

Education Committee Report: March 2023

National Association of University Forest Resources Programs (NAUFRP)

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MARCH 20-21, 2023

1. SAF Accreditation - Education Policy Review Committee

The education committee chair continues to serve on the Education Policy Review Committee (EPRC) of SAF. There are a number of ongoing developments in the EPRC:

a) Accreditation or an accreditation type program for certificates in forestry is continuing to be discussed. While the number of institutions expressing interest in this is small, once a policy is put in place it is anticipated that interest has the potential to grow rapidly. Previous discussions and input from the NAUFRP Executive Committee suggests that there is support for a program, but it should be quite distinct from the current accreditation program so that confusion among students and employees is minimized.

b) Discussion of granting accreditation to an institution for a program that is partially completed at a second institution has been discussed. This relates to one specific institution that has agreements with a range of other programs to deliver part of its curriculum. These partner programs may or may not have SAF accredited programs of their own, and discussions have centered around what the limits would be to such programs. This topic has not been revisited at the most recent EPRC meeting.

c) A request has been made to consider the accreditation landscape for a two-year college with an accredited two-year program to partner with a second institution for a four-year program. These would then be companion programs. Most of the discussion of this has centered around the logistics of such a program and the logistics for accrediting the program (site visits, self-studies etc). The biggest challenge for the institutions proposing this is the number of faculty who are identified as having specialized expertise in forestry, especially in the second institution that does not currently have an SAF accredited program. The four-year program may be at a traditionally two-year college, and this scenario is a larger issue for NAUFRP institutions. As part of this work, SAF is considering piloting one or two accreditation candidacies for two year programs that include a path to an accredited four-year program. One of these being considered is Gogebic Community College as a two-year candidacy program with a path to Michigan Tech.

d) SAF is pursuing CHEA certification. The only change to the accreditation standards would be that the timeframe for communicating back to the programs following determination of outcomes of submissions would be reduced from 60 days to 30 days. SAF believes that this is achievable.

2. Fall enrollments

In early Fall, the education committee sent a short survey to find out about early indications of enrollment numbers in Forestry and Natural Resource programs. The goal was to provide membership with an early indication of trends within NAUFRP, and the plan was to share this with participating programs. The response to the survey was very low, and results were not disseminated. The chair of the

Southern Region Committee indicated that this region already conducts a similar survey of its members, and proposed that each regional committee be asked to conduct a survey in the future. It is proposed that this is the path forward to allow for timely information about enrollments to be shared. Further input from the regional chairs is encouraged, and the Education Committee is willing to collate the information from the regions if requested.

3. New initiatives to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging in forestry education programs.

Following the tragic loss of Diversity Committee chair Yeon-Su Kim, progress on the white paper developed by Dr Tara Bal (Michigan Tech) and Dr Marcella Windmuller-Campione (University of Minnesota) has not yet moved forward. The white papers centers around the interest in developing tools for culturally responsive teaching in forestry, and recognizes that to achieve the goal of integrating data that reflect the input from instructors, admin and others into these tools will take investment. The committee chairs had agreed to work with the investigators to a) identify ways to integrate the work with other ongoing efforts, b) identify expertise in the social sciences to participate in the work, and c) identify sources of funding for the proposed work, including from NAUFRP and participating institutions. It is intended that this discussion can move forward in 2023.

4. Education Committee Membership.

The Education Committee chair would like to increase membership of the committee from other NAUFRP institutions. Please encourage interested faculty to contact the chair to indicate their interest.