



Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are pleased that your student is interested in the Environmental Studies Summer Youth Institute (ESSYI) at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS). On our website, you will find application materials, curriculum outline, faculty and staff bios, student perspectives and other information about HWS. ESSYI is designed to help your teen understand the complexity of environmental issues while exploring lakes, streams, and bogs in the Finger Lakes Region and by spending time hiking, canoeing and camping in the Adirondacks State Park - the largest single state or national park in the lower 48 states.

Our mission is to provide talented high school students with a college-level, hands-on learning experience that explores the many disciplines, tools and approaches demanded by complex environmental problems. We welcome students with a wide range of interests and academic preparation, recognizing that all can contribute to the success of the Institute, whether their interests are in the arts, the humanities, the natural sciences, or the social sciences. Students in the Institute work closely with a diverse group of Hobart and William Smith faculty; this summer we expect faculty to include artists, economists, political scientists, geologists, biologists, chemists, writers and philosophers. Much of our work will be in the field— water quality sampling on the Colleges' 65-foot research vessel the *HWS William Scandling*, measuring stream discharge in local watersheds, using photography to establish a “sense of place,” surveying the habitats of Adirondack lakes, investigating plant communities in a quaking bog and more. College credit is awarded upon successful completion of the Institute.

There are three primary outcomes expected by students participating in ESSYI. First, your child will discover ways that they can have a powerful and lasting impact on environmental issues locally, regionally and globally. He or she will learn techniques and approaches used by professionals and put them into practice in ways that reveal important lessons about the local and global environments. Second, the academic nature of this experience will provide your child with a valuable pre-college experience. The program will give your son or daughter a sense of true college life including: rigorous classroom and laboratory work, life in dormitory settings, and opportunities to build social relationships both independently and collectively. And finally, because students work with at least 15 different HWS faculty from different fields and disciplines, they will be able to identify specific fields or majors they hope to explore in college. Faculty expertise ranges from forest ecology, sustainability practices, solid waste management and environmental justice to alternative energy, environmental economics, and public policy.

ESSYI is based at HWS, a liberal arts institution with a strong reputation and one that has demonstrated itself as a leader in terms of environmental sustainability, civic engagement and career placement. The colleges have received recognition by several popular organizations, including:

- Received the distinction of “leader” in sustainability by both *SIERRA* magazine and *The Princeton Review*.
- Ranked 43 in the Wall Street Journal Magazine’s *SmartMoney* in its ranking of “Colleges that Help Grads Get Top Salaries.”
- Included in the federal government’s “Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll” for volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.
- Recognized as an ‘Exemplary STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Summer Program’ by the Finger Lakes Hub of the Empire State STEM Learning Network.

The HWS campus is located at the northern end of Seneca Lake in the heart of the Finger Lakes region. It is a beautiful place to spend time in the summer. Please do not hesitate to call, e-mail or visit our web site if you have questions about the Institute or the application process.

Sincerely,

Prof. Jim MaKinster  
ESSYI Executive Director  
Professor of Education  
(315) 781-4401  
[essyi@hws.edu](mailto:essyi@hws.edu)  
<http://essyi.hws.edu>

