



SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation

Report to Council

Task Force Members

Chair:

James H. Culbert

USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC

Members:

Lori J. Schmidt CF

Vermilion Community College, Ely, MN

Monica I. Spicker

Spokane Community College, Spokane, WA

Elizabeth A. Brantley CF

Penn State-Mt. Alto, Mt. Alto, PA

Joan M. DeYoung CF

Mt. Hood Community College, Gresham, OR

John C. Welker

American Forest Management Inc., Charlotte, NC

Kenneth M. Laustsen CF

Maine Forest Service, Waterville, ME

Nancy Livingston

Tree Farmer, Hancock, WI

Staff Liaison:

Terrance W. Clark CF

April 22, 2008

Acknowledgements

Many people contributed to this report. The SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation would like to thank the colleges and universities with educational programs in forest technology that responded to the Task Force's requests for information. The input was critical to developing the recommendations contained in this report. Those who submitted written comments were: Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College; Allegany College of Maryland; Dabney S. Lancaster Community College; Glenville State College; Green River Community College; Haywood Community College; Horry-Georgetown Technical College; Lurleen B. Wallace Community College; Pennsylvania College of Technology; Reedley College; Spokane Community College; Thompson School of Applied Science, University of New Hampshire; Vermilion Community College; Wayne Community College.

The Task Force also benefited from the work of many other people and organizations that have long grappled with forestry technology accreditation and education issues including the Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools (CEFTS), the SAF Committees on Forest Technology School Recognition and Accreditation and the SAF Educational Policy Review Committee. The starting point for the deliberations was the proposed document, *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*, submitted by the Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools. CEFTS developed the proposed document using the existing *SAF STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNIZING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN FOREST TECHNOLOGY* and the 2004 edition of the *ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK: Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Professional Forestry*. These documents contains the standards, procedures, and guidelines for accrediting educational programs in professional forestry, and it has served as the primary reference for those programs preparing for an accreditation review and evaluation.

The Task Force particularly acknowledges the support, wisdom, patience, and guidance provided by Mr. Terrance W. Clark, CF throughout the Task Force's deliberations. As a skilled and experienced professional, he was immensely helpful in providing a historical perspective to many of the issues the Task Force debated.

Executive Summary

The background information and deliberations that lead the Task Force to the development of the following recommendations are contained in the body to this report. A detailed explanation of the recommendations is contained in Section V.

Recommendations

Accreditation – Establishment of a program of accreditation for educational curriculum in forest technology by SAF is warranted.

Transition Period - SAF should give all schools with forest technology programs the opportunity to apply for SAF accreditation. During the transition period, currently recognized programs would retain SAF recognition until they receive or fail to receive accreditation or candidate status, or the application period expires.

Visiting Team Size and Composition – SAF visiting teams should be a minimum of three and maximum of five members, and only one SAF staff would accompany the team when the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation deems this presence useful.

Fee Structure – A fee structure is recommended that combines all reasonable accreditation program costs on an annualized basis. New accreditation fees would be effective in the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, following SAF approval of the fee structure.

Administration – A Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation needs to be established to administer the program of accreditation. The current Committee on Forest Technology School Recognition can serve in this capacity.

Handbook Revisions – The Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology should be revised based on recommendations received during the fact finding process.

Table of Contents

Section I – Introduction	1
Section II – Background	1
Section III – Assessment.....	4
Questionnaire Responses	4
Part I.....	5
Part II	5
Part III.....	6
General Comments and Questions.....	6
Section IV – Budget and Staffing Implications	6
Site Visit Costs.....	6
SAF Staff Support.....	8
Section V – Recommendations.....	8
Accreditation.....	9
Visiting Team Size and Composition	10
Onsite Visit	11
Fee Structure	11
Administration	12
Handbook Revisions	12
Section VI – Accreditation Handbook Revisions	12
APPENDIX A.....	15
Letter from Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools.....	15
APPENDIX B	17
A Discussion of the Terms Accreditation and Recognition.....	17
APPENDIX C	20
SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questionnaire.....	20
APPENDIX D.....	24
SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questionnaire – Summary of Responses.....	24
APPENDIX E	29
SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questions on Accreditation Fees – Summary of Responses.....	29
APPENDIX F.....	31
Revised Draft Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology	31
PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	36
Standard I: Program Objectives	36
Standard II: Curriculum	37
Standard III: Faculty	39
Standard IV: Students	39
Standard V: Program.....	39

Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas	40
Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities	40
PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES	41
Accreditation Status	41
Application Process and Eligibility	41
Accreditation Period	42
When and How to Apply	42
Step 1: Self-Evaluation Review	42
Step 2: On-Site Visit	43
Responsibilities of the Program Head – On- Site Visit for Accreditation Review.....	43
Selection of the Visiting Team	44
Responsibilities of the Visiting Team Chair	44
Visiting Team Consultation	45
Accreditation Status Time Line	46
Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation Action	46
Reference to Accreditation Status in Institutional Publications	47
Progress Review Reports	47
Substantive Change Reports	47
Fees and Charges	48
Explanation of Fees and Charges.....	48
Receipt of Fees and Charges.....	48
Appeal of SAF Accreditation Status Decisions	49
Procedures for Responding to Complaints Against Accredited Programs	50
PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORTS	51
Assembly.....	51
Narrative	51
Documentation.....	52
Suggested Narrative Content and Documentation.....	52
for.....	52
Each Accreditation Standard.....	52
Standard I: Program Objectives	52
Standard II: Curriculum	53
Standard III: Faculty	54
Standard IV: Students	54
Standard V: Program.....	55
Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas	56
Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities	56

Section I – Introduction

The SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation was established by the SAF Council on December 3, 2006, to evaluate the merits of SAF accreditation of forest technology education programs. The original Charter was amended by Council June 10, 2007, to allow the Task Force more time for its work and to report to Council no later than March 2008.

The specific charges to the Task Force were to concern itself with:

- the merits of SAF accreditation of forest technology education programs,
- budgetary implications for schools and SAF,
- staffing implications for schools and SAF,
- the review and revision, of the proposed document, *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology**,
- the structure and function of the existing SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Recognition in relation to a program of accreditation.

*Posted on the SAF website at http://www.safnet.org/education/tech_acc_std061407.pdf.

The Task Force members were appointed on May 23, 2007. The Task Force held its first meeting by conference call on June 5, 2007. The Task Force reviewed prior discussions and supporting documentation regarding the accreditation of forest technology educational programs as the first step in its deliberations. Subsequent conference calls were held to review and discuss all of the specific charges to the Task Force and to develop the following recommendations.

A survey questionnaire was developed by the Task Force and sent to forest technology educational program heads (Sec. III). The responses received formed the basis for much of the Task Force's discussions and recommendations.

