

ACTION PLAN CONTENT TEMPLATE

Procedure

Following completion of the review, the Dean of the program, in consultation with the Chair and department, will prepare an action plan identifying specific actions to be taken as a result of the review. The action plan, including timelines for completion, must be approved by the Provost and Vice-President Academic and will become part of the review documentation.¹

The Action Plan

The purpose of this template is to summarize all the actionable recommendations generated from the major deliverables of the program review to date (student survey results, self study report, and external review panel report). These action items should be considered "actionable" in terms of department's current ability to provide the leadership and resources to accomplish them. If resources are required that are beyond the means of the department, these should be formally procured or arranged prior to including related action items in this report.

If action plan items require the participation of outside personnel or departments, the program review steering committee retains all responsibility for the success of its initiatives. It is recommended that all necessary cross-departmental relationships or working groups be formalized prior to recording action items that depend on these relationships. For example, if an action plan item depends on working with the Registrar, then the Registrar should be aware of the department's intentions, and committed to participate, prior to the action item appearing on this list.

Action items listed in this report should be included if they will be undertaken (although not necessarily completed) in the academic year in which this report is prepared. A committee meeting will be scheduled one year after submission of this report to provide a departmental update on progress.

Sections

Due date: The department's commitment date for completing its action items.

Persons responsible: Faculty member(s) who will be responsible for the action item. Those faculty members will be invited to report on the department's progress at the one-year follow up meeting of the Program Review Oversight Committee.

Ref#: All of the recommendations in the self study report and external panel report should be numbered and listed at the end of this document. This column refers to those numbers as a cross-reference.

¹ Procedure 31.15.002.

PROGRAM REVIEW ACTION PLAN – UPDATE JUNE 2014

Program review details

Department: Forestry

Submitted by program review chair: Doug Corrin

Date: Today

This action plan addresses the recommendations arising from the department’s self study report and the report of the External Review Panel. Proposed actions are based on the suggestions of the Advisory Committee for the Forest Resources Technology Program and reflection of the Forestry Department.

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Maintain a good working relationship with our Advisory Committee and the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning (CIEL) with the aim of continuously improving the forest resources program.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Department will remain current with forest practices by meeting 1 to 2 times per year the Advisory Committee. In addition the Department will look to establish mechanisms, such as an online forum, to allow for communications on a continual basis (vs. restricted to periodic meetings). 2. The forestry department will continue to meet with the CIEL to review results of new initiatives, consider different methods to deliver education and evaluate and assess student work.
<i>Ref #:</i> 1	<i>Due date:</i> Ongoing	<i>Persons responsible:</i> All instructional members of the department; with the current chair responsible to schedule relevant feedback discussions at department meetings and explore possibilities for an online discussion forum.

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Adjust staffing levels to allow for the constant monitoring of woodlot and biosolids project throughout the summer holiday months. Pay attention to instructor workloads, with particular attention to work required outside of the academic terms		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Woodlot and biosolid staff will plan vacation schedules to allow for staffing in a significant portion of the summer months. 2. Project activities will be scheduled when there is staffing coverage.
<i>Ref #:</i> 2, 18	<i>Due date:</i> Done (ongoing)	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Jim Wilkinson and Marise Wickman
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Foster more critical thinking, develop improved writing skills and teamwork in assignments and discussions.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faculty already posts due dates for exams and major projects on a common calendar to allow assessment and adjustment of student workloads. 2. Through consultation with the CIEL, faculty has already begun (June 2012) to redesign course work to assign fewer but more substantive assignments and projects. Further, in some courses final exams have been replaced with substantive final projects. Continue working with CIEL in this regard.
<i>Ref #</i> 3, 12	<i>Due date:</i> Sept 1, 2012 and ongoing	<i>Persons responsible:</i> All instructional members of the department; with the current chair responsible to schedule relevant feedback discussions at department meetings

