Ten Years in the MES Program

The Fall 2003 semester at the College of Charleston marks the ten-year anniversary of the Master of Environmental Studies program. Although it has undergone several major changes since classes first started in the fall of 1994, the program continues to thrive and succeed in offering excellent educational and experiential opportunities to students, faculty, and the community at large.

The program was first started with funding provided from a grant through the United States Department of Energy. This multimillion dollar grant was awarded to the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and was aimed at the completion of four major tasks related to training and research in the environmental field. One of the four major tasks was the development of a Master of Science in Environmental Studies (MES) program. The program was originally offered jointly through MUSC and the College of Charleston and involved three different tracks - Environmental Science, Environmental Policy, and Risk Assessment. As Laura Hines, Director of Graduate Services, explained, the goals of the initial program, “clearly stated the three tracks to give people interested in environmental policy, environmental science, and risk assessment a chance to focus their studies.”

The program initially had joint directors, but had one central office housed at MUSC to aid students in completing the program. Students were required to take core courses at both MUSC and the College of Charleston. However, courses in the Risk Assessment track were mainly centered at MUSC, while the Environmental Science and Policy tracks were centered at the College of Charleston.

A major change to the program was when MUSC decided to withdraw from the administration of the program in May, 2000. MUSC faculty continue to work with students on their research projects and to provide additional educational opportunities. The program did not undergo any major curricular changes until 2001, allowing current students to complete their studies. As the College of Charleston assumed full responsibility of the program in 2001, several curriculum changes were made. A significant change to the curriculum was the deletion of the Risk Assessment track from the program. For the 2001-2002 academic year, further changes were made to the curriculum. The program no longer had specific and separate policy and science tracks. This curriculum change was a move to adopt the more integrated approach to Environmental Studies that the program has today.

While the MES program has undergone many changes in its first ten years, it continues to thrive and grow. Enrollment in the program’s first year was thirteen students. That number has grown to 32 new students for the 2003-2004 academic year, bringing the total number of students (full-time, part-time, and completing Internship and Thesis projects) in the program to 87. The program has also increased the number of assistantships granted, rising from four in the 1997-1998 academic year to its current number of sixteen. The list of adjunct and full-time faculty has grown to 117, giving students access to individuals with expertise ranging from Plant Ecology to Environmental Sociology.

Over the past ten years, 158 students have graduated from the Master of Environmental Studies program. Alumni of the program have found careers in several different areas including both the private and governmental sectors. Others have found careers in the nonprofit field and still others have continued

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From the Director

October 2003

Dear Friends of the MES Program:

As we celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the MES Program this year we look back on a period of great growth and achievement, and forward to an exciting future. There have been changes through the years as the program has adapted to new circumstances and taken advantage of new opportunities, but our fundamental vision has remained the same. Perhaps best expressed in the words of our mission statement, “through a comprehensive, balanced, and inclusive curriculum, this program strives to prepare students to solve the increasingly complex environmental problems facing society.” We can be proud of the many accomplishments of the MES Program, and of our more than one hundred and fifty graduates who are working to make a better society.

The MES Program would not be what it is today if it were not for the hard work and foresight of the initiators of the program, College and University graduate administrators, and all those who have served as MES Program Director. These numerous faculty and administrators have collectively contributed to the strength and vision of our highly successful and unique program. In particular, please join me in acknowledging and thanking the Program Directors:

♦ Andy Felts (College of Charleston) co-director 1994-1995
♦ Eberhard Voit (Medical University of South Carolina) co-director 1994-1999
♦ Lou Burnett (College of Charleston) co-director 1995-1997
♦ Mitchell Colgan (College of Charleston) co-director 1997-1999
♦ Mike Schmidt (Medical University of South Carolina) co-director 1999-2000

As we continue to build on their foundations, we see our current students engaging themselves in the environmental arena in so many ways. Their wide range of multi-disciplinary interests, as described in our most recent survey, includes areas as diverse as:

♦ Sustainability
♦ Wetlands and Coastal Management
♦ Natural Resource Policy
♦ Hazard Mitigation
♦ Environmental Law and Justice

As they pursue these and other interests through their school and post-graduate careers, we know that our students will bring us many more reasons to celebrate the MES Program. It is through support from you, the friends of the MES Program, that our students are able to achieve all they have. We anticipate that with your help the program will rise to ever greater heights through this tenth year and beyond!

Warm regards,

Angela Halfacre
MES Program Director
Make sure to mark your calendars for February 21, 2004. That is the date of the Second Annual MESSA 8K for H2O, taking place at Folly Beach, South Carolina. The race is scheduled to start at 9:00 AM, with registration occurring in the parking lot of the Folly Beach Holiday Inn. This flat course is a pleasure to run or walk, offering scenic views of the Atlantic Ocean and beautiful salt marshes.

