

## Education Committee report: October 2023

### National Association of University Forest Resource Programs (NAUFRP) Executive Committee meeting, Sacramento, CA.

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#### 1. SAF Accreditation - Education Policy Review Committee

The education committee chair continues to serve on the Education Policy Review Committee (EPRC) of SAF and has volunteered to be reappointed at the end of the current term in December 2023. There has been no recent activity on this committee due to personnel changes at SAF, including the appointment of Erin Turner as the Director of Credentialing at SAF. Some of the issues that were previously discussed within the EPRC have been moved forward, including the piloting of companion arrangements within the existing accreditation standards for four-year programs.

#### 2. Presentation to the Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism

An invitation was extended to present a keynote at the Sixth General Assembly for Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism 15-17 August, 2023, Kunming, China. Due to issues with obtaining visas, this presentation was made virtually. Dr. Tara Bal (Michigan Tech) gave a zoom keynote presentation to the general assembly:

Bal TL and AJ Storer. 2023. Lectures, labs, and field camps: Maintaining the momentum of quality forestry education during a pandemic. Keynote presented at the The Sixth General Assembly for Asia Pacific Forestry Education Coordination Mechanism, Kunming, China, 15-17 August 2023. Virtual.

The presentation focused on the ways in which forest education continued during the pandemic, including education relating to field skills and other field experiences. It included a consideration of the value of virtual regional meetings of NAUFRP members to share ideas and strategies for navigating instruction during the pandemic, as well as brief NAUFRP partner stories from UW Madison, Iowa State University and Michigan State University. The presentation is available at [https://apfecm.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2023/10/2 APFECM Kunming China online Bal 8-15-2023.pdf](https://apfecm.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2023/10/2_APFECM_Kunming_China_online_Bal_8-15-2023.pdf).

#### 3. Contribution to a book commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SAF.

A chapter has been prepared for inclusion in a book edited by Char Miller, Pomona College, to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SAF in 2024:

Sharik TL, AJ Storer and TL Bal. 2024. Opportunities for Improving the Quality of Forest Education and Implications for the Forest-related Professional Workforce. In: SAF 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (C. Miller ed.). Forthcoming.

The original framing of the opportunities and their implications for the workforce was first presented at a seminar given Dr Terry Sharik at the University of Alberta in November 2021. The chapter includes some of the key milestones in the evolution of forest education, and a consideration of nine opportunities:

1. Enhancing the relationship among educational levels.

2. Developing a clearer understanding of the roles of various disciplines involved in forest education.
3. Developing a clearer understanding of the discipline of forestry.
4. Enhancing the image of forestry as a discipline.
5. Increasing the linkages/collaboration/partnerships between higher education institutions, the forest sector (private and public), and the general public.
6. Improving demographic diversity in the tertiary student population.
7. Achieving balance in the curriculum.
8. Strengthening digital information availability and accessibility.
9. Preparing students for a workforce in which artificial intelligence is omnipresent.

Publication of the book is anticipated in mid to late 2024.

#### **4. Updates on enrollments in Natural Resource disciplines.**

Dr Terry Sharik shared a copy of a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Enrollment trends in natural resources degree programs through Fall 2022: Emphasis on demographic diversity” with the NAUFRP listserv. This will be presented by Dr Tara Bal (Michigan Tech) at the SAF National Convention in the session “Successes and Challenges of Natural Resource Professions Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” moderated by Terry Sharik. The session is scheduled for Friday, October 27, 2023 at 4pm in A2 of the convention location. Sharik, Bal and co-authors are preparing a manuscript that includes data that are shared in this presentation, and which will update previous contributions relating to enrollment trends.

#### **5. Education Committee Membership.**

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