The report was submitted to Council on March 9, 2008, at which time, Council asked the Task Force to consider the comments provided by the SAF Educational Policy Review Committee, to circulate the draft report to the members of the National Association of University Forest Resource Programs, and to resubmit the report with any revisions for Council consideration.

Section II – Background

Consideration of the merits of SAF accreditation of forest technology education programs was initiated in September 2005 with the receipt of a letter to SAF from Mr. Christopher Westbrook, Chair, Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools (CEFTS) requesting SAF to consider accrediting forest technology school programs (Appendix A).

The letter was referred to the Committee on Forest Technology School Recognition (CFTSR) for consideration and recommendations to Council. At its October 2005 meeting, the CFTSR unanimously passed the following motion:

The Committee on Forest Technology School Recognition requests Council's consideration of accreditation of forest technology programs in lieu of the current recognition process.

The CFTSR maintained that the evolution of forestry education has been such that the term “recognition” is no longer appropriate (see Appendix B) and that a timely shift to an accreditation program for forest technology programs would benefit forestry education and SAF. Furthermore, the CFTSR proposed that accreditation of forest technology programs is warranted based on:

- SAF's mission to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry;
- The evolution of the forest technology school recognition program;
- The development of articulation agreements;
- The increased role played by trained technicians in forest management;
- Forester licensing and registration requirements;
- An increase in SAF membership and participation; and
- The precedent for accreditation of associate degree programs by other accreditors.

Mission

Accreditation is a collegial, flexible, and adaptive process based on self and peer assessment for public accountability and improvement of academic quality. SAF established a program to accredit professional forestry programs in 1935. The SAF standards require an educational program to demonstrate clarity and purpose; and show that it has a professional curriculum, a functioning organization and administrative structure, procedures to maintain faculty and students, and the physical resources and facilities to carry out the educational objectives. Over the years, accreditation processes and standards have been reviewed and revised periodically to assure that professional foresters continue to meet contemporary needs.

Evolution of Educational Programs

Responding to the growing need for trained forestry technicians, SAF first established guidelines for recognizing educational programs in forest technology in 1971. In 1982, Council adopted the ***Standards and Procedures for Recognizing Educational Programs in Forest Technology*** and established the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Recognition to evaluate and periodically review programs for the teaching of forest technology and to make decisions concerning SAF's recognition of such programs. The standards and procedures for forest technology school recognition have been continually reviewed and revised to keep pace with the evolving profession.

Articulation Agreements

Forest technology programs not only provide trained technicians but also play an ever increasing role in providing an economical, hands-on foundation for acquiring a professional forestry degree from an SAF accredited program. With more stringent entrance requirements for incoming freshmen, the community college system is being viewed as a potential source of transfer students for many accredited forestry programs. The establishment of a program of accreditation for forest technology programs will help insure consistent quality of education.

Increased Role in Forest Management

Trained forest technicians play an increasingly important role in the preparation and implementation of forest management activities. As practicing foresters find more of their time pulled toward the planning, policy, and administrative aspects of forest management and as many accredited forestry programs focus in this direction, forest technicians are becoming responsible for the on the ground implementation of forest management prescriptions. Employers are finding that well educated technicians are able to step into this role with a minimum of orientation and on the job training.

Licensing and Registration

Seven states allow technicians to become licensed or registered foresters. (For detailed requirements see the SAF Task Force Report on Forester Registration and Licensing 2001, <http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/LRCinfo.cfm>). The educational foundation and competence of foresters who provide services to the public is a primary concern of SAF as reflected in the position statements, State Programs to Credential Foresters and Professionalism in Natural Resource Management Agencies.

Membership

In this era of declining membership and participation, SAF has a significant opportunity to attract technician members. However, out of a potential pool of nearly 18,000 forest and conservation technicians, the Society has less than 500 Technician Members who may hold office and vote at the Chapter, Division, and State Society levels, and may serve, with voting and office-holding privileges, on working groups and the House of Society Delegates (Constitution of the Society of American Foresters, Membership, Article III, Section 8). Accreditation of forest technology programs would provide a tangible indication of SAF's support of the forest technician as a full partner on the forest management team.

Precedent for Accreditation of Associate Degree Programs

There is a precedent for the accreditation of associate degree programs by other specialized accrediting organizations. A review of specialized accreditors recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) reveals several that accredit programs at the associate, baccalaureate and masters levels. Here are three examples:

- Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) currently accredits some 2,700 programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology, including forest engineering, at over 550 colleges and universities.
- American Council for Construction Education (ACCE) accredits four-year baccalaureate degree programs in construction, construction science, construction management, and construction technology, and two-year associate degree programs “of a like nature.”
- Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) accredits eighteen institutions with both associate and baccalaureate level business programs, 136 two-year institutions and 140 four-year institutions.

However, the CFTSR acknowledged that evaluating its recommendation is a major undertaking and, rather than requesting a Council action at that time, the CFTSR provided background information to initiate Council's full discussion of forest technology educational program accreditation and its implications. The CFTSR was granted approval to continue to explore the

feasibility of accrediting forest technology school programs and provide additional information to Council. The CFTSR worked with CEFTS on the proposed accreditation process and recommended that Council appoint a Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation to evaluate the merits of SAF accreditation of forest technology education programs, and to review and revise the proposed Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology, if needed.

Section III – Assessment

After discussing the background information, the Task Force determined that it would be necessary to contact the heads of forest technology educational programs to determine their perspectives on the proposal developed by CEFTS and the CFTSR. To facilitate their responses, the Task Force developed a questionnaire that was organized in the same fashion as the proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*.

Part I of the questionnaire addressed the adequacy of the educational standards in relation to the objectives of accreditation of advancing the quality of technical forestry education; establishing, maintaining and improving standards to guide and measure achievement; and providing assurance that graduates of SAF-accredited programs have been instructed in the basic knowledge and skills, as well as environmental ethics and values and that a quality educational environment is available at SAF-accredited programs.

Part II addressed the proposed accreditation procedures including application process, the self evaluation report, onsite review, accreditation period, complaints and appeals and fees. Alternatives to the proposed procedure were requested.

Part III addressed the proposed guidelines for the development of the self-evaluation report.

A fourth section was included for general comments and questions on effect of accreditation on their program's continued interaction with SAF as well as the effect on hiring graduate of their program. There was also a question on the need for a SAF Certified Forest Technician credential.

The full questionnaire is included in Appendix C.

Questionnaire Responses

The questionnaire was sent to 24 forest technology programs in the United States and Canada that are currently SAF recognized and to 17 that are not currently SAF recognized. Six recognized programs returned questionnaires although some did not answer all questions, and two provided comments by email. A table containing the responses is included in Appendix D. The results are summarized below.

Part I

The response to PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS were favorable. One respondent requested clarification on some of the curriculum descriptions.

