

**Department of Forestry Program Review Implementation Plan
Undergraduate Program
2013-2014 Annual Report**

Recommendations:

- 1. Although recruitment into the Forestry program is primarily the responsibility of the college, recruitment at the departmental level is fairly passive. The department should be more proactive in its recruiting efforts, including minority recruitment. Currently, the department's major effort toward recruitment appears to be through extension activities throughout the state.**

Assessment Method: Increased enrollment figures.

Results: At the request of the incoming new Chair, the College administration provided funds for an Academic Coordinator (AC) position. We hired a person for this position and has begun recruiting efforts. The Academic Coordinator serves as a contact for visiting students, ensure a strategic and proactive effort takes place toward identifying prospective students, and provide materials to faculty and staff who are in contact with prospective students.

Analysis of results and reflection: During the first two years of the Academic Coordinator's (AC) hiring, enrollment numbers increased 30-40% over the department's 10-yr average. Over the last two years, the AC and the Chair have focused on retention issues and establishment of a variety of programs to enhance student competitiveness for internships and employment. For example, over 75% of juniors had career-relevant internships during 2013. The 2014 graduating class had over 90% employment in a field related to their major. A student wild land firefighting crew, the FireCats, was established in cooperation with the Kentucky Division of Forestry. We have expanded professional development and communication training opportunities for students. These programs have been very successful.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: In the coming year, the department will focus more on recruiting and boosting enrollment. The AC will also concentrate on other student services such as student life within the department, access to scholarships and programs within the College and University, placement of students into internships and employment, and finally, alumni relations. We have embarked on a curriculum revision that should expand student opportunities to explore forestry-related fields and gain experience and expertise in those disciplines (e.g., wildlife, business, communications) that will make them better and more well-rounded professionals.

- 2. Students expressed disappointment that the Forestry department is obscure within the university, and there may be more opportunities for campus-wide engagement than the faculty is currently exploiting.**

Assessment Method: Increased visibility of the Forestry Department.

Results: Additional steps are being taken to further “advertise” and inform our students of our larger mission and role, not only throughout the university, but also the state. These measures include, but are not limited to, a departmental newsletter, displays throughout the building of faculty and staff activities, and video/photographic exhibits of our efforts throughout the state. The Department also plans to sponsor undergraduate and graduate student outreach efforts across campus by handing out tree seedlings on Arbor Day. The Forestry Club has expanded cooperation with other groups, offices, and organizations on campus. They took the lead in making UK a Tree Campus USA. Our faculty members have been members of the Ag Faculty Council and Faculty Senate for the last 5 years.

Analysis of results and reflection: These efforts will better inform our stakeholders and university colleagues, visitors to the building, and alumni, about the breadth and scope of work in which our faculty and staff are involved. We have increased our visibility across campus and throughout the College. We would a

Ongoing Improvement Actions: One of our faculty members is the Chair of the College interdisciplinary NRES program. The same faculty member is one of the co-leaders of a new honors residence program addressing environmental sustainability. Our faculty are engaged in several different departments as adjunct faculty, participate on numerous college and university committees, and maintain active involvement in many college extracurricular activities. It should be noted that students’ conclusion on the issue of our faculty not being engaged across campus may reflect the students’ lack of awareness of the many involvements the department does have across campus. We are attempting to better inform our students of the many ways we engage using various social media, as well as getting our students engaged in a variety of campus-wide extracurricular activities.

3. There is no formal alumni program, and both students and faculty expressed a desire to develop closer relationships with their alumni.

Assessment Method: The update/upkeep of an alumni database and development of a department newsletter.

Results: A new student exit interview process was initiated, where all graduating students visit with the Department Chair in order to, among other things, build and develop the relationship between the department and our graduates. We have begun an active campaign through a variety of media informing our alumni that we value their role as members of the Department’s extended family. An update of our alumni list was completed and a departmental newsletter is now published as a means to re-establish close working relationships with our alumni and to serve as a starting point for getting them engaged with our students in a more formal way. The department hosts an “alumni recognition” event in the fall that reaches a large group of former graduates. A fall picnic for faculty, staff, students, and alumni is also held and a similar and larger event is also hosted in spring semester to acknowledge students, friends, and partners who deserve recognition. The department also established an Alumni Scholarship Committee which has, over the last 1.5 years, raised over \$13,000, which is more than halfway toward our goal to develop an alumni scholarship.