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
<p>Reduce transportation limitations to field lab sites. Identify potential drivers for trips to the VIU Woodlot at the beginning of each term. Consider providing some small compensation (gas money) to those drivers who carpool other classmates</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ideally, the purchase of a new bus suitable for logging roads would enhance the number of field labs and trips. 2. Transportation deficiencies have already been discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting in February 2013. Liaison with industry will continue to determine the cost and potential purchase of a used, off-road bus. 3. Discuss with the Dean the issue of compensating students for 'gas money'.
<i>Ref #:</i> 4, 16	<i>Due date:</i> Fall 2014 - ongoing	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
<p>Increase student awareness about the necessary costs associated with the program, assess the need for textbooks and explore ways to reduce costs. Explicitly mention the deposit required for borrowed equipment in the letter specifying costs that is sent to new students.</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student representatives now sit on the Advisory committee to provide a mechanism for official input and discussion regarding program costs. 2. In addition to website transparency of the program costs, the information is included in letters sent to admitted students; prior to the first fall semester. 3. Financial student costs will also be discussed at annual orientation meetings held in May. 4. The Finance page of the program website has been modified to clarify the equipment deposit expense. 5. Faculty is using Internet versions of required textbooks and manuals where available. All textbooks in FRST courses have been eliminated and replaced with "e-versions". 6. A number of classroom sets of manuals exist for several courses. Additional class sets are being added on an ongoing basis. 7. Individual faculty members evaluate textbooks and adjust requirements on an annual basis 8. Where feasible, there are class sets for textbooks and government manuals.
<i>Ref #:</i> 5, 10, 15	<i>Due date:</i> Done	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Address the low rating in writing clearly and concisely.		Forestry Faculty to meet with key individuals in the English Department to discuss this issue and find ways to incorporate meaningful writing assignments across the curriculum.
<i>Ref #:</i> 6	<i>Due date:</i> June 30, 2013 - done	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Enhance integration of first and second year cohorts within the Forestry program.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the Fall semester, initiate prompt student body selection of class representatives and facilitate social events throughout the school year. Now have a BBQ and host more 1st/2nd year events. 2. Explore the possibility of joint field trips and labs. In Jan 2013, the school jointly attended the Truck Loggers convention; look to continue this event in the future.
<i>Ref #:</i> 7	<i>Due date:</i> 1-Sept 2013; 2-Ongoing	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
To support field labs with a technical assistant.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In discussion with the Advisory Committee, industry professionals will volunteer in outdoor field labs to provide additional training. 2. Discuss with the Dean the possibility of increasing the technical position, presently at 0.5 FTE. Had chat ... not possible. ☹
<i>Ref #:</i> 13	<i>Due date:</i> Ongoing	<i>Persons responsible:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respective instructors. 2. Chair, Forestry Department

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
To evaluate the technical equipment/instruments used in the program and ensure that students are kept current with current industry standards.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This topic has received ongoing attention in advisory committee meetings. Cutting edge technology is not rated as high as critical thinking and communication skills. 2. Where needed, professionals knowledgeable in the state of the art technology will be brought in as guest speakers. 3. The department is currently pursuing has adopted the use of smart devices for field navigation (GPS and GIS) and data collection. The department has adopted the requirement for students to purchase an iPad, in lieu of any texts.
<i>Ref #:</i> 14	<i>Due date:</i> 1,2- ongoing 3-Fall 2014	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Entire Department
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
To ensure students are working in a safe work environment and understand the contingencies in the event of an accident during field trips and labs.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety orientation, organization and procedures are incorporated into all courses that involve field work. 2. Enhance the awareness of field safety , a field sheet is under development developed that identifies location, hazards, weather , emergency numbers, safety gear requirements, etc.
<i>Ref #:</i> 17	<i>Due date:</i> June 30 2013 - done	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Marise Wickman, Jim Wilkinson and Pat Hayes

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
To seek more active participation by representatives of the major coastal licensees on the Advisory Committee and ensure student representation at meetings of the committee.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student representatives now attend the Advisory Committee meetings (effective Feb 2013). 2. The committee will be expanded to include two more coastal licensees.
<i>Ref #:</i> 19	<i>Due date:</i> September 2013 - done	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Maintain or enhance student recruitment efforts.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to develop the department web site as a marketing tool. 2. Target high schools with forestry classes (Port Alberni and Campbell River) for recruitment.
<i>Ref #:</i> 20	<i>Due date:</i> On going	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Aim for class sizes of 24, but allow up to 28 students per year in the FRTD program.		Discuss with the Dean of Science and Technology the possibility of reducing the official class size to 24 to be in line with the other technology programs. ... it was a short discussion 😊
<i>Ref #:</i> 21	<i>Due date:</i> September 2013 - done	<i>Persons responsible:</i> Chair

Recommendations listed below have no proposed action plan.