Part II

In PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES, there were a variety of responses to the questions relating to the onsite visit because it represents a new cost that would be borne by the accredited program. One respondent summed up several comments with the statement, “The word accreditation itself means more to students, educational institutions and employers than recognition, it does not necessarily translate into higher wages and other benefits that might be expected from an accredited four year institution. Community colleges also do not enjoy the same level of funding as do four year institutions and as such, visitation costs need to be as low as possible without compromising the intent of the visit.”

The proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* called for a three person visit team with a technician program administrator as chair, a practitioner member, and a member from the CFTSR. The minimum of three team members seemed to be acceptable with an upper limit of five. One respondent replied, “We agree with the lead team member for the visiting team having direct responsibility or experience in academics and administration. We also want to stress the importance of visitation team members from academia who are representative of another 2-year Forest Technology program rather than a 4-year program.” Furthermore, it was recommended that the team be drawn from as near to the program under review as possible to minimize travel costs. A staff member would accompany the team as necessary, which was questioned in one response. It was also recommended that the reimbursement rate for the team be no higher than the school allows for per diem.

The length of the site visit itself was an issue related to the cost and logistics of the visit. The proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* called for a one-day onsite visit with a dinner meeting with the program head the evening before the visit. A one-day site visit was deemed reasonable as long as the schedule was worked out in advance and that it include not more than two nights lodging. However, one respondent recommended a one and one-half day visit to allow for a more complete team report to the school and to take advantage of other opportunities. Recommendations were made to reduce lodging costs such as utilizing alumni housing.

The respondents considered the fees recommended in the proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* to be reasonable but differed on the best way to assess the fees. A follow-up email regarding the fee structure was sent out and is discussed in the section below titled Site Visit Costs (Sect. IV).

The response to the other questions in Part II were favorable, including the role of the CFTSR in the administration of the accreditation program. One respondent emphasized the importance of confidentiality in the accreditation process.

Part III

The responses to PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORT were favorable.

General Comments and Questions

A variety of comments were provided in response to the questions in the GENERAL COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS section of the questionnaire. The respondents generally agreed that an SAF program of accreditation for forest technology would be a positive step that would be supported by their institutions and that hiring agencies would look more favorably on an SAF accredited program than an SAF recognized program, at least in initial hiring, and that it would be important for SAF to publicize the new accreditation process. With one exception, the respondents supported the development of an SAF Certified Forest Technician credential.

Section IV – Budget and Staffing Implications

The Task Force requested the SAF National Office staff to provide information on the cost of accreditation site visits and the cost of administering the SAF accreditation and recognition programs.

Site Visit Costs

The SAF National Office accreditation program files contained invoicing records for twenty-six accreditation site visits throughout the United States conducted between 2004 and 2007. All but one of the site visits were of the standard two and one-half day duration with from three to four team members. The other was a one-day limited site visit made by two people. The invoicing records represent only those expenses that were not direct billed to the institution under review. It is standard practice for visiting team meals and lodging during the visit to be billed directly to the institution. Therefore, over ninety percent of the costs were for transportation. The remaining costs were for airport parking, meals and lodging in transit and other incidental expenses. The average cost per person for all twenty-six site visits was \$658. The maximum cost per person to a remote campus was \$1,372.

The institution under review would have the same cost in preparation of the self-evaluation report as under the current recognition program; however, it would incur additional personnel expenses to arrange and coordinate the site visit as well as the time for the administration and staff to participate in the interview process. These costs would fall into two categories: 1) personnel time of administrative assistants, faculty and administration, and 2) miscellaneous costs such as photocopying, travel to field sites if warranted, and meals for college employees. The estimated additional costs would range from \$700 to \$1000 for personnel costs and \$50 to \$150 of miscellaneous costs.

SAF invoicing does not include the cost of team member time. The team is composed of SAF members who volunteer their time to prepare for and conduct the onsite review and to develop the team report that is submitted to the institution and the CFTSR.

SAF staff time is included in the accreditation review fee. The SAF National Office staff reviewed the cost of the current SAF accreditation and recognition programs from 2003 through 2007.

Table 1 shows the representative costs along with the estimated institution expenses for the accreditation site visit and the necessary preparation for the visit.

Table 1. SAF revenues and expenses (2003-2007) and institution expenses based on proposed accreditation process and fees.

	Existing Recognition Program	Task Force Recommendation
Number of Institutions	24	24
SAF Revenue		
School Accreditation Service		\$9,000 ¹
Accreditation Visit		
Technical School Recognition	\$2,233	
Total	\$2,233	\$9,000
SAF Expenses		
Personnel Expenses	\$9,499	\$11,692 ²
Office Expenses	289	289
Program Expenses	1,403	1,403
Indirect Expenses	6,460	7,950 ³
Total	\$17,651	\$21,334
SAF Net Revenue	(\$15,418)	(\$12,334)
Institution Re-accreditation Expenses		
Self Evaluation Report	\$4,386	\$4,386
Personnel Expenses ⁴		950
Visiting Team Transportation ⁵		2,364
Visiting Team Lodging ⁶		600
Visiting Team Meals ⁷		720
Institution Expenses	\$4,386	\$9,020

¹ Task Force recommended annual fee of \$375 times 24 institutions.

² Average annual increased staff costs due to time required for site visits. Three days per site visit, including travel time, times 2.4 visits per year.

³ Indirect costs are distributed among programs based on personnel costs and, therefore, are proportional to the personnel cost increase.

⁴ Estimated average cost of \$950 per site visit for administration, faculty and staff coordination and participation in the site review.

⁵ A 4-person visiting team at an average cost of \$591 per person based on actual cost for accreditation site visits from 2004-2007.

⁶ A 4-person visiting team at an estimated average cost of \$75 daily cost per person for two night's stay.

⁷ A 4-person visiting team at an estimated average cost of \$60 daily cost per person for three days including travel.

The responses to the Task Force questionnaire were based on the fee schedule contained in the proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*. The SAF National Office staff recommended that the institutions be assessed fees that would make the proposed accreditation program self-supporting, or nearly so. Based on the information in Table 1, the National Office proposal was for a \$500 annual fee and a \$2,500 continued accreditation fee once every 10 years. These fees are the same as those currently assessed for the accreditation of professional forestry programs. Because this recommendation represented a significant difference from those in the questionnaire, the Task Force asked all 41 schools as the following questions in a separate email request:

- Would your institution support accreditation of your forest technology program if the annual fee is \$500 and the continued accreditation review fee is \$2,500?
- Would your institution find it easier to support one annual fee of \$750 that combines the two fees above?

Fourteen responses were received, one of which did not address the questions (See Appendix E). Of the thirteen that did address the questions, only two addressed the first question directly. Both thought that an annual fee of \$500 and a continued accreditation review fee of \$2,500 was not appropriate for community colleges that have much less funding than universities. The higher fee would have roughly “10 to 30 times” the impact on a community college budget. Both recommended a lower fee schedule. One suggested that an annual fee of \$200 with a continued accreditation review fee is \$1,500 may be acceptable. A third respondent remarked that the increase was considerable but did not respond further.