This year’s race will also feature a 5K Family Fun Walk, which will also begin at 9:00 AM. Families are encouraged to come out and support the event. Children, strollers and pets are welcome!

This year, the proceeds will be donated to the Lowcountry Earthforce (www.earthforce.org/charleston), who will apply the funds to their Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) program. This program seeks to educate youth on water quality issues facing the Lowcountry, and provide them with hands-on experience in monitoring and improving those problems. Race coordinator Tommy Linstroth is excited by Earthforce’s educational potential: “Earthforce has some really great educational programs for water quality. If the programs can reach children at an early age, they can affect their actions for life. That is why we are so excited to make Earthforce the recipient of the proceeds.”

In the MESSA 8K for H2O’s inaugural year, over 150 participants made the event a success. $2500 were raised and donated to Friends of the Edisto (www.edistofriends.org), a non-profit group dedicated to maintaining the Edisto River, which is a primary source of Charleston’s drinking water.

For the race’s second year, MESSA is hoping to raise the number of participants to over 200. “Incorporating the 5K Family Fun Walk into this event not only encourages those who could not run 8 kilometers to participate, it also allows the opportunity for families and individuals of all ages and abilities to support the efforts to maintain and improve water quality in the Lowcountry,” said Linstroth. “It can only help MESSA improve on last year’s success.”

If you are interested in registering for the MESSA 8K for H2O, please visit the website at: www.cofc.edu/~messa/8k.htm. Information is also available at local running stores. For any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact race coordinator Tommy Linstroth at tlinstroth@yahoo.com, or by phone at (843)367-4598.

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on to earn a Ph.D. Some of the governmental and nonprofit organizations that currently employ graduates of the MES program are the NOAA-National Ocean Service, the City of Charleston, the Lowcountry Open Land Trust, and several colleges and universities. Some of the private organizations that employ MES program graduates are the Milliken Corporation, Tetra Tech, Inc., General Engineering Labs, and Camp, Dresser, & McKee, Inc.

The Master of Environmental Studies program has also made great contributions to the community. One major way the program has contributed to the surrounding community is through the work performed by the MES Student Association (MESSA). Formed in 1997, MESSA’s goal is to enhance the graduate learning experience through community outreach and service. Some of the projects that MESSA is involved with are South Carolina Beach Sweep/River Sweep, Habitat for Humanity, and Adopt-a-Highway. The student association also held its first annual MESSA 8K for H2O road race (see above). The proceeds from the race are donated to a nonprofit organization that works towards improving local water quality.

Much has changed in the MES program since the first classes were held in the fall of 1994. The program has seen major curriculum changes, several different directors, and a rapidly increasing list of students, alumni, and faculty. Through all of these changes, the high standards of the program have not changed, and the MES program continues to offer excellent opportunities to students and the surrounding community.
Dr. Norm Levine is the newest faculty in the Geology Department, and is the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) professor at the College of Charleston. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Geology from George Washington University, also pursuing extensive studies in Computer Science. After a year of graduate work in Geophysics at Texas A&M, he then completed a Master’s degree in Geology from Indiana State University. After a year of working as a consultant in the New York area, Dr. Levine returned to school, earning his Ph.D. in Applied Environmental Geology from the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Purdue University. His Ph.D. work gave him focus as an Environmental and Engineering Geologist, a Hydrogeologist, and a Geophysicist, culminating in his dissertation entitled “The Development and Use of a GIS-Based Expert System for Hazardous Waste Landfill Siting.”

Dr. Levine has a varied background of research experience and work in several sectors. He was the President and Co-Founder of a consulting firm specializing in geologic and environmental problems. He has taught and researched at several institutions, most recently as Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology and Center for Environmental Programs at Bowling Green State University under a joint position. This broad array of research interests provides a benefit to the MES program. Dr. Levine previously worked on projects involving soil erosion, water quality, planning issues, creating wildlife corridors in Yellowstone National Park, and environmental justice issues. He wants students to make a range of connections through GIS. Currently, he is incorporating his expertise in the research efforts of departments as varied as Religious Studies and Classics.

Dr. Levine’s main research interests include: the uses of GIS for decision-making; helping make scientifically-sound policy decisions; the effects of land-use and development on hydrology and the environment; data integration and visualization. His interests focus on learning tools and techniques to educate the public, as well as how to use GIS and Remote Sensing to create new ways to understand data. Dr. Levine appreciates the College of Charleston because the research and work is truly interdisciplinary in nature, and “the meshing of science and policy is understood here.”

