

Forestry Department/ Programs

1. **Department/program(s) mission/vision/philosophy (if you've ever identified this; don't worry if you haven't done anything official before; try to articulate what you think your programs are about, if possible)**

The mission of the VIU Faculty of Science and Technology is “to stimulate scholarship in sciences and to encourage scientific literacy in the wider population. We achieve these goals through teaching and learning, facilitated by close student-faculty interactions, through research and through a strong connection to our community.” The mission of the Forestry Department is to develop foundational concepts, practical skills and critical thinking in order to promote success in a forestry-related career or post-graduate educational pursuit. We achieve these goals through a wide variety of learning experiences within the classroom and in the field, including practical, conceptual and experiential approaches. Our educational philosophy: The foundation of effective teaching is a passion for the subject matter, and a genuine interest in supporting students in their pursuit of a rewarding career. Education should foster critical thinking and problem solving, and instil a desire for continual learning. Teaching practical skills and information must be accompanied by understanding. Both a sense of humour and a sense of wonder help facilitate learning.

2. **Function/purposes/objectives of the program**

The objective of the program is to produce graduates that are well-placed to succeed in either the forestry sector or undergraduate forestry programs at UBC, UNBC, U. Alberta or other institutions. In addition, students can readily transfer to the B.A. Geography - Resource Management or the Natural Resource Protection degrees at VIU. While the program provides students with skill sets valued by the forest industry, they are also prepared to enter other career streams in natural resources management.

3. **Brief description of the value of the programs(s) to the community, region, and/or university as a whole.**

Forestry is a major employer for Vancouver Island and throughout BC. Forecasts indicate that forestry employment will grow slightly faster than the average for all industries in BC, and there is an expected medium- and long-term shortage of forestry technicians and professionals throughout North America. The VIU Forestry Program is one of only two forest technology programs offered on the BC coast and one of the four remaining programs in the province, so it is well-positioned to fill the future demand for forest technologists.

If Vancouver Island University and the Faculty Science and Technology is to focus its efforts on natural sciences of regional and local importance, then forestry is a natural fit as a terrestrial applied science. Furthermore, forestry is well-positioned to fill the demand for capacity building for First Nations to practice forestry on their traditional territories.

4. If program is not adequately resourced, why not (and what would be required to address it)?

The forestry program is adequately resourced for the most part. However, there is continued financial pressure on BC's universities as the government reduces its contribution to operating budgets. The forestry program is in need of updated classroom computer stations, ergonomic classroom seating and storage space. Operating funds are tight by year-end, making it challenging to address photocopying, supplies and equipment needs. We also rely on an aging VIU bus that is the only vehicle capable of off-road transport of students to field labs. Options to address these resource issues outside of university budget allocations include fund-raising activities, or contributions / sponsorship by the forest industry.