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Sac State program vital to water management

Sacramento State’s Office of Water Programs (OWP), the largest self-funded center on campus, provides cost-effective solutions for protecting and enhancing water resources, public health and the environment through training, scientific research and public education.

OWP’s mission is twofold: The training group has become the nation’s No. 1 provider of materials that prepare water and wastewater treatment plant operators and managers for their jobs; and the research group’s engineers conduct applied research to assist government agencies and other organizations in the areas of stormwater runoff, low-impact development, dam safety and other water issues.

Ramzi J. Mahmood, professor and chair of the Civil Engineering Department, has been OWP director since 1997, when he succeeded the program’s founder, Emeritus Civil Engineering Professor Kenneth D. Kerri.

OWP has grown exponentially since Kerri created the training group nearly four decades ago. It currently produces more than 20 titles, videos and online courses, all offered as distance learning opportunities for students to earn continuing education units and contact hours. OWP is the preeminent distance educator of operators and managers of water treatment and distribution systems, and wastewater treatment and collection systems. It also provides programs and publications for pretreatment facility inspectors, environmental compliance inspectors and utility managers. Training manuals are written to be used either as stand-alone, self-paced learning tools or through correspondence or online courses.

OWP’s research engineers and scientists provide technical expertise and research management services for water and wastewater treatment, stormwater policy and watershed planning issues. They provide assessments for improving water and wastewater treatment processes, manage investigations to develop and test methods for controlling stormwater quality, oversee and conduct water quality monitoring, and perform modeling, data analysis and cost assessments. These services help both the public and private sectors make informed decisions based on accurate information and good science.
Past and current contracts have funded projects with the California Department of Water Resources, Caltrans, the State Water Resources Control Board, the U.S. Geological Survey, the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA) and the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Researchers have assisted with statewide runoff characterization, treatment device effectiveness and erosion control effectiveness studies that continue to provide the stormwater industry in California and throughout the United States with useful management strategies. Locally, OWP was involved with similar efforts in the Tahoe Basin.

Mahmood is particularly proud of the OWP staff, who represent a mix of professional expertise. Some work full time for the program while others, including technical adviser John Johnston, professor of civil engineering, divide their time between OWP and other campus commitments. Their collective capabilities have enabled the program to establish itself as a leading provider of instructional materials and research aimed at preserving a finite resource.

For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

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Sacramento State is making a difference in California’s Capital Region and beyond. We offer a life-changing opportunity for our 28,000 students, preparing them to be leaders in their professions and communities. Our professors are known for their dedication to great teaching. And our location in the capital of the nation’s most populous state allows students to pursue unique internships and research.

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