

**Forestry Department**  
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The following table shows the assessment methods used and numbers of individuals assessed for the Forestry Department.

Degree Program(s) Assessed	Assessment Methods	Number of Individuals Assessed in 2003
Forestry – B. S., M.S.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Exit interviews with graduating students</li> <li>2) Performance of seniors in capstone course</li> <li>3) Faculty questionnaire for student performance in capstone course</li> <li>4) Student questionnaire for seniors in Forestry 4443</li> <li>5) Post summer camp retention and graduation rates</li> <li>6) Satisfaction survey of graduates (1994-1998)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 9 seniors, 1 graduate student</li> <li>2) 8 seniors enrolled</li> <li>3) 3 faculty responding</li> <li>4) 7 seniors responding</li> <li>5) All students completing summer camp 1993 - 2001</li> <li>6) 80 graduates were mailed surveys</li> </ol>

**Analysis and Findings:**

- 1) Exit interviews: Forestry Department Head, Dr. Craig McKinley, conducted exit interviews in fall 2002 and spring 2003 with a total of 9 graduating seniors. One graduate student was interviewed in 2002, but information is not presented in order to keep responses from being identified. Comments from seniors closely parallel those of previous years. Briefly, the following points were made by students relative to the forestry program:
  - Students indicated that their desire to work outdoors led them to Forestry.
  - Overall, students were pleased with quality of education.
  - Transfer students indicated an initial concern regarding acceptance into the department. However, summer camp generally allayed those fears.
  - Students indicated that summer camp was the highlight of their academic experience. Some concern was expressed over the cost of summer camp and the fact that a summer of work was partially lost.
  - Students who participated in the International forestry course were quite pleased with that experience and felt it added significantly to their education.
  - Students were pleased with advisors in developing academic and career paths.
  - Several students expressed a positive perception of the curriculum options to be implemented in fall, 2003.
  - Students indicated some courses provided redundant information.

- (2) Capstone performance: The Capstone course is designed to provide an opportunity to approach real-life problems with off-campus clients. Following problem analysis and preparation of results, students make formal presentations to clients.

Teamwork skills appear to be well developed and well understood by the students as they completed the semester's work. Exit interviews demonstrate that student perceptions of the capstone course are excellent.

Client Comments from 2003 include:

- Good presentation.
- The group has researched the project well and was very knowledgeable.
- The presentation was received clearly.
- Written project well organized for presentation to non-professionals.

- (3) Faculty Evaluation of Capstone Students: Following project completion and presentations by students, faculty who attended presentations were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed by the Society of American Foresters as part of that organization's efforts to better evaluate outcomes assessment. A summary of the results in 2003 indicate:

- Students were rated highest in their ability to manage teamwork productively.
- Students appear to understand forest community, structure and function.
- Students demonstrated a strong ethical sense of stewardship for the environment.
- Students were rated lowest in their ability to evaluate possible solutions in terms of specific criteria and to make a case for the preferred solution.
- Faculty rated students' communication (both written and spoken) skills at a higher level from last year. Communications has been one area of focus for improvement within the capstone course.

- (4) Forestry 4443 Questionnaire: *A total of 7 senior students in Forestry 4443 (Administration and Policy) responded to a questionnaire designed to evaluate their perceptions of the college experience. Below are listed the results of this survey. It should be noted that seven students is a limited sample and conclusions should be viewed with that fact in mind.*

- Students rated themselves high in the ability to recognize and respect the rights of others.
- Students believe they are able to make informed moral decisions with discernment.
- Students perceive themselves as having the ability to organize and lead groups of people. They also believe they are able to effectively participate as a member of a group.
- Students rated themselves low in their ability to speak effectively and with confidence. They also gave themselves a low rating in the ability to communicate research findings to relevant publics.

- (5) Post-summer Camp Retention and Graduation: The Forestry Department tracks retention and graduation following the academic forestry summer camp that is conducted between the sophomore and junior years. Of the 7 students who attended camp in 2001, 4 (57%) have graduated from OSU. The other three students are expected to graduate in summer or fall, 2003, bringing the total graduates to 7 (100%). The graduation rate of students completing camp for the nine years, 1993 through 2001, is approximately 88%.

CAMP YEAR/ GRAD YEAR	93/95	94/96	95/97	96/98	97/99	98/00	99/01	00/02	01/03
Graduation Percentage	94%	86%	91%	82%	78%	91%	91%	83%	100%

- (6) Satisfaction Survey (forestry graduates of 1994 to 1998): Surveys to assess the satisfaction of the 1994 to 1998 graduates with their educational training were mailed in February 1999. Approximately 35 percent of those surveyed responded. Data were summarized and analyzed in summer, 1999, with a compilation of results presented to the department's Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) for review and action. A copy of this summary and recommendations is available upon request.

#### **Uses of Assessment Results:**

As with any activity to evaluate the quality of the educational experience, outcomes assessment must be incorporated into the overall improvement effort. As such, dramatic changes in curriculum, course content and expectations for students are not to be based solely on results reported here. Additionally, such changes should not be initiated without considerable regard to long-term trends and intended results. It has been the philosophy of this department to carefully review the results of outcomes assessment and other evaluation opportunities (SAF accreditation, etc.) over an extended time frame to assure that any program modifications attain the desired results.

Information relative to the outcomes assessment process is submitted in written form by the Department Head to the forestry faculty for their review and consideration. The department's Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) also utilizes this information as a basis for possible changes in the instruction program that might be recommended. The Department Head discusses comments relative to specific courses with involved faculty as part of that individual's appraisal and development process.

#### **Other uses of Outcomes Assessment:**

- (1) The Forestry Department is involved in an intensive recruitment program. Assessment results are utilized to determine student needs and expectations for a four-year degree in forestry. The development of curriculum options and the reduction in summer camp requirements based upon student inputs are expected to enhance this recruitment effort.
- (2) Curriculum reviews continue as a result of the information received from exit interviews, senior questionnaires, etc. This is not exceptional as curricular matters receive regular attention in the department. As a result of students' desire for additional specialization opportunities, a curriculum review in 2002 led to the development of a proposal for four curriculum options. Those options have been approved and will be implemented beginning in fall, 2003.
- (3) Outcomes assessments have shown that student communication skills need to be improved. The Capstone course continues to focus on oral and written communication skills both within the department and with outside clients. Several other courses include communications activities by students as part of the course requirements. Examples of such activities include presentations, written reports, leadership of discussion groups, etc.