Analysis of results and reflection: Tremendous strides have been made and notable accomplishments recorded toward engaging our alumni.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: We will continue to seek and develop ways to maintain and improve relations with our alumni both through formal and informal means.

- 4. Revision of the strategic plan to include addition of language that explicitly mentions the interdisciplinary efforts the department is hoping to achieve, as well as ethical behavior components. It is also recommended that the department review the metrics presented in the strategic plan, include quantitative metrics where they do not yet exist, and provide additional measurable metrics for financial support and fundraising strategies.**

Assessment Method: Improvement of interdisciplinary efforts in the Department that capitalize on recent advances in terms of curricula revision and strategic plan development. Increase fundraising efforts for extramural research funding and endowments.

Results: An Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC) was developed to create a venue for proactively and strategically thinking about how our students are taught and what adjustments can be made. An Outreach Committee was also established to share the accomplishments and activities of the Department with the outside world. The UPC developed a professionalism document that was signed by all faculty members and reviewed and signed by all students each year. The document outlines the professional, ethical, and academic expectations for students in the Forestry program. The Research Committee has begun to devote specific time and efforts toward identifying the areas of Departmental strength and developing strategies for capitalizing on those strengths in the context of 1) communicating and collaborating internally, 2) identifying and pursuing funding sources, and 3) developing partnerships with peer departments and institutions to pursue funding in strength and strength-related areas. The Department Chair is also developing relationships with alumni, stakeholders, and other clientele in an effort to pursue development opportunities.

Analysis of results and reflection: Significant strides have been made to improve the professionalism of our undergraduate student body and to reach out to our related programs. The department is, essentially, taking a proactive role in pursuing extramural funding as related to our core faculty expertise.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Chair and Department will continue to focus on this recommendation.

- 5. Create an organized, external advisory committee. An external committee might be an effective step toward greater departmental stature and influence. It is in the department's new strategic plan to create a standing Advisory Committee.**

Assessment Method: The creation of an external advisory committee.

Results: An external advisory group was organized in the fall of 2013 comprised of approximately 20 individuals from diverse industries, organizations, agencies, and

partners who have strategic interest in the success of the Forestry Department at UK. An initial meeting was held with presentations focusing on the three mission areas within the department: teaching, research, and outreach.

Analysis of results and reflection: Excellent input was received from the external advisory group about ongoing growth and programmatic development within all three mission areas. Advisory group members were particularly impressed with the development of Economic Analyses of the Forest Industry in Kentucky, the growth in the undergraduate program, the research significance and impact of our faculty and graduate students, and the impressive educational programming conducted by just a few extension faculty and staff. Improvement opportunities included new facilities, a revised curriculum to allow flexibility to expand coursework into burgeoning related areas, more emphasis on urban forest issues, and a greater recognition by the UK administration of the importance of forestry, wildlife, and natural resource pursuits.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: We will continue to meet with advisory group members individually and as a group annually. The annual fall meeting was postponed due to a variety of conflicting events and a preference for incorporating the meeting into the Spring 480 presentations and banquet.

6. Continued and increased participation by the faculty in sabbatical opportunities.

Assessment Method: Track the number of sabbaticals taken annually by the Department of Forestry faculty members.

Results: One faculty member, Dr. Chris Barton took sabbatical leave during the 2012-2013 Academic Year.

Analysis of results and reflection: No additional sabbaticals have been requested by faculty. This is partially explained by the bimodal nature of the faculty – approximately one-half are junior faculty and one-half are senior faculty who have expressed little interest in sabbaticals.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Chair will continue to monitor the number of sabbatical opportunities utilized by the departmental faculty members.

7. The Department of Forestry should be more proactive in its recruiting efforts, including minority recruitment. Cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity should be a priority for the department.

Assessment Method: Increased enrollment of cultural, ethnic, and gender diverse students.

Results: 96% of the students who enrolled in Forestry between 2006 and 2014 were “white or Caucasian”. Since 2011, the Department has actively recruited students from all walks of life and has participated in several annual events each year for the past four years aimed at minority recruitment. We have also worked closely with the CAFE Office of Diversity for the last 4 years to identify additional opportunities to recruit diverse students.

Analysis of results and reflection: All of the previous departmental efforts have been largely unproductive. Virtually all 1862 land-grant Forestry programs struggle

with the same issues of lack of diversity in their undergraduate populations. Graduate student diversity is not a concern.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: Efforts to participate in every event that offers potential minority recruitment opportunities have scaled back. Efforts will be more strategic over the coming years.

