

Sherburne Abbott appointed Syracuse University's vice president for sustainability initiatives and University Professor of Sustainability Science & Policy

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Syracuse University Vice Chancellor and Provost Eric F. Spina today announced the appointment of Sherburne “Shere” Abbott as vice president for sustainability initiatives and University Professor of Sustainability Science & Policy.



Abbott, a leading expert in the field of sustainability science and policy, currently serves as the associate director for environment of the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of the President. Her appointment will be effective July 1.

“I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Chancellor Cantor and Provost Spina to help SU build a premier program to advance the field of sustainability science, its applications and its policy implications,” says Abbott. “Working with faculty, students and the wider community across the domains of scholarship and practice, I believe we can develop exemplary models of sustainability for the University, the region, the nation and beyond.”

“Appointing Shere Abbott to this dual role underlines SU’s commitment to being a leader in sustainability in American higher education,” says SU Chancellor and President Nancy Cantor. “SU long has been a generator of leading scholarship on sustainability, and as early signatories to the Presidents Climate Commitment we put a stake in the ground for campus sustainability practices. Shere is superbly qualified, and extremely well-positioned, to build on this strong foundation, especially as sustainability must be integrated more deeply not only into every discipline, but into our everyday lives.”

In her current position with the Executive Office of the President, Abbott manages a portfolio of science and technology policy that ranges from energy and climate change to environmental quality and sustainability. President Obama appointed her to the position and she was confirmed by the Senate in April 2009.

“Shere Abbott will play a pivotal role in moving SU to the next level of excellence in sustainability scholarship and practice. There are few people in the nation—indeed the world—

who have Shere's extraordinary background in both cultivating scholarship and formulating and implementing policy across the broad domain of sustainability," says Spina. "With her leadership, we will forge new connections across SU's many academic and operational sustainability efforts, making a whole that is much greater than the sum of its parts. I know Shere looks forward to working closely with our faculty and staff across multiple units to advance our excellence in the environmental and sustainability domains."

Prior to her current appointment, Abbott served as the director of the Center for Science and Practice of Sustainability in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Texas at Austin, and as a faculty member of the College of Liberal Arts. Previously, she served as chief international officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Prior to that appointment, over a 17-year period at the National Academies' National Research Council, she served as executive director of the Board on Sustainable Development, the director of international organization programs for the Office of International Affairs, and the director of the Polar Research Board of the National Academies' National Research Council. Abbott also served as assistant scientific program director of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission.

Abbott received her A.B. from Goucher College and her M.F.S. from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She is married to James Steinberg and they have two daughters, Jenna, age 9, and Emma, age 6. Steinberg currently serves as Deputy Secretary of State, and is also joining SU as dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and University Professor of Social Science, International Affairs and Law.