Of thirteen respondents, eleven answered the second question regarding the assessment of one annual fee and two expressed no preference. Eight preferred the assessment of an annual fee only and three preferred a lower annual fee with a continued accreditation fee.

SAF Staff Support

The Task Force recognizes that National Office support is critical to the proper function of an accreditation program. The staff not only provides a record keeping and historical function but also provides overall coordination and serves in an advisory capacity with regard to the institutional and legal requirements of accreditation. The Task Force offers the observation for further consideration that transition to a program of accreditation will place an additional workload on the staff liaison, who is already fully engaged. SAF Officers and Council will need to consider how to handle this growing workload.

Section V – Recommendations

The Task Force considered the background information provided since its inception, additional information gathered through the survey questionnaire and follow-up survey, and through discussions with the SAF educational committees to arrive at the recommendations contained within this report. Of primary importance was determining whether or not

accreditation of educational programs in forest technology by SAF is warranted. All other consideration hinged on this decision.

Accreditation

The educational foundation and competence of foresters who provide services to the public is a primary concern of SAF. Graduates of forest technician programs play an increasingly important role in the preparation and implementation of forest management activities. As practicing foresters find more of their time pulled toward the planning, policy, and administrative aspects of forest management and as many accredited forestry programs focus in this direction, forest technicians are becoming responsible for implementation of forest management prescriptions. Employers are finding that well educated technicians are able to step into this role with a minimum of orientation and on the job training.

When SAF first established its standards, procedures and guidelines for the recognition for educational programs in forest technology in 1971, the objectives were to:

1. Seek continued advancement in the quality of technical forestry education.
2. Give students, employers, SAF members, and the general public assurance that graduates of SAF-recognized programs have been instructed in the basic knowledge and skills, as well as environmental ethics and values.
3. Provide prospective students, employers, SAF members, and the general public assurance that a quality educational environment is available at SAF-recognized programs.
4. Establish, maintain and improve standards to guide and measure achievement for programs.

These objectives are consistent with the purposes of accreditation as stated by the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation, which are:

- Verifying that an institution or program meets established standards;
- Assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions;
- Assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credits;
- Helping to identify institutions and programs for the investment of public and private funds;
- Protecting an institution against harmful internal and external pressure;
- Creating goals for self-improvement of weaker programs and stimulating a general raising of standards among educational institutions;
- Involving the faculty and staff comprehensively in institutional evaluation and planning;
- Establishing criteria for professional certification and licensure and for upgrading courses offering such preparation; and
- Providing one of several considerations used as a basis for determining eligibility for Federal assistance.

Forest technology programs not only provide trained technicians but also play an ever increasing role in providing an economical, hands-on foundation for acquiring a professional forestry degree from an SAF accredited program. With more stringent entrance requirements for incoming freshmen, the community college system is being viewed as a potential source of transfer students for many accredited forestry programs. Determining the educational quality of course offerings among the programs can be a challenge. The establishment of a program of accreditation for forest technology programs will help insure consistent quality of education and facilitate the development of articulation agreements.

The respondents to the Task Force survey generally agreed that an SAF program of accreditation for forest technology would be a positive step that would be supported by their institutions and that hiring agencies would look more favorably on an SAF accredited program than an SAF recognized program.

The Task Force finds that the establishment of a program of accreditation for educational curriculum in forest technology by SAF is warranted as a logical step in the continual improvement for forestry educational programs. The Task Force recommends a transition period that would give all schools with forest technology programs an opportunity to apply for SAF accreditation. During this transition period, currently recognized programs would retain SAF recognition until they receive accreditation or candidate status, fail to receive accreditation or candidate status, or the application period expires. Furthermore, the Task Force recommends that SAF use the transition period to modify the current recognition review schedule to even out the workload on an annual basis.

Visiting Team Size and Composition

There was a consistent recommendation among respondents to the Task Force survey questionnaire to minimize the expense associated with the addition of an on-site visit. Consequently, the Task Force is recommending that SAF visiting teams should be a minimum of three and maximum of five members, including one SAF staff member when required. The SAF staff member would accompany the team only when the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation deems this presence useful. A visiting team of this size is consistent with the existing program of accreditation for professional forestry programs and is quite adequate to fulfill its mission.

Consistent with the above recommendations, the proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* calls for a three person visit team with a technician program administrator as chair, a practitioner member, and a member from the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. The team chair should have direct responsibility or experience in academics and administration and the team members from academia should be representative of another 2-year forest technology program. Furthermore, it is recommended that the team be drawn from as near to the program under review as possible to minimize travel costs. A staff member would accompany the team as necessary.

Onsite Visit

The length of the site visit itself was an issue related to the cost and logistics of the visit. The proposed *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* calls for a one-day onsite visit with a dinner meeting with the program head the evening before the visit. A one-day site visit was deemed reasonable as long as the schedule was worked out in advance and that it include not more than two nights lodging. However, the institution under review should have the flexibility to arrange a one and one-half day visit to allow for a more complete team report to the school and to take advantage of other opportunities.

The Task Force supports recommendations made by survey respondents to minimize lodging costs when possible by utilizing acceptable alternatives to commercial facilities. The Task Force also supports the survey recommendation that the reimbursement rate for the team be no higher than the per diem of the institution.

Fee Structure

The establishment of a fair and equitable fee structure is another item that required careful deliberation by the Task Force. Since a majority of respondents to the survey follow-up questions preferred a higher annual fee than a lower annual fee combined with a continued accreditation fee assessed every ten years, and that an annual fee would provide a more consistent source of revenue for SAF, the Task Force recommends that an annual fee be assessed.

In determining the amount of the fee to recommend, the Task Force considered the need for SAF to be fiscally responsible in relation to the importance of a reasonable transition to a program of accreditation of educational programs in forest technology and the level of service required. The current cost of recognition includes a one-time non-refundable initial application fee of \$500 to be submitted with the application, a \$300 interim review fee five years after initial or continued recognition, and a continued recognition fee of \$500 every ten years. This fee schedule would equate to an annual fee of \$80. The National Office recommendation of an annual fee of \$500 and a continued accreditation fee of \$2,500, or the equivalent of \$750 taken on an annual basis, is more than nine times the current fee structure. While all respondents agreed that it is reasonable to expect a significant increase in cost, the National Office increase would be a burden for several programs. One respondent summed up several comments with the statement, “The word accreditation itself means more to students, educational institutions and employers than recognition, it does not necessarily translate into higher wages and other benefits that might be expected from an accredited four year institution. Community colleges also do not enjoy the same level of funding as do four year institutions and as such, visitation costs need to be as low as possible without compromising the intent of the visit.” Therefore, the Task Force recommends an annual fee of half the National Office proposal or \$375 per year as a reasonable increase and one that is consistent with the level of service required to administer a program of accreditation for educational programs in forest technology. In addition, this recommended annual fee is about half the combined fees charged to four-year institutions for accreditation were it charged on an annualized basis. New accreditation fees would be effective in the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, following SAF approval of the fee structure.