Among his short-term academic goals at the College of Charleston, he plans to raise the visibility and usefulness of the Santee-Cooper GIS lab, as well as draw in faculty and graduate students that do not normally use the lab to incorporate GIS into their research. To this end, he has redesigned the GIS laboratory logo and website to increase awareness and publicize the lab. Dr. Levine’s long-term goal is to place the Santee-Cooper GIS lab “as the center for GIS in this region... that may mean working on issues as diverse as homeland security and greenspace planning. Currently, Dr. Levine is working to ensure that we have enough data and information to support the work going on at the college. Dr. Levine is currently seeking a student interested in educational web setup. For more information about the lab see http://www.cofc.edu/~scgis.

**New Faculty Spotlight: Norm Levine**

Joe Dukes, Chris Kious, Tommy Linstroth, and Katherine Zimmerman presented posters entitled “Connecting Campus with Community: The College of South Carolina’s Approach” at the Greening of the Campus V, in Muncie, Indiana September 18-21, 2003. These posters were developed with Dr. Angela Halfacre.


Katharine Owens and Katie Zimmerman presented a paper written with Dr. Angela Halfacre entitled "Faculty-Student Service Learning, Research Teams and Political Science Concepts: The Case of a Historic Green-Building Project on a College Campus" at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting held in Philadelphia, PA, Aug. 28-31, 2003.

Stephen Schabel, Jr., presented "Disseminating Scientific Information To The Lay Public: The Urbanization And Southeastern Estuarine Systems Project (Uses) Public Outreach To Civic Groups" at the Coastal Zone 03 (CZ 03) Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, July 13-17, 2003.

Qamar Schuyler presented the results of her thesis research for the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation (PCRF) Meetings in Oakland, California, October 16-22, 2003.

Susannah Sheldon presented "Economic Incentives for Continuing Beachfront Development in Charleston County, South Carolina" at the South Carolina Environmental Symposium in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, October 15-17, 2003.

**MES Student Conference Participation**

Dr. Levine is currently seeking a student interested in educational web setup. For more information about the lab see http://www.cofc.edu/~scgis.
MESSA Kicks Off 10th Anniversary Celebration with Oyster Roast

As part of the celebration of the 10th anniversary year of the MES program, the MES Student Association hosted their annual oyster roast, complete with plenty of food, games, and live music. The roast was held on Saturday, October 11 starting at 1:00 pm at the beautiful Dixie Plantation.

Six bushels of local oysters were shared by past and present faculty, alumni, students, and friends and family of the MES program. More great food was provided by current students of the MES program.

Even with ominous clouds and early morning drizzle, there were over 50 people in attendance at the roast as everyone enjoyed music performed by Cary Ann Hearst (voted the Charleston City Paper’s “Best Female Musician/Vocalist 2003”) of the band, Borrowed Angels. There were also plenty of pick-up games of horseshoes and Frisbee. Those attending the roast also had the benefit of enjoying the scenic grounds of Dixie Plantation, and could walk along the pier leading to salt marsh to do some fishing, or just enjoy the scenery.

As program coordinator Mark McConnel described afterwards, “It was the best oyster roast ever!”

Minutes after steaming, six bushels of oysters were polished off.

City Paper’s Best Female Vocalist of the Year Cary Ann Hearst provided great music for the Oyster Roast.

Students, faculty and friends all had an enjoyable time at the annual Oyster Roast.
MESSA (www.cofc.edu/~environ/MESSA.htm) encourages students to participate in service activities as a way to become involved in our program, school, and citywide communities. MESSA has been involved in a variety of events in the Fall 2003 semester, some of which are highlighted here.

MESSA sponsors the cleanup of an area of Highway 61 near the Ashley River through the Adopt-A-Highway program. Students spend several Saturday mornings a year making this stretch of highway clean and beautiful. This fall MESSA members collected 11 trash bags of garbage and 2 bags of recyclable materials from the side of the highway, removing an estimated total of 195 pounds of litter.

MESSA continued its student involvement in the South Carolina Beach Sweep/River Sweep, the largest day of cleanup in South Carolina. MESSA members cleaned up sections of downtown Charleston's Waterfront Park, braving mud, muck, and marsh to do their part to help Charleston maintain its pristine beauty.

This semester MESSA members have also continued their involvement in the South Carolina Oyster Restoration and Enhancement (SCORE) program. MESSA members monitor water quality weekly at oyster restoration sites to ensure the health of developing oyster beds created by NOAA and DNR. MESSA also helped provide substrate for new and developing oyster beds by donating all of the oyster shells used at the MES oyster roast to the SCORE program.