8. The department should address salary deficiencies at the professorial level.

Assessment Method: Salary levels will be tracked using internal salary information and national salary data to see if the Forestry Department has funded faculty salaries at all levels, particularly full professor, to at least 90% of benchmark institutions by 2014.

Results: The 2013-2014 mean faculty salaries were \$78,625 for Assistant Professors, \$91,955 for Associate Professors, and \$104,965 for Full Professors.

Analysis of results and reflection: The 2013-2014 mean faculty salaries increased for most levels to an average of \$78,625 for Assistant Professors, \$91,955 (a slight decrease) for Associate Professors, and an increase to \$104,965 for Full Professors. These salaries are approximately 5.28% below, 7.44% above, and 6.03% below the average for Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors' salaries, respectively, among southern Forestry Schools and departments.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Department will continue to identify faculty salary disparities as compared to peer institutions and strive to meet regional averages.

9. Improve Forestry Department facilities in the TP Cooper Building or move Forestry to a new building.

Assessment Method: Evaluate facilities annually.

Results: The Forestry Department lost two buildings to condemnation – the Insectary and the Tobacco Research Lab which housed the herbarium and the wildlife research lab. These facilities were moved to Dimock Building, which reduced the size of our facilities, but improved the quality. We developed a building prospectus with the Department of Entomology, Landscape Architecture, and related interdisciplinary programs and initiatives to construct a new building in the vicinity of the rest of the College's building. There would be obvious benefits to a new facility in terms of faculty access to high quality research space and equipment, recruiting, and demonstration of a university commitment to environmental programs.

Analysis of results and reflection: Little progress has been made, largely due to a UK-wide focus on dorm building and a perceived dearth of administrative advocacy for new facilities.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Department will continue to push for new facilities for the programs listed above. A Forest Health Research and Education Center (FHREC) is being developed with the Southern Research Station (USDA Forest Service) and Kentucky Division of Forestry; the former has agreed to provide some funding toward a new facility as it relates to the cooperative effort to develop the FHREC on UK's campus. We will continue to push for new facilities and attempt to identify large donors who could catalyze efforts to construct a new building.

**Department of Forestry Program Review Implementation Plan
Graduate and Extension Programs
2013-2014 Annual Report**

Recommendations:

1. Increase the number and diversity of graduate students in the Department of Forestry.

Assessment Method: Using Office of Institutional Effectiveness data, track the number and demographics of graduate students in our MS program and for Ph.D. students advised by our faculty in other programs (i.e., Biology Department, IPSS, Animal and Food Sciences, Plant and Soil Sciences).

Results: This data is not currently available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Analysis of results and reflection: Anecdotally, we have seen an increase in the number of women and international students coming to Forestry. However, we need to evaluate this against data coming from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Perhaps the most effective means we have for increasing the number and diversity of students is to increase the number of assistantships we offer.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: We continue to recruit high-quality graduate students from diverse backgrounds. The number of graduate assistantships the department offers has doubled over the last two years. The Department is also optimistic that newer faculty will continue to recruit a diversity of students into our program.

2. Increase the number and amount of hard-money graduate assistantships in the Department of Forestry.

Assessment Method: Using Forestry Department internal records, the number of departmental assistantships will be tracked to see if the forestry department doubles the number of departmental assistantships by 2014.

Results: For the 2013-2014 academic year, four (4) departmental assistantships were awarded.

Analysis of results and reflection: This number should begin to increase as our endowments recover from the past challenging economic times and begin to generate limited income to support graduate research.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Department will continue to seek cost-saving measures to increase the number of assistantships offered. Additional donations will be sought to bolster our graduate program.

3. Increase graduate teaching capacity in the Department of Forestry through direct increases in FTEs devoted to this purpose and through Adjunct faculty appointments.

Assessment Method: Track the number and diversity of faculty and adjunct faculty in the Department of Forestry.