Administration

The SAF Committee on Accreditation is fully occupied with the existing workload generated by the 48 accredited and 2 candidate programs and may be faced with an increasing workload as institutions begin to request specialized accreditation in urban forestry. Consequently, the Task Force recommends that Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation be established to administer the program of accreditation and that the current Committee on Forest Technology School Recognition can serve in this capacity.

Handbook Revisions

The *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* should be revised based on Task Force recommendations and those recommendations and comments received during the fact finding process. The details of the Task Force recommended revisions are contained in Section VI of this report.

Section VI – Accreditation Handbook Revisions

Once the Task Force arrived at its recommendations, the appropriate changes were made to the draft *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* to reflect the recommendations. Additional revisions were made in response to comments received the survey questionnaire. The revisions are summarized in this section and contained in the full *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*, which is contained in Appendix F. New wording is shown as underlined text.

The first revision is to update the introductory information with the statement:

The Recognition Standards were revised in 1997 and the Recognition Procedures and Guidelines were revised in 1999, 2000, 2004 and 2008. The SAF Council approved the current revisions to the *Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology* in June 2008 for implementation beginning August 1, 2009.

In **PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS** a descriptive statement was added to the third paragraph to explain the organization of the standards. It reads, “The seven Standards describe the essential elements of a forestry technology education program: program mission, goals, and objectives; curriculum; forestry program organization and administration; faculty; students; parent institution support facilities; and physical resources and facilities. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs, when identified and documented, will be evaluated against the intent of the minimums established.”

A general statement of purpose was also added to **Standard II: Curriculum** to clarify the intent to provide flexibility to different institutions while providing overall consistency in a forest technology education. The standard states that:

The forest technology curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences. Subject matter described below may be incorporated differently by different programs. What may be a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs, when identified and documented, will be evaluated against the intent of the minimums established.

In addition, a specific explanation was added to the description of the **Remote Sensing** technical subject area in response to a specific item in the questionnaire. The revision states that remote sensing involves the “Acquisition and processing of the primary data derived from various sensors– identification and interpretation; area determination; scale; height measurement; type mapping; road location; bearings and distances.”

Several revisions were made to **PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES** to address the issues associated with the onsite visit and fees and to address the need for substantive change reports between on-site visits. Under Accreditation Period text was added to the second paragraph to explain the substantive change process. This section now contains the statement, “Between comprehensive self-evaluations and on-site reviews, continued accreditation is contingent upon on-going compliance with the SAF Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology. Notification of substantive program changes occurring between reporting periods is mandatory. The SAF Associate Director of Science and Education will request substantive change information annually (see also Substantive Change Reports).”

In Step 2: On-Site Visit a statement was added to provide the Program Head the option to utilize suitable institutional facilities for the team’s lodging and meals, or seek the assistance of the institution’s alumni or the local SAF chapter members when making arrangement for the visiting team in order to minimize the cost of the on-site visit.

Several changes were made to the section on the Selection of the Visiting Team to reflect the Task Force recommendation limiting team size and staff participation and to clarify other team member requirements. The revised text reads:

The team will consist of at least three persons and no more than five persons, including any SAF staff member. All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. The team chair must be a forestry educator with academic administrative experience. At least one team member must come from the nonacademic sector. This practitioner should reside in the program’s home or contiguous state or province and be generally familiar with current forest technology practice in organizations employing forest technicians. Selection of this individual may be made in consultation with the local SAF state society chair. No visiting team member may be an alumnus, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member should have even the appearance of a conflict of interest. The third

participant must be a member of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. In addition, a member of the SAF staff may accompany the team and serve in a support capacity. The staff liaison to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation shall accompany all visiting teams considering initial accreditation or re-accreditation when the committee deems this presence useful.

All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. No team member may be an alumnus, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member may have even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Revisions were made to the sections on **Fees and Charges** and **Explanation of Fees and Charges** to reflect the annual fee of \$375 with no reaccreditation fee and to clarify that “Team member expenses are not to exceed the per diem rate of the institution under review.”

APPENDIX A

Letter from Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools

September 22, 2005

The Ranger School
257 Ranger School Rd.
Wanakona, NY 13695



Dr. John A. Helms, President
Society of American Foresters
University of California
Dept/ESPM Ecosystem Science
152 Hilgard Hall 3110
Berkeley, CA 94720-3110

Dear Dr. Helms:

As the current Chair of the Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools (CEFTS) and on behalf of the members of CEFTS, I would like to request that the Society of American Foresters (SAF) consider accrediting forest technology programs. As you know, the SAF currently recognizes forest technology programs rather than accredit them. Perhaps the most significant difference between recognition and accreditation is that recognition does not require a site visit by the evaluating team prior to awarding or renewal of recognition.

Over the past five years the CEFTS membership has researched, discussed, and debated this important issue at our annual meetings. Two years ago the schools in attendance at our annual meeting held at Penn State Mont Alto voted unanimously to begin the process of seeking accreditation rather than recognition from SAF. This view was reaffirmed at our meeting held at Pennsylvania College of Technology in August of 2005.

We request this change in review status for a number of reasons. Forest technology programs adhere to the highest professional standards in educating forest technicians and therefore should be measured by appropriate processes. Recognition is not a commonly used term as most educational programs throughout the country are accredited rather than recognized. In fact, the only educational program that we are aware of that is recognized is forest technology. Several colleges report that their college administration supports and encourages our efforts to seek accreditation.

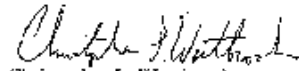
Other benefits could include increased membership in SAF, improved articulation opportunities between 2 and 4 year programs, and a broader base of expertise from forest technology graduates.

It is fully understood that there would be added costs to the institution, including financial and time resources, if the change from recognition to accreditation is approved. We further understand that there will be an extra cost for bringing in a review team at the beginning of each new term of accreditation. These added costs are a concern to some institutions given the limited financial resources available to them.

We believe that much of the current recognition standards material could be used for accreditation standards with minor revision. CFPAS is willing to assist with the development with other material needed for a change from recognition to accreditation.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact me. We look forward to hearing from you regarding this important issue facing forest technology institutions.

Sincerely,



Christopher L. Westbrook
Chair

cc: Michael T. Goergen, Jr.
~~Executive Director~~
SAF-Recognized Technical Forestry Education Programs

APPENDIX B

A Discussion of the Terms Accreditation and Recognition

What is accreditation?