For more information on MESSA outreach and community involvement, please do not hesitate to contact MESSA outreach coordinator Julia Byrd at juliabyrd@hotmail.com.

Congratulations! New MESSA officers were elected on December 5th. Those elected will hold office beginning with the Spring 2004 semester and throughout the summer and fall of next year. Congratulations!

President — Sarah Falkowski
Vice-President — Kristan McKinne
Secretary — Sarah McGuire
Treasurer — Dany Burgess
Social Chair — Jeanette Klopchin
Public Relations Liason — Angela Jones
Community Outreach Coordinator — Sarah Griffin
Isabelle Tapley has lived and worked in the environmental field all over the United States, from Groton, Connecticut to Los Angeles. She has been an environmental manager, regulations coordinator, adjunct professor and attorney, in addition to running an environmental consulting business. However, this summer she moved to Charleston, South Carolina and is now serving as one of the newest adjunct faculty in the MES program. “I've always liked to learn new things,” she explains, and she hopes to be able to pass on some of the knowledge and experience she has acquired to students in the MES program.

Ms. Tapley earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania, focusing on economics, political science, considerable biology, and teaching certification. It was around this time that she was involved in a major lead (Pb) poisoning study where she aided in chemical analysis, laboratory procedure, and research proposal writing. This study helped to initiate the eventual banning of the addition of tetraethyl lead to gasoline. This experience showed Ms. Tapley that it is possible to make a difference and to make changes actually happen, and sparked her current interest in the environmental impact of industry. After earning her Master’s degree in History and Sociological Science at the University of Pennsylvania where she focused on evolution theory and science policy, she began working with several companies in the mining and oil industry, negotiating permits, editing environmental impact statements, and helping companies comply with environmental regulations. She then went on to earn her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California at Los Angeles, and continued her work in environmental permitting and compliance. Throughout her career, she has also been a member of the National Association of Environmental Professionals and the American Bar Association.

With her recent move to the coast, Ms. Tapley’s current interests reside in increasing her knowledge of the impact of development on wetlands. While wetlands management is a new area for her, she is still extremely interested in continuing her work in evaluating current environmental policy, laws, and regulations to identify shortcomings and propose changes. Ms. Tapley insists, “I think it's important to have a good balance,” and she hopes to continue working to balance conservation and the need to use resources.

She is also very excited to become more involved in the MES program, advising students and conducting workshops. In October, she conducted a workshop on the Federal Register and hopes to conduct several more workshops in the spring, all dealing with more practical issues such as the process of issuing point source permits. She is also looking for input on ideas for future workshops, and she urges any students with ideas for workshops that relate to her interests to contact her. With her broad range of interests and expertise, Ms. Tapley also hopes to work with more students one on one - advising, helping to set up internships, and further developing their interests. Her email address is idtapley@aol.com and her phone number is (843) 722-7199.

**New Faculty Spotlight:**
Isabelle Tapley

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**MES Student Publications**

Congratulations to current MES student Katie Zimmerman, MES alums Katharine Owens and Zac Hart, and Dr. Angela Halfacre for accepted publication of their paper "Problem-Based, Collaborative Service-Learning in Political Science: The Case of Green Renovation of a College Historic Structure." in PS: Political Science and Politics. (Scheduled for April 2004).

Congratulations to MES alum Zachary Hart, Dr. Marianne Burke, and Dr. Angela Halfacre for accepted publication of their paper "Community Participation in Preservation of Lowcountry SC Sweetgrass (Muilenbergia filipes) Basketry" in Economic Botany (Scheduled for Spring 2004).
The Sustainable Charleston Awards Program

Originally conceived by Robert Prioleau of Bluelon and MES Program Director Dr. Angela Halfacre, the Sustainable Charleston Awards Program seeks to recognize innovations incorporated by area businesses to implement sustainable business practices in any of seven categories, including energy efficiency, waste/emission reduction, transportation alternatives, product development, water conservation, quality of workplace life, and procurement practices.

This program has been fully developed through a unique partnership between the MES program, MESSA, and the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. Mary Graham and Honey Hopkins of the Chamber have contributed substantial time to promote the project. The Developers Council within the Chamber of Commerce is enthusiastic to co-sponsor the event, forming a successful relationship between the academic and the business world through a joint effort. The awards program, which was formally announced on December 1st, is open to any area business. Applications will be due on February 13th, with judging commencing in March. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony hosted by the Chamber of Commerce at the American Theatre on Friday April 30th.

Please visit www.sustainablecharleston.org, or contact Tommy Linstroth by email at tlinstroth@yahoo.com or by phone at 843-367-4598 for more information on the award program.