December 15, 2010

CONFIDENTIAL

Johan du Toit  
Utah State University  
Wildland Resources Department  
5230 Old Main Hill Rd.  
Logan, UT  84322-5230

Dear Dr. du Toit:

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) appreciates Utah State University’s dedication to excellence in forest resources education and its continued support of specialized forestry accreditation review. The SAF Committee on Accreditation grants Accreditation through December 31, 2020 to the Forestry curriculum leading to Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry in the Wildland Resources Department at Utah State University.

The Society’s goal is to maintain a responsive accreditation process; therefore, I encourage you to make any suggestions that may help to keep accreditation an effective tool for assessing and improving the quality of forestry education. Should you have any comments or questions, please direct them to Ms. Carol Redelsheimer, CF, Director, Science and Education. She may be reached at (301) 897-8720 extension 240 or by email at redelsheimer@saflnet.org.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Goergen, Jr.

Cc: Dr. Terry L. Sharik

Endorse: SAF Committee on Accreditation Summary Findings and Action
INTRODUCTION
The College of Natural Resources at Utah State University reorganized in 2002 to eliminate the four existing departments and created in their place the Departments of Wildland Resources, Watershed Sciences, and Environment and Society. All existing degrees were maintained and redistributed into appropriate departments with the degrees in Forestry (BS, MS, PhD) going to Wildland Resources. Faculty were redistributed along appropriate lines with the “forestry faculty” consisting of a complex mixture of from all four previous departments in the college, plus new hires. A major curriculum outcome of the reorganization was the creation of a “departmental common” curriculum that provides a common foundation for all degrees (Forestry, Range Management, Wildlife Management and Conservation and Restoration Ecology) in the Department. The BS in Forestry is the curriculum that was reviewed for re-accreditation by a Visiting Team of the Committee on Accreditation of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) on January 18-21, 2010.

SUMMARY FINDINGS:

STANDARD I: FORESTRY PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES
The Departmental mission is clearly stated and aligns with the missions of the College and University. The program’s objectives are also well connected to the mission. The self study report clearly articulated five goals to achieving the mission and further detailing objectives for each goal. The goals were stated on the website but missing from some of the printed recruiting materials. In addition, mention of the program being the only 4-year forestry program accredited by the SAF in Utah was missing. Materials have been revised since the site visit to include this information.

The Standard is met.
STANDARD II: CURRICULUM

Re-accreditation is sought for the Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry offered by the Department of Wildland Resources. The degree requires 120 semester hour credits of which 56 are professional education. Of these 56 hours, 24 are the "Commons Courses" required for all undergraduate majors in the Department. The curriculum includes the requisite general and four professional forestry subject matter categories required by SAF, and the curriculum demonstrates the desired elements of integration, systematic problem solving and decision-making. Curriculum revision is an ongoing collaborative process among faculty that also includes feedback from alumni and stakeholders. This process promotes logical progression of knowledge and skills as students move into advanced coursework. A wide variety of meaningful assessment tools are being used to provide evidence that desired program outcomes are being achieved.

General Education

General education requirements were clearly documented in the Self-Evaluation Report. Table 1 indicates zero semester hours in computer literacy because this component is integrated into professional education courses. The remaining components in Table 1 show reasonable balance across the required components.

Table 1. General Education Requirements: (semester hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Science &amp; Mathematics</th>
<th>Social Sciences &amp; Humanities</th>
<th>Computer Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional Education

The Forest Resources Education Summary for the curriculum was clearly described in the Self-evaluation Report. Table 2 illustrates a reasonable distribution of credit hours across the four professional forestry areas. The COA is satisfied that courses for which credits are spread across two or more areas do in fact address the respective areas. Since the site visit, a second semester of chemistry has been dropped with the credits being added to natural resource economics and policy and free electives.

Students gain leadership skills through work in team situations. Content, concepts, problem-solving and decision-making learning outcomes are integrated across the curriculum and the commons courses provide interdisciplinary interactions among all majors in the Department. Some students were concerned about lack of perspective in certain commons courses but by the time students have taken all the common courses they will have been exposed to a range of disciplinary perspectives. The Department's curriculum committee is also considering whether individual commons courses should be interdisciplinary.
Table 2: Professional Forest Resource Education: (semester hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Ecology &amp; Biology</th>
<th>Measurement of Forest Resources</th>
<th>Management of Forest Resources</th>
<th>Policy, Economics, &amp; Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Commons</td>
<td>15.65</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Major</td>
<td>7.45</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.15</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Curriculum Total</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to difficulty accessing field sites during most of the academic year and with the summer camp being eliminated, the program has relied on students being employed during the summer to gain proficiency in fieldwork beyond what coursework can provide. The visiting team, students and faculty expressed concern whether students were getting enough field-based experience. Since the site visit, the Department has created a one-week required (2-credit) field methods course starting in 2012. This course will occur immediately following spring semester to provide additional training in a field setting.

