SESYNC Expands Synthesis and Leadership Opportunities for Graduate Students with New Workshop

Oct 10, 2019

SESYNC’s graduate workshops will build students’ capacity for leadership and interdisciplinary and socio-environmental science.

SESYNC’s Graduate Student Research Program began in 2013, with a focus on fostering interdisciplinary science among graduate students who were participating in a few team-based Graduate Pursuits. Fast forward to 2019, and SESYNC’s graduate program has now hosted 7 graduate-oriented workshops and funded 28 Graduate Pursuit teams, with another cohort of teams underway as of fall 2019. Such significant growth in just a few years has demonstrated to SESYNC the need to expand synthesis opportunities designed specifically for graduate students.

To address this need, SESYNC is developing a set of workshops that will further build graduate students’ capacity for interdisciplinary and socio-environmental science and teach them the skills needed to lead an interdisciplinary team. The goal of these events will be to expand students’ understanding in key areas of interdisciplinary and S-E science; expose them to key skills through hands on activities; and give them key opportunities to network with peers outside of their
disciplines.

Dr. Nicole Motzer, leader of SESYNC’s Graduate Student Research Program, said these workshops will “support the goal of expanding who can learn and benefit from the knowledge and experiences that SESYNC’s graduate program offers.”

These workshops, however, will not be connected to SESYNC’s traditional graduate research pursuits. Instead, these trainings will introduce synthesis and data-driven concepts, theories, frameworks, methods, and skills from an individualized approach rather than a team-based approach. Students will learn tools to enhance their own scientific thinking and practice with synthesis as opposed to learning how to conduct longer-term synthesis research as a team. With this focus on the individual, the workshops aim to develop future leaders who can spearhead successful interdisciplinary projects designed to find solutions to pressing socio-environmental problems.

Motzer said the workshops stem from multiple requests over the years from master’s students seeking to jump-start synthesis training for an eventual PhD and from those wishing to develop such skills for a non-academic research position at an NGO, government agency, etc. The new workshop design will better accommodate the shorter program period of master’s degrees and serve PhD students who might not be able to commit to a Graduate Pursuit. It will also serve as a great starting point for students who want to learn how to make their own graduate research more interdisciplinary and actionable.

SESYNC will hold the first workshop, “Graduate Leaders in Socio-Environmental (S-E) Synthesis Workshop,” this January in Annapolis, Maryland. The three-day training will have room for 25–30 attendees. There is no cost to attend. To learn more about the workshop or to apply: http://sesync.us/gradleaders. Deadline to apply is November 15, 2019.
Audience:
Researcher [4]
Educator [5]
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[1] https://www.sesync.org/for-you/educator/programs/graduate-programs