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Consider broadening the FRTD program content.		This issue arose based on student interviews during the external review in the fall of 2012. This issue was discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting and it was felt that the “missing topics” were in fact covered in our second year capstone course, FRST 242 Integrated Resource Management, in the spring. No action required.
<i>Ref #:</i> 8	<i>Due date:</i>	<i>Persons responsible:</i>
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Consider removing the requirement for one of the two English courses and strengthening the communication requirements offered within the FRTD program.		This issue was discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting and it was determined that, as writing clearly and concisely was the lowest rated skill, it would be best to maintain both English courses. In addition, the two English courses are recognized at other institutions and count as credits when graduates continue their education at other institutions (i.e. UBC, UNBC and U of A). No action required.
<i>Ref #:</i> 9	<i>Due date:</i>	<i>Persons responsible:</i>
<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Consider offering an option that allows the FRTD program to be spread over a longer period of time than two years.		It is already made known to the students that the program can be completed in 3 years and that students should consult with the Chair to determine the appropriate course schedule. If the 3 year option was promoted and exercised by incoming students it would increase the cost per FTE for delivery. No action required.
<i>Ref #:</i> 11	<i>Due date:</i>	<i>Persons responsible:</i>

<i>Goal</i>		<i>Proposed actions</i>
Review the credits assigned to existing forestry courses relative to the contact time associated with those courses		A review of credits assigned top courses has already been conducted. The reason why some courses are “under credited”, in relation to course hours, is because tuition is tied to credits. The program is already at 72 credits. Increasing credits, and therefore tuition, would likely make the program less attractive. No action required.
<i>Ref #:</i> 22	<i>Due date:</i>	<i>Persons responsible:</i>

REFERENCE NUMBERS FOR ACTION PLAN
<i>Recommendations from Self Study report</i>
1. To maintain a good working relationship with our Advisory Committee and the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning with the goal of continued improvement.
2. Staffing changes/additions to allow for the constant monitoring of woodlot and biosolids project throughout the summer holiday months.
3. Faculty to continue to assess and adjust the volume of assignments to allow students “quality” time to work on projects that foster more critical thinking, develop improved writing skills and teamwork.
4. Transportation limitations have been significantly reduced due to the purchase of 2 additional buses to the VIU vehicle fleet. However, the one bus that is allowed to travel “off-road” is periodically removed from service due to its age. Ideally, the purchase of a new bus suitable for logging roads would further reduce concerns over lack of transportation to field lab sites.
5. With regards to additional costs of the program, Faculty will seek input from the current student body regarding ways to reduce unnecessary costs. Further, the Forestry website will be updated so that the costs associated with the Forest Technology program are transparent; and to increase the awareness that requirements such as first aid are “employable” skills.
6. Forestry Faculty to meet with the English Department to discuss the one critical outcome that was rated lower than the VIU average.

Recommendations from External Review Panel Report

7. Look for opportunities to integrate the first and second year cohorts within the FRTD program.
8. Consider broadening the FRTD program content.
9. Consider removing the requirement for one of the two English courses and strengthening the communication requirements offered within the FRTD program.
10. Periodically assess the textbook requirements in each Forestry course.
11. Consider offering an option that allows the FRTD program to be spread over a longer period of time than two years.
12. To the extent possible, coordinate the scheduling of assignments and midterms among courses to better harmonize student workload throughout an academic term.
13. Endeavor to support field labs with a technical assistant.
14. Evaluate the technical equipment/instruments used in the program and ensure that students are kept current with current industry standards.
15. Explicitly mention the deposit required for borrowed equipment in the letter specifying costs that is sent to new students.
16. Identify potential drivers for trips to the VIU Woodlot at the beginning of each term. Consider providing some small compensation (gas money) to those drivers who carpool other classmates.
17. Provide a structured safety orientation at the beginning of each field exercise that is targeted to the specifics of the location, weather, and the field exercise itself. Provisions for what to do in the event that the instructor is injured should also be included in the orientation.

18. Pay attention to instructor workloads, with particular attention to work required outside of the academic terms.

19. Seek more active participation by representatives of the major coastal licensees on the Forest Department Advisory Committee and ensure student representation at meetings of the committee.

20. Maintain or enhance student recruitment efforts

21. Aim for class sizes of 24, but allow up to 28 students per year in the FRTD program.

22. Review the credits assigned to existing forestry courses relative to the contact time associated with those courses.