Results: Several adjunct faculty were appointed in the department over the last several years. Dr. Claudia Cotton (USFS Soil Scientist) has assisted with Landscape Assessment since 2012. Drs. Monte McGregor, John Brunjes, Dana Baxley, and Matt Thomas, from Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, were accepted as Adjunct Faculty in 2013. We hope to involve these individuals in teaching classes in the near future, but in the meantime they are cooperating on various research endeavors. We have also hired Dr. Bert Abbott, Research Geneticist, to assist with the development of the Forest Health Research and Education Center at UK. Dr. Abbott has already reached out to undergraduate students to provide research opportunities and his increased involvement is anticipated in the graduate program in the coming year. Certainly, he will contribute to graduate research opportunities for students.

Analysis of results and reflection: These steps seem to be propelling us in the right direction for increased graduate instruction. In addition to the steps described above, we have also made several revisions to faculty DOEs to create more opportunity for graduate instruction. First and foremost, limiting junior faculty teaching to undergraduate courses and to a certain course level will permit more room for teaching a graduate course. Also, Dr. Dave Wagner has released a portion of his DOE previously dedicated to teaching an undergraduate course toward the development of an additional graduate course.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Chair will continue to monitor graduate teaching capacity.

4. Creation of a Ph.D. program in Forestry.

Assessment Method: The development of a Ph.D. program in Forestry.

Results: The creation of the IPSS (Integrated Plant and Soil Sciences) Ph.D. program has reduced the urgency/need for a specific Ph.D. in Forestry. Several Forestry faculty are graduate faculty members in this program and can advise Ph.D. students under its umbrella.

Analysis of results and reflection: The department needs to strategically assess whether the creation of a Ph.D. program in Forestry is still a priority. The number of Forestry faculty who are able to mentor/advise Ph.D. students in the IPSS program should be expanded. Our current supply of assistantships is considerably less than the demand by potential students. While we have been very successful in acquiring extramural funding to support both MS and Ph.D. students, additional hard-money incentives are needed to leverage opportunities which result in increased Ph.D. student numbers.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The department will discuss and evaluate the need for developing a Ph.D. program in Forestry and will also identify opportunities to recruit international students who may come to UK with their own financial support. The Department will also seek additional hard-money resources to fund graduate assistantships.

5. Increase hard-money Extension FTEs.

Assessment Method: Track the number of Extension personnel.

Results: The number of Extension faculty decreased with the retirement, and concurrent loss of the position due to budget cuts, of Deborah Hill, Non-timber Forest Products Specialist in 2012. Carroll Fackler, Extension Associate for the Primary Forest Products Industry, also retired in June 2014.

Analysis of results and reflection: A recurring, tenure-track position to replace Dr. Deborah Hill is not anticipated, however, Carroll Fackler will be replaced.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The department conducted a strategic planning exercise in 2013 to identify the priority personnel needs in each mission area. It was determined that one of the critical needs for Forestry Extension was a Forest Health Specialist (to include a research appointment). Resources are currently not available to hire a tenure-track full-time Forest Health Extension Specialist, but we have acquired funds from the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station to hire an Extension Forest Health Post-Doctoral scientist for two years who will develop educational programs targeting forest health. A scientist to fill this position is currently being sought. A position description for the Primary Forest Products Extension Associate position is being developed.

6. Increase Extension grantsmanship.

Assessment Method: Track the number and dollars of grants coming to Forestry Extension personnel.

Results: The total amount of external Extension grant dollars during 2013-2014 was \$109,500.00 from five (5) grants, compared to \$111,640 from 5 grants in 2012-2013.

Analysis of results and reflection: While the amount of Extension grants declined slightly (less than 2%) in 2013-2014 from the previous year, the number of grants remained constant. More emphasis needs to be placed on this recommendation by the Department.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The Chair will stress grantsmanship during annual performance reviews and all faculty meetings.

7. Conduct forest landowners' needs assessment.

Assessment Method: The implementation of a forest industry needs assessment as a pre-cursor to the development and implementation of a landowner needs assessment.

Results: A forest industry needs assessment was conducted which identified several major areas in which the industry recognized a need for more information. Common themes among those surveyed included the need for additional information regarding marketing products, both domestically and overseas, employee training, and burdensome government regulations.

Analysis of results and reflection: While we don't currently have the personnel capacity to address these areas comprehensively, we can begin to organize

conversations and periodic workshops to address some of these issues. In addition, as we seek to hire new personnel to replace retiring staff and faculty, we will identify individuals who may have the capacity to offer some educational programming in these areas.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: At this time we don't have concrete plans to conduct a forest landowners' needs assessment. However, we will evaluate our current workload and ongoing relationships with partners to determine the degree to which this needs to become a priority.