

To: Deans, Chairs, Institute/Center Directors, and other faculty

From: Robert McGrath  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Subject: Consortium for Integrative Environmental Research (CIER)

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Colleagues I am very pleased to announce an initiative to integrate and strengthen what we do in environmental studies. Conflicts between the resource needs of an expanding human population and the natural environment are accelerating rapidly on local, regional, and global scales. Solving many of the most important environmental problems requires multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches.

I convened a task force of faculty drawn from across the university to assess our extant strengths and to recommend how best to coordinate and foster new interdisciplinary approaches to the big environmental issues. The task force report recommended establishing a center (named in the report Center for Environmental Science Education and Research) to help integrate and unite environmental research and education activities that already exist in many of our departments, the Marine Sciences Research Center, and at Brookhaven National Laboratory. The report is available on the web at: <http://ws.cc.stonybrook.edu/provost/Reports/Reports.htm>.

By combining all the strengths of Stony Brook (including SB Southampton in the future) we can attract large, interdisciplinary grants and contracts that focus on both the causes and consequences of environmental change as they relate to human health and well being. Clearly the social sciences and humanities in such fields as environmental economics, public policy, environmental history, and globalization all come into play in finding solutions. Better coordination can also be expected to lead to development of attractive interdisciplinary degree and certificate programs

My memo of September 21 announced an initiative in Computational Science. That memo described how funds made available through the SUNY Empire Innovation Program (EIP) would be used in this first year of the program to support cluster faculty hiring in seven areas including environmental sciences. I'm happy to report the initiative in Computational Science and the cluster recruiting process is already underway.

A portion of the EIP funds are available for a cluster hiring initiative in integrative environmental research and education. I am pleased that Distinguished Professor Nicholas Fisher, a well known marine biogeochemist in MSRC with connections to environmental research projects throughout the campus and beyond, has agreed to be the founding director for this initiative. He will begin a program of seminars and workshops designed to attract faculty who already work on problems of environmental interest and to foster interdisciplinary interactions. He is also responsible for developing a search committee to identify and recruit the

best and brightest young faculty in any of a number of fields that will multiply our strengths in environmental sciences education and research. The cluster recruiting rules will be the same as those announced for computational science... host departments or units will provide funds for 0.5 FTE, so that up to six new faculty can be hired. Fisher plans to re-convene the "CESER" task force for purposes of reviewing and discussing areas where this hiring initiative can have maximum leverage. He will also announce a time and place for a town meeting where interested department chairs and other faculty can discuss this exciting initiative. I hope many will attend.