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### Letter to the Faculty - February 27, 1956

Hardy L. Shirley

*SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry*

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TO THE FACULTY

February 27, 1956

From: Hardy L. Shirley, Dean

You are naturally interested and concerned over the legislative bill introduced by Senator Hughes, providing that the College of Forestry be continued as a contract college, operated by Syracuse University, the latter serving as representative of the Education Department.

A copy of Senator Hughes' bill is attached. The purpose of this statement is to appraise the bill and estimate its implications, including both the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed arrangement to our College and its students and faculty.

As indicated in Section 4 of the bill, funds for operating the College of Forestry would be appropriated by the State and allotted to Syracuse University for expenditure. Subject only to appropriations by the State therefor, Syracuse University is empowered by this bill to administer the College of Forestry "as to the establishment of courses of study, the creation of departments and positions, the determination of the number and salaries of members of the faculty and other employees thereof, and employment thereof, the maintenance of discipline, and as to all other matters pertaining to educational policies, activities, and operations, including research work."

If this bill becomes law, the policies and standards for undergraduate and graduate education would be determined and administered by Syracuse University. The College Board of Trustees would be abolished, and Syracuse University would directly represent the State Education Department.

As the bill states, Syracuse University would have custody of the land, buildings, and equipment of the College and would establish fees and tuition. Syracuse University would also have authority to establish courses and programs; to create, abolish, or combine departments; and to determine the salaries and numbers of faculty and other employees. As "integration" with the University, this could mean abolishment or curtailment of a number of the College Departments and fields of instruction, such as Botany, Entomology, Chemistry, Zoology, Economics, Surveying, English, and Accounting. It could also mean the elimination of the services now performed by the College's Dean of Students, graduate office, research director, business office, and maintenance and clerical services. Such services would then be available only through the corresponding offices of Syracuse University.

The Dean of the College would be required to channel all administrative actions through the administration officers of Syracuse University, and secure their approval.

This legislation would give the State University power over approval of the budget and payment of vouchers. This could result in prolonged delays and friction, which inevitably would cause the College to suffer. Moreover, the College and Syracuse University would be subject to special scrutiny and possible delaying actions by the State Division of the Budget, Public Works and other state agencies with which we would still be involved and with which Syracuse University has no experience.

Furthermore, unless accompanied by further legislation, this bill would also:

- a) Remove from civil service status and benefits all clerical and custodial workers, or render their status uncertain.
- b) Remove the faculty and civil service employees from the State Retirement System.
- c) Subject all faculty appointments and promotions to review by the Syracuse University Senate.
- d) Not provide for State appointed members of Syracuse University Board of Trustees, nor for any advisory body for the College, reflecting the views of influential persons from industry, and forest owners.

What are the advantages of contract college arrangement?

Presumably it would assure college students, faculty and staff continuance of the privileges they now enjoy at Syracuse University. However these privileges were extended while the College was under State administration and control. The fact that Syracuse University has continued these for some 45 years is evidence that it has found such a relationship to be in its own best interests. Should this interest change due to increased tuition paying students or otherwise some or all of the privileges could be withdrawn whether the College was a contract college or not. The same could apply to accessory instruction, steam, and other services the College now purchases from Syracuse University.

The advantages seem to lie almost solely on the side of Syracuse University where it could mean greater freedom in using college faculty, staff, equipment and buildings, a chance to sell more services to the State, and a chance to increase fees for our students. It would also mean increased prestige, and more alumni from which to request support for the University.

If the present College organization were inefficient or involved undesirable duplication, such revisions might be desirable. But actually the productivity, stature, efficiency, and educational standards have been maintained at high levels under the present organization, and any new combinations or consolidations could only mean appreciable reductions in efficiency as well as a protracted period of turmoil and lowered morale for the College and its people.