Accreditation in higher education is defined as a collegial process based on self and peer assessment for public accountability and improvement of academic quality. The practice of accreditation arose in the United States as a means to insure a basic level of quality by conducting non-governmental, peer evaluations of educational institutions and programs. Peers assess the quality of an institution or academic program and assist the faculty and staff in improvement following criteria that reflects the qualities of a sound educational program and procedures for evaluating institutions or programs. Because it developed from a diverse set of institutions, accreditation is a flexible and adaptive process.

There are two basic types of educational accreditation, one identified as "institutional" and one referred to as "specialized" or "programmatic." Specialized or programmatic accreditation normally applies to programs, departments, or schools that are parts of an institution. The accredited unit may be as large as a college or school within a university or as small as a curriculum within a discipline.

Functions of Accreditation

- Verifying that an institution or program meets established standards;
- Assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions;
- Assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credits;
- Helping to identify institutions and programs for the investment of public and private funds;
- Protecting an institution against harmful internal and external pressure;
- Creating goals for self-improvement of weaker programs and stimulating a general raising of standards among educational institutions;
- Involving the faculty and staff comprehensively in institutional evaluation and planning;
- Establishing criteria for professional certification and licensure and for upgrading courses offering such preparation; and
- Providing one of several considerations used as a basis for determining eligibility for Federal assistance.

Elements of Accreditation

1. Standards: The accrediting agency, in collaboration with educational institutions, establishes standards.
2. Self-study: The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-evaluation study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency.
3. On-site Evaluation: A team selected by the accrediting agency visits the institution or program to determine first-hand if the applicant meets the established standards.

4. **Publication:** Upon being satisfied that the applicant meets its standards, the accrediting agency grants accreditation or reaccreditation status and lists the institution or program in an official publication with other similarly accredited or reaccredited institutions or programs.
5. **Monitoring:** The accrediting agency monitors each accredited institution or program throughout the period of accreditation granted to verify that it continues to meet the agency standards.
6. **Reevaluation:** The accrediting agency periodically reevaluates each institution or program that it lists to ascertain whether continuation of its accredited or reaccredited status is warranted.

What is Recognition?

Term “recognition” in higher education is less well defined than “accreditation”, is infrequently applied, and, when used, is, more often than not, left undefined. The term recognition is most often used to convey acceptance, such as the recognition of Advance Placement Program (AP) credits or prior informal learning, or the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas and degrees obtained in another country.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in its “Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education” defines the term as follows:

‘recognition’ of a foreign qualification in higher education with a view to the practice of a profession means acceptance by the competent authorities of the professional preparation of the holder for the practice of the profession concerned, without prejudice, however, to the legal and professional rules or procedures in force in the States concerned and provided the holder would be entitled to practice the same profession in the State in which the professional preparation and qualification had been obtained; such recognition does not exempt the holder of the foreign qualification from complying with any other conditions for the practice of the profession concerned that may be laid down by the competent governmental or professional authorities in the States concerned.

The Planning Accreditation Board, a CHEA recognized accrediting organization that currently accredits baccalaureate and masters degree programs in planning, explains that their accreditation program is the successor to the planning degree "recognition" program, started in 1960 by the American Institute of Planners (AIP). The recognition program was begun as a means of assessing graduates' qualifications to take the AIP examination, but expanded into accreditation as a means of assessing the quality of planning education.

CHEA Recognition

The Society of American Foresters is recognized as a specialized accrediting organization by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA, <http://www.chea.org/>), a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening higher education through strengthening accreditation. The CHEA website says, “‘Recognition’ is a process of review of the quality and effectiveness of accrediting organizations. This review is carried out either by CHEA (a private body) or the federal government through the USDE. CHEA’s primary purpose is to assure and strengthen

academic quality and ongoing quality improvement in courses, programs and degrees. CHEA's recognition is based on five standards that include, e.g., advancing academic quality and encouraging needed improvement. The USDE's primary purpose is to assure that federal student aid funds are purchasing quality courses and programs. USDE's recognition is based on ten standards that include attention to, e.g., recruitment and admissions practices, fiscal and administrative capacity and facilities.


The CHEA Recognition Standards are to:

- **Advance academic quality.** Accreditors are required to have a clear definition of quality and clear expectations that the institutions or programs they accredit have processes to determine whether quality standards are being met.
- **Demonstrate accountability.** Accreditors are required to have standards that call for institutions and programs to provide consistent, reliable information about academic quality and student achievement to foster continuing public confidence and investment.
- **Encourage purposeful change and needed improvement.** Accreditors are required to encourage planning for purposeful change and scrutiny for needed improvement through ongoing self-examination in institutions and programs.
- **Employ appropriate and fair procedures in decision-making.** Accreditors are required to maintain appropriate and fair organizational policies and procedures that include effective checks and balances.
- **Continually reassess accreditation practices.** Accreditors are required to undertake self-scrutiny of their accrediting activities.

In its evaluation of SAF as an accrediting organization, CHEA not only evaluates SAF accreditation of professional forestry degree programs but also considers "accreditation review activity" not part of the current CHEA-recognized scope of accreditation including forest technology school recognition and continuing education programs.

APPENDIX C

SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questionnaire

 <p><i>Society of American Foresters</i> 5400 Grosvenor Lane Bethesda, Maryland 20814-2198 (301) 897-8720 Extension 123</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questionnaire</p>
--	--

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is evaluating of the merits of establishing an SAF program to accredit forest technology educational programs. If approved, this accreditation program would replace the existing recognition program. The SAF Council appointed an eight member Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation to conduct an evaluation and recommend a specific course of action. As one step in its evaluation, the Task Force would like your perspective on the draft accreditation process outlined in the DRAFT Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology.

With the exceptions of an onsite review requirement and a revised fee structure, the standards, procedures and guidelines are essentially the same as the existing forest technology school recognition program; however, this is an opportunity to comment on all aspects of the program. The Task Force would like you to address the merits of SAF accreditation of forest technology educational programs including budgetary and staffing implications, the draft standards and procedures and the structure and function of the an SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.

This questionnaire has been developed to help guide your review. Please return your comments by **October 7, 2007** to Terry Clark, CF, Associate Director, Science and Education by email at clarkt@safnet.org or by mail or fax to the address or fax number below.

PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Does the proposed SAF technology education accreditation program outlined in the draft DRAFT Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology meet the following objectives of accreditation?

- Continued advancement in the quality of technical forestry education.
- Providing assurance that graduates of SAF-accredited programs have been instructed in the basic knowledge and skills, as well as environmental ethics and values and that a quality educational environment is available at SAF-accredited programs.
- Establishing, maintaining and improving standards to guide and measure achievement for programs.

Are these objectives adequately reflected in the standards listed below?

Please list any recommended changes or additions.

