on adaptation and mitigation responses. SNRE and members of this group received a grant from Environmental Defense to produce a white paper on the mitigation of greenhouse gases in the agricultural and forestry sectors of Florida.

**Mini-grants Program --** The SNRE Mini-grants Program advances UF interdisciplinary research and program development. A review of the last three years indicates that 45 projects were funded involving 258 PIs, Co-PIs and collaborators. A total intramural allocation of $436K has generated a return of $11.8M from outside sources. Ninety-four publications were produced, 97 national and international presentations were given, 68 grant proposals were submitted, and a wide variety of spin-off projects have occurred, including the creation of faculty positions, research and Extension programs, memorandum of agreements, student scholarships, curriculum, and websites.

(over)
Faculty Workgroup Grants Database -- was created in 2007 for SNRE’s two active faculty workgroups: People and Land Use Strategies (PLUS) and Climate Change. The database is linked to the SNRE website and allows faculty to search targeted funding opportunities by keyword, funding agency, topic area, and purpose (research, education, management, and scholarship). Searching the database results in a brief overview of the grant, closing dates, and a link to the official grant solicitation. Funding opportunities for graduate students were recently added. The database is regularly updated and offers roughly 50 active and open funding opportunities.

Grant Assistance -- SNRE provides logistical and administrative support to faculty in assembling and submitting interdisciplinary proposals. The Research and Outreach/Extension office supports faculty by identifying potential collaborators in other units within or outside the university and sending regular and frequent funding opportunities targeted to their specific research interest.

Research Partnerships

The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) -- The Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESUs) are competitively established five-year funding agreements between federal agencies, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. SNRE administers three CESU agreements (South Florida-Caribbean, Gulf Coast, and Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast). All UF faculty can participate in these funding opportunities. At least 32 UF projects totaling $2.6M were funded through these agreements.

National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) -- is a National Science Foundation (NSF) opportunity to establish ecological instrumentation sites across the U.S. SNRE provided initial administrative and logistical support to SEEON (Southeast Ecological Observatory Network), UF’s successful multi-partner proposal to establish a core site observatory at the Ordway-Swisher Biological Station, with three other re-locatable sites in Florida countries on six continents. The SEEON group is now advancing the project with NSF.

Communications

SNRE Website -- was re-organized to efficiently communicate with our many audiences. The website has been tracked for one year. Within this time, roughly 40,000 unique visitors viewed 146,000 pages online. More than 8,300 web visits came from outside the United States and included visits from 175 different countries on six continents.

The SNRE Source -- is a student, faculty, and alumni driven online magazine that is published in the spring, summer and fall semesters. In our spring 2008 issue more than half the articles were submitted by students, alumni and faculty about their ongoing research and professional experiences. Tracking statistics for our spring 2008 edition show the SNRE Source is becoming widely popular. Within a month of its release, 2,300 visitors totaling 8,500 page views and had a global readership in 82 countries around the world.

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Extension

Florida Natural Resources Leadership Institute (NRLI) (http://nrl孚.ifas.ufl.edu/) is a partnership program with IFAS Extension and the Food and Resource Economics Department. It helps rising leaders in agencies, agriculture, elected office, academia, resource based industries and NGOs develop skills in conflict management and collaborative leadership. NRLI fellows participate in nine three-day sessions over a ten-month period and complete a practicum for presentation. NRLI has graduated 135 fellows by the end of 2007. One of SNRE’s joint faculty members directs NRLI.

Natural Areas Training Academy (NATA) -- (http://nata.snrэ.ufl.edu/) is a training program for managers of natural areas jointly operated by The Nature Conservancy and SNRE, in partnership with IFAS Extension. It is designed to teach people how to managed natural areas. Over 1,200 people have participated in NATA since its inception in 2000 and 82 people have earned a Certificate in Natural Areas Management by completing the five workshop series of specific sources.

Program for Resource Efficient Communities (PREC) (www.energy.ufl.edu) teaches the adoption of best design, construction, and management practices in new residential community developments that measurably reduce energy use, water consumption, and environmental degradation. As an example, PREC began to deliver inspector certification training for the “My Safe Florida Home” statewide surveyor/inspector exam in 2006. As a result, over 30 courses have trained about 2,000 inspectors. PREC is a partnership program with IFAS extension and several colleges.

www.snre.ufl.edu

A university-wide program in ecology, environmental sciences and sustainability, hosted by IFAS in collaboration with the colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Business Administration, Design Construction and Planning, Engineering, Health and Human Performance, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Journalism and Communication, Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Center for Latin American Studies, and the Florida Museum of Natural History

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