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UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT IN NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS: DEMAND AND REALITY

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ABSTRACT: Many of us involved in enrollment management in University Education in Natural Resources have experienced declines in undergraduate enrollment and face challenges in recruiting students from under-represented groups. At the same time local, state, and federal natural resources-related agencies tell us that in the next 5-10 years demand for our graduates will be the greatest it has been in 30 years. Furthermore, these agencies expect to hire a diverse workforce. Is there something wrong with this picture? Are there things we can do as a group to meet our own enrollment goals and the goals of the agencies and corporations? Questions to be

addressed could include the following: What are the undergraduate enrollment trends? How can we attract a diverse student body? Are there common enrollment trends and challenges? What are the natural resource agencies' and companies' needs and expectations of a workforce? Are there discrepancies in what we have and what they want? Do we need to rethink our recruitment strategies? How can we, as a group, build a coalition to address these questions? Potential end results of this discussion might include a better understanding of a particular programs' enrollment standing among natural resource programs in the United States. We may gain insight into how to use workforce expectations in our recruiting efforts. We can make recommendations to employers on how they can help us meet all parties' expectations. We will determine if, why, and how we should build a network of enrollment/diversity specialists to better represent our concerns to universities, agencies, and companies. At the very least we will strengthen a previously inconspicuous camaraderie among people dealing with enrollment and diversity in University Education in Natural Resources.