Standard I: Program Objectives

Standard II: Curriculum

Standard III: Faculty

Standard IV: Students

Standard V: Program

Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities

PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Do the proposed accreditation procedures reflect the existing and foreseeable academic setting for forest technology programs?

Accreditation Status and Application Process and Eligibility

Are the stated criteria consistent with the objectives of accreditation stated in Part I?

Accreditation Period

Is the accreditation period reasonable?

- Please note that the proposed accreditation program requires a comprehensive self-evaluation at least once every 10 years with notification of substantive program changes occurring between reporting periods and periodic progress review reports when required. A 5-year Interim Review Report would no longer be required.

When and How to Apply

Does the application and continued accreditation process provide reasonable timelines and sufficient flexibility to address unusual circumstances?

Self-Evaluation Review and Onsite Visit

Is the proposed self-evaluation and onsite visit, including the responsibilities of the institution, team composition, scheduling and overall timeline, reasonable given institutional resources and the location of many forest technology programs in areas distant from major airports? If not, please provide recommendations to improve the process.

- Please note that:
 - The onsite visit is one of the most significant changes in transitioning from a program of recognition to one of accreditation. The requirement for an onsite visit is one of the basic standards for SAF to be recognized as an accrediting organization by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (<http://www.chea.org/default.asp>).
 - The entire cost of the onsite visit would be borne by the institution. This would include travel, lodging and meals of the visiting team members and SAF staff. Your response may address any of these items.
 - The proposed procedures call for the onsite visit to be accomplished in one day in an attempt to minimize the cost to the program; however, alternative onsite visit scenarios will be considered. The proposed typical agenda leaves very little leeway for the visiting

team to develop its findings and report them onsite and contemporaneously to the program head. A written report would not be available until after the onsite visit.

Are there alternative options, regarding the timing of the arrival and the duration of the onsite review that you would like to see offered?

SAF welcomes any ideas that would assist the school in minimizing the overall cost of the onsite review, in particular the number and type of reviewers needed to comprise the structure of the review team and their accessibility to the school.

Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation Action

Do you have questions or recommendations regarding the role of a committee of forest technology accreditation, its organization and operating procedures?

Reference to Accreditation Status in Institutional Publications

Do you have questions or recommendations regarding the publication of SAF accreditation?

Progress Review and Substantive Change Reports

Do you have questions or recommendations regarding the requirement for reporting between the 10-year self-evaluations?

- Please note that a Substantive Change Report checklist will be sent from the SAF National Office annually as a reminder of the need to report substantive changes to your program.

Fees and Charges

What effect would the proposed fees and associated costs of accreditation have on your institution's participation in an SAF program of accreditation for technician programs?

Please note that:

- An accreditation fee of \$100 would be charged July 1 annually.
- There would no longer be a requirement for an Interim Review Report fee, now \$300.
- Onsite Review Fee of \$500 billed on January 31
- There would be no fee for a Substantive Change Report.
- All fees and charges are subject to revision by the Task Force and SAF Council.
- Fees are in addition to the cost of the onsite visit.

Appeal of SAF Accreditation Status Decisions

Is the appeal process fair and equitable?

- Please note that only a denial of initial or continued accreditation status may be appealed.

Procedures for Responding to Complaints against Accredited Programs

Does the procedure for responding to complaints protect the rights and autonomy of the accredited institution while providing fair treatment to complainants?

**PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM
ACCREDITATION REPORTS**

Do the guidelines in this section provide sufficient information for the development of the self evaluation report?

GENERAL COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

Do you think that agencies hiring your technology graduates will look more favorably upon an accredited program versus the current recognition?

Do you think you institution would participate in an SAF program to accredit forest technology educational programs?

What effect would the proposed SAF program to accredit forest technology educational programs have on your institution's interaction with SAF?

If accreditation becomes available, would you further support SAF developing a Certified Forest Technician credential similar to the current SAF Certified Forester?

Are there additional comments for items or concerns that were not covered in the questionnaire?

Would you please include your full contact information for potential follow-up by the task force members?

Submitted by _____
Institution _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

APPENDIX D

SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questionnaire – Summary of Responses

Respondents:

Verimilion Community College	Lori Schmidt and Dixon Shelstad
Spokane Community College	Monica Spicker
Thompson School of Applied Science, University of New Hampshire	Matt Chagnon
Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College	Rod Brown
Green River Community College	Dick Hopkins
Glenville State College	Charles R. Sypolt
Pennsylvania College of Technology	Dennis Ringling
Haywood Community College	Doug Staiger

Question	Response
PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	
<p>Does the proposed SAF technology education accreditation program outlined in the draft DRAFT Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology meet the following objectives of accreditation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued advancement in the quality of technical forestry education. - Providing assurance that graduates of SAF-accredited programs have been instructed in the basic knowledge and skills, as well as environmental ethics and values and that a quality educational environment is available at SAF-accredited programs. - Establishing, maintaining and improving standards to guide and measure achievement for programs. 	<p>YES x 3</p>
<p>Are these objectives adequately reflected in the standards listed below?</p>	<p>Yes, we think they are representative, we would like clarification on some of the curriculum, specifically the Aerial Photo interpretation components, as digital imagery has become more commonplace.</p> <p>YES x 3</p>

Question	Response
PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES	
Do the proposed accreditation procedures reflect the existing and foreseeable academic setting for forest technology programs?	Yes, with the understanding that there will be a committed effort from the institutions to support Professional Development and SAF participation for the faculty in order to stay current on the trends and expectations within the profession. YES x 2
Are the stated criteria consistent with the objectives of accreditation stated in Part I?	Yes, we feel they are consistent. YES x 4

