

# VIU Forest Resources Technology

## Advisory Committee Meeting

May 25, 2012 (9:00 to 1:00 pm)

Location: Blg. 370 Rm. 105

### Minutes

Attendees: Peter Marshall, Randy Trerise, Nancy Pezel, Brian Saunders, Brooks Yancy, Branko Samoukovic, Dave Lewis; VIU: Jason Ross (student rep.), Marise, Paul, Michel, Doug, Jim, Pat, Bill

1. Introductions and approval of Agenda.
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting ( 8 December 2010) as distributed.

#### Old Business

3. Report on action items from the last meeting:
  - a. Safety. Jim and Bill reported on how we have incorporated safety in all relevant courses. Safety is now part of the learning outcomes of all courses with field work. The first-year Surveying course (FRST111) is where we introduce and emphasize the importance of safety in the program.
  - b. Ethics. Michel reviewed how we cover ethics in various courses.
  - c. Course outlines. Doug reported that all outlines are now on-line, and were also emailed to non-faculty Committee members.
  - d. Fisheries & RMOT one-year post-graduate diplomas (Doug). We deferred pursuing these options in order to finalize a degree option with Geography. Our diploma graduates can now complete another 2 year and receive a BS in Geography—providing graduates with a forestry background plus GIS skills.
  - e. Program changes (Doug). The faculty considered input from the committee in the latest program changes.

#### New Business

##### Information Items

4. Doug and other faculty presented a brief overview of the recent program changes.
5. GPS. Bill reported on the status of teaching GPS in the program. We now have 17 new Garmin eTrex units for use in classes (not enough yet for one per student). Although they are recreational quality, we are able to expose students to GPS operation and upload of data in FRST121 and other courses. We also have Greg Kiel give the government GPS certification course in the field studies course (spring). We discussed the potential for getting some outdated units from industry (Brooks), or getting outside help with loan of units or training costs (Dave).
6. FRST-GEOG dual credential. Doug described the new option (see 3d above).
7. Recruitment efforts / website. We have updated our website and have a new brochure with an appealing design, using the slogan “Get some mud on your boots!” as a way to “brand” our program. A discussion ensued regarding recruitment. Going to high schools is time consuming; hence, difficult for faculty to do; results vary when using university-level recruiters that are less familiar with

the program; there are opportunities for recruitment from the high school program in Pt. Alberni (Ryan Dvorak); we could establish ties with North Island College.

8. Innovations & Excellence in Learning. We have been working with Liesel Knaak, Director of the VIU Centre for IEL, on improving several aspects of our program:
  - a. Course learning objectives
  - b. Program learning objectives
  - c. Assessment & Evaluation
  - d. Delivery of content

This is helping us to make materials consistent, to eliminate unnecessary overlap and to reduce the workload, which we believe has crept up to excessive levels for both students and faculty.

9. Woodlot Update (Jim & Marise). A cutblock was harvested last fall. Students took part in planting and browse protection in the spring. We are at the cutting permit stage for another block.
10. Biosolids Update (Marise). A summary was distributed (see attached). Growth plots by Brian D'Anjou have been re-measured.

### Discussion Items

#### 11. Adequate coverage of certain topics?

- a. Ethics/ professionalism. This must be incorporated throughout our program. The Advisory Committee (AC) thought it was a good idea to bring in Brian Robinson from ABCFP. Actions: discuss a workshop with ABCFP; bring ethics and professionalism into our student assessments; ensure these topics are incorporated into appropriate classes (e.g., IRM, Admin.)
- b. First Nations (traditional use, significant features, treaties, consultation/accomodation, etc.). We discussed our current approach in IRM (i.e., lecture in IRM by Cindy Stern from Tseshaht). TLA is working on FN training and engagement, and labour market partnerships. We need to cover information-sharing versus consultation, FN perspectives on issues, and how to work effectively with FNs (Bob Joseph). There is currently funding available for FN Resource?Research programs (Randy). Actions: Doug will follow-up with local Sneyneymeaux FN (Keith Atkinson); Marise will talk to Joseph.
- c. Wildlife/ biodiversity. We discussed the areas covered by FRST235 (Ecol & Mgt.) and FRST242 (IRM), guest speakers (e.g., MacKinnon, Manning) and variable retention layout (FRST262). No action items.
- d. Fisheries/ hydrology. Marise reviewed the content of the new Hydrology course. What do graduates need? AC: Be able to recognize fish habitat (especially the small streams); know how to measure streams; be able to ask the right questions; recognize sediment. No action items.
- e. Math. CTAB is pushing for calculus to be included. What is needed? AC: trigonometry, ratios, an understanding of statistics. Ideas: use a pre-test for math; have an on-line self-test or course for forestry (Selkirk). Actions: Explore ideas from other programs during articulation meeting; look at Strategic's introductory course; make sure math outcomes are in our learning objectives; look into the potential for tutoring of 1<sup>st</sup>-year by 2<sup>nd</sup>-year students; look into pre-testing.
- f. Forestry in other regions (across Canada, North America, International). How important is this? AC: We should continue to focus on the BC coast, but

students also need an awareness of forestry in other places. Our current focus is appropriate. No action items.

g. Footnote: The TLA is spending \$100k/yr on education over the next 5 years.

12. Summative Assessment. Doug described VIU's examination of current programs and the relevance for our department. We feel we are in a good position right now due to solid enrollment, good retention to 2<sup>nd</sup> year and positive initiatives with the IEL Centre. It also helps that the Woodlot is making some money now too! We will solicit support letters from AC members.

13. Internal VIU Program Review of Forestry Program. Brandon Nelson gave a report on the current internal review. Overall, our students have a very positive view of the program. There were also some constructive suggestions for improvement that we are already working on. Some AC members will be asked to take part in the review.

14. Meeting adjourned at 1 pm.

P.S.

After the meeting, a Focus Group discussed the program with Brandon. Topics included: the 5 most important skills (collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity/flexibility, writing), computer skills, technology, emerging trends (First Nations, women in forestry, mechanization, retirement of qualified workers). What would improve our graduates? Being more selective (more applicants), and having a better understanding of the business world.

/WJB