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**Arkansas State University**  
**Department of Biological Sciences**  
**Environmental Sciences Program**  
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# ABSTRACTS

## Breakout Sessions

### Interdisciplinary Scholarship: How to promote and sustain

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No consensus has been reached on whether Environmental Studies is a field that can be described as an area for professional and technical preparation, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, metadisciplinary or if it is a discipline in itself. The term multidisciplinary may imply that what you are trying to do is to coalesce a bunch of disciplines together without real integration, and that is not what Environmental Studies is all about. Metadisciplinary has a number of philosophical implications that will bore the non-philosophers, and your environmental students are more interested in problem-solving approaches than discussing the squaring of the circle, the gender of angels, or even the deconstruction of the environment. I personally prefer the more commonly used term interdisciplinary because it conveys the sense that you require information, methods, and perspectives from different disciplines to be integrated in order to fully understand environmental issues. For example, the topic of global warming is not just a matter of atmospheric chemistry, but one of impact on biodiversity, differing policy approaches, and various economic considerations, and it will be perceived in one way or another depending upon how it is reported in the media. What will be the public response to it will depend upon ethical considerations, and so the list goes on. That is what Environmental Studies is all about: integration.

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