Professional ethics are not formally incorporated in the curriculum, although students did understand what professionalism meant. Since the site visit, information regarding the SAF Code of Ethics has been added to two commons courses and also to the senior capstone course for forestry majors. Finally, faculty and employers expressed concern regarding the quality of written communication. Since the site visit faculty discussions are ongoing to address this concern.

**Distance Learning**
Faculty are being encouraged to develop distance-learning courses to support regional campuses. Currently most distance courses are for Wildlife Science majors with laboratory experience delivered face-to-face by instructors at each remote site.

**The Standard is met.**

**STANDARD III: FORESTRY PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

The BS in Forestry is one of three majors administered by the Department of Wildland Resources, which is one of three Departments within the College of Natural Resources. The Department Head has a good reputation and his leadership is respected. Faculty have voice in policy and curriculum development and implementation. The CNR has two professional advisors who assist current students and also recruit. The College has increased efforts to build enrollment including the forestry major which has relatively low numbers. Student admission standards for the Department are the same as those for other programs on campus.
The support staff is very effective and highly regarded by the faculty. The number of support staff is adequate but only because of the high skill levels of the current individuals. The current number needs to be maintained to continue the level of performance.

**Program Planning and Outcomes Assessment**
Faculty are actively engaged in program planning and assessment through annual retreats and regular meetings during the academic year. The outcomes assessment developed by forestry faculty that is used to guide curriculum development is commendable. The cross referencing of assessment results directly with SAF competency areas is particularly noteworthy, along with the adaptive management model of program improvement. Although the assessment measures include alumni and employer feedback, faculty decided to create an advisory board as a source of additional input into decisions that affect the Forestry program.

**The Standard is met.**

**STANDARD IV: FACULTY**
Background and academic summaries of the faculty were provided in the Self-Evaluation Report, and budgeted time and specific assignments for teaching in the forestry program clearly specified. The number of faculty participating in the forestry curriculum exceeds the accreditation standard of eight. Faculty have diverse backgrounds although gender and cultural diversity remains relatively low (but typical of natural resources programs throughout the US). Faculty serve on College and University committees and have collaborative relationships with other units and organizations on and off campus. Most faculty have published in peer reviewed or other journals in the past five years.

Faculty take pride and show genuine interest in undergraduate teaching and student success. Student surveys indicate they are highly satisfied by the quality of instruction. Research experiences are used to enhance teaching. Graduate students who assist with classroom instruction noted they would like more feedback regarding their teaching effectiveness. Teaching responsibilities appear to be relatively balanced with other responsibilities with a course-load per teaching FTE roughly equivalent to forestry programs across the country. Faculty appear to be teaching in the areas for which they were trained, development funds are available to support new teaching initiatives and professional development, and faculty are taking sabbaticals. Faculty noted they needed more assistance with distance delivery technology.

**The Standard is met.**

**STANDARD V: STUDENTS**
Current and former students were pleased with their academic experiences. Hands-on experiences and practice (versus demonstration) were considered critical and important to maintain or be increased in the curriculum. Participation in research and interactions with graduate students were also valued. Employers were pleased with their entry-level employees. The Forestry Club (student chapter of SAF) is very active and popular among both forestry majors and non-majors within the department. Students in the club won the Quiz Bowl at the 2008 SAF National Convention.
Undergraduate enrollment averaged 21 students over the past four years with approximately 29% of the student body female and 13% minority. Although diversity is relatively low, the student body reflects the population of Utah residents. Improving enrollment within the forestry major is an ongoing discussion by faculty. Two professional advisors and two peer advisors are available to students within the College. In addition, one forestry faculty advises all of the majors. All faculty are readily available to students for academic or career advice.

The Standard is met.

STANDARD VI: PARENT INSTITUTION SUPPORT

The Department (and forestry major) is funded at average levels at the University and is viewed by the Dean and Provost’s Office as being important to the land grant mission of the University. Student services are diverse and readily available throughout the University, College and Department. Job opportunities are advertised to students through Department efforts. The Department’s physical space, electronic technology and laboratories are excellent resources for the programs offered. Although limited by winter weather, the Department has access to a variety of field sites for teaching and research. In addition to an impressive state-of-the-art University library, the College has its own library with appropriate electronic and print media to support forestry instruction and research.

The Standard is met.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

SAF commends the forestry faculty for maintaining a high quality program that appears to be producing effective professional foresters. We also appreciate the significant efforts associated with developing meaningful assessment tools to measure learning outcomes.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The SAF COA grants continued accreditation to the Forestry curriculum leading to a BS in Forestry through December 31, 2020.

The above summary findings and action by the SAF Committee on Accreditation are based upon a review of the visiting team’s January 21, 2010 report, written responses and oral comments provided to the Committee by Terry Sharik, Professor and Johan du Toit, Professor and Department Head, Utah State University, and George M. Hopper, Visiting Team Chair.

By: Laura E. DeWald
Laura E. DeWald, Chair
SAF Committee on Accreditation

Date: December 15, 2010