History of the ESGP 1977-2012

The ESGP was developed by Dr. Norman N. Durham in 1977 in response to faculty and students' desire to work cooperatively on environmental problems and concerns from multiple disciplinary perspectives. The Graduate College assumed responsibility for the program in 1982 when Dr. John D. Vitek, Associate Dean of the Graduate College, became the director of the program. Under Dr. Vitek's tutelage, the program thrived with more than 60 students working on their M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The program's students were in home departments such as Agricultural Economics, Economics, Leisure Studies, Plant and Soil Sciences, Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, Forestry, Geology, Geography, Political Science, Educational and School Psychology, School of Teaching and Curriculum Leadership, Sociology, and Zoology. Five thrust areas were developed, which included water, renewable natural resources, energy, environmental education, and policy. Each thrust area defined recommended courses. Faculty such as Jim Lawler, Ted Mills, Lowell Caneday, Michael Smolen, and Jack Vitek supported the Program by teaching the core courses, most often without compensation.

Dr. Paul Matthews, served as Associate Dean of Multidisciplinary Studies and ESGP Program Director from 1993 through 1995. The Environmental Institute was also founded in 1993. From 1994-1995, Dr. Will Focht was hired as the first research fellow within the Environmental Institute. In 1995, Dr. Gary Ostrander became Associate Dean of Research, Director of the Environmental Institute and Director of the ESGP. Dr. Ostrander hired a permanent program coordinator and an instructor for environmental science core courses. Dr. Anne Cross taught ENVR 5100 and ENVR 5300 courses. The development of ENVR 5100 was motivated by an outside review board recommendation.

Dr. Edward Knobbe took over as director in January 1997 and served until December 2001. He worked under the Vice President for Research as the Associate Dean of Research, Director of the Environmental Institute, and Director of the Environmental Science Graduate Program. Under his administration, the program established several specializations including environmental management, disaster and emergency management, and environmental chemistry, toxicology and risk assessment. Dr. Timothy J. Pettibone, Dean of the Graduate College assumed leadership of the program until a new director could be found. Together, Dr. Pettibone and Dr. Focht restructured the program with the establishment of a steering council and three standing committees.

Dr. Will Focht served as Director from 2002 to 2011. Under his leadership, the program elevated admission standards; instituted environmental awards; established an external Environmental Programs Advisory Board; established five new specializations; and developed a new strategic plan. In 2012, Dr. Sheryl Tucker, Dean of the Graduate College, appointed Dr. Scott Stoodley as the ESGP Director. Since becoming director, Dr. Stoodley led the efforts to develop a new specialization, entitled the Professional Science Master's in Environmental Management. This new master's program will allow students to pursue advanced training in Environmental Management while simultaneously developing professional workplace skills.

In 2013, Dr. Tucker appointed Dr. Ken Ede as the Associate Director for the ESGP in Tulsa. Environmental Science Graduate Program has graduated over 380 students since 1977. Most have found employment in large corporations, federal and state government, educational organizations, non-profit organizations, and consulting firms with an average salary more than $50,000. Over 25% of the graduates have been awarded a Ph.D.

HISTORY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN TULSA

The ESGP program started in Tulsa at the University Center at Tulsa (a consortium of NSU, Langston, OU and OSU) in 1993 under Dr. Paul Matthews, then the Director of the ESGP. The former University Center at Tulsa became OSU Tulsa in Jan 1999, broadening the University's research capabilities and presence in Tulsa. After OSU Tulsa was founded, the ESGP flourished with increased support. With the innovation of specializations, OSU Tulsa became a leader in environmental management. Through adjunct faculty that bring a real world prospective and expertise to the classroom, the OSU Tulsa campus offers a myriad of environmentally related courses. OSU Tulsa adjunct faculty include Kevin Gustavson, Damon Wright, Ed Rossman, Derek Blackshare, Tracy Hammon, Teri Holmes and Bert Fisher.