Is the accreditation period reasonable?	Yes, very reasonable, with the opportunity to track any changes by the Substantive report and with guidance from the Campus Advisory Committees, the curriculum can be adjusted within the 10 year time frame of Accreditation. YES x 4
Does the application and continued accreditation process provide reasonable timelines and sufficient flexibility to address unusual circumstances?	Yes, very reasonable time frame to complete the necessary review. There really is not much of any change in the report so I do not see that as a big issue. YES x 4
Is the proposed self-evaluation and onsite visit, including the responsibilities of the institution, team composition, scheduling and overall timeline, reasonable given institutional resources and the location of many forest technology programs in areas distant from major airports? If not, please provide recommendations to improve the process. Please note that: • The onsite visit is one of the most significant changes in transitioning from a program of recognition to one of accreditation. The requirement for an onsite visit is one of the basic standards for SAF to be recognized as an accrediting organization by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (http://www.chea.org/default.asp). • The entire cost of the onsite visit would be borne by the institution. This would include travel, lodging and meals of the visiting team members and SAF staff. Your response may address any of these items. • The proposed procedures call for the onsite visit to be accomplished in one day in an attempt to minimize the cost to the program; however, alternative onsite visit scenarios will be considered. The proposed typical agenda leaves very little leeway for the visiting team to develop its findings and report them onsite and contemporaneously to the program head. A written report would not be available until after the onsite visit.	<p>This is the area where we have the greatest concerns, since this is where the greatest costs lie. The word accreditation itself means more to students, educational institutions and employers than recognition, it does not necessarily translate into higher wages and other benefits that might be expected from an accredited four year institution. Community colleges also do not enjoy the same level of funding as do four year institutions and as such, visitation costs need to be as low as possible without compromising the intent of the visit.</p> <p>Where we had the biggest concerns with the present proposal and its language are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team size – should have a definite upper limit and should not be “accompanying staff” (pg 13). We recommend a minimum of 3 and no more than 5. • Reimbursement should be set at levels no higher than what the school normally allows for per diem. • No more than 2 nights of lodging. <p>Providing access to facilities at night may present problems. Perhaps it should be stated that after hours use of facilities and support should worked out ahead of time but that the visiting team also needs to set a reasonable time to adjourn for the day. Our building for example works on a card key system and we are unsure we’d be able to get or give such a card to the visiting team. Our computers are all networked which requires one to be logged in to even use a printer.</p> <p>The addition of the visit is where the big deviation is. Having the team there for only one day will be a big help to keep costs down. It will be very important for the Program Coordinator and Team Leader to work on the agenda ahead of time to make sure they get to see everything that they need to see. Yes. We normally now wait for tile report and I do not see this as a problem.</p>

<p>Are there alternative options, regarding the timing of the arrival and the duration of the onsite review that you would like to see offered?</p>	<p>In a remote campus such as Vermilion, Accreditation Teams may want to extend their stay to include an additional evening in Ely prior to traveling back. The nearest airport is Duluth, two hours south of Ely. This is dependent upon travel and flight opportunities, but if the review ends at 5 pm, the flight departure times would need to be after 8 or 9 pm, often making for difficult or impossible connections. The extra evening may be an opportunity for participation in a student social event. One question: if a visitation results in a program with concerns or needing follow-up details, would the program be responsible for a second focus visit, or can data be shared with the Committee on Forest Technology and resolved in that manner?</p> <p>We think that every attempt should be made to travel to the visit site fairly early in the day, so that team members can have at least ½ to ¾ day to review documentation and other materials, with an evening meeting/dinner with the program head and faculty a reasonable activity. The following day could be as outlined in the proposal with departure in the late afternoon.</p> <p>Visit should be 1 ½ days to allow for reporting in an "exit interview."</p> <p>NO x 2</p>
<p>SAF welcomes any ideas that would assist the school in minimizing the overall cost of the onsite review, in particular the number and type of reviewers needed to comprise the structure of the review team and their accessibility to the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the above comments. • If several schools are reasonably close together and can be put into one longer trip, it might save money. • Use at least 1 local member for the team who will incur little or no lodging and travel costs. <p>I would suggest one instructor from an accredited school, a private practitioner and someone from the public sector. I think that lodging cost could be reduced by having the team housed in Alumni houses or other facilities when possible.</p> <p>RECOMMEND A LARGE GROUP OF ON-SITE REVIEWERS FROM WHICH THOSE CLOSEST TO SCHOOL COULD BE SELECTED TO REDUCE TRAVEL FEES.</p>
<p>Do you have questions or recommendations regarding the role of a committee of forest technology accreditation, its organization and operating procedures?</p>	<p>This is a good checks and balance system for the process. We think the Committee of Forest Technology is crucial in maintaining the standards. We agree with the lead team member for the visiting team having direct responsibility or experience in academics and administration. We also want to stress the importance of visitation team members from academia who are representative of another 2-year Forest Technology program rather than a 4-year program.</p> <p>NO x 3 NONE AT THIS TIME.</p>
<p>Do you have questions or recommendations regarding the publication of SAF accreditation?</p>	<p>No, I think this is critical and our enrollment office will be notified of the exact language.</p> <p>NO x 4</p>
<p>Do you have questions or recommendations regarding the requirement for reporting between the 10-year self-evaluations?</p>	<p>No, this seems like an efficient method to document changes on a yearly basis.</p> <p>NO x 4</p>
<p>What effect would the proposed fees and associated costs of accreditation have on your institution's participation in an SAF program of accreditation for technician programs?</p>	<p>These fees can be budgeted as part of the expenses for maintaining a quality program. The department preference is that the budget line is part of an administrative program review budget line rather than affecting the non-personnel budget line that is critical to equipment, operations and student transport to field labs. It would also be the recommendation of the department that the administration provide a stipend to the program leader to produce the accreditation report on the 10 year rotation.</p>

	<p>We don't think the fees themselves are a problem. Having to pay 100\$ each year is a bit of an inconvenience, given the typical paper trail that we would have to file with the school. Having an option of paying the annual fee in one lump sum to cover the accreditation period would be nice.</p> <p>The fees are reasonable, but the cost of the team visit could be pretty expensive. Since UNH is paying for my review it is not an issue for me. Since all of the other CEFTS schools that have attended meeting over the last few years have been in favor of accreditation it seems as if the costs are not an issue.</p> <p>I think the fees are very reasonable the administration at our college has agreed to cover all of the fees.</p> <p>THE PROGRAM WOULD NEED TO PLAN FOR A BUDGET FOR THE PROCESS—ESPECIALLY DURING A YEAR IN WHICH THE ON-SITE VISIT WAS REQUIRED. (MIN OF \$2000.00 THAT YEAR). YES.</p> <p>None</p>
Is the appeal process fair and equitable?	<p>Yes, it seems very fair.</p> <p>YES x 4</p>
Does the procedure for responding to complaints protect the rights and autonomy of the accredited institution while providing fair treatment to complainants?	<p>Yes, we are very committed to the quality and integrity of Accredited programs, and are supportive of a process to ensure quality when a self-review may not be as revealing. We are interested in the confidentiality of this process for the programs affected.</p> <p>YES x 4</p>

Question	Response
PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORT	
Do the guidelines in this section provide sufficient information for the development of the self evaluation report?	YES x 4

GENERAL COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS	Response
Do you think that agencies hiring your technology graduates will look more favorably upon an accredited program versus the current recognition?	<p>Yes, I think it is confusing for agencies to define 'recognized,' but there is a greater understanding of accreditation. After this process is complete, I think it is appropriate for SAF to take the lead in discussing the hiring practices of agencies with respect to the benefits of an accredited program.</p> <p>Perhaps in the initial hiring, if deciding between 2 otherwise equal candidates, but doubtful if it makes that much difference with respect to advancement or pay.</p> <p>My faculty and administration are behind accreditation 100%. I think that parents and people in the industry understand accreditation better. I always feel like I am apologizing when I say we are recognized and then have to explain what that is.</p> <p>Yes and so does the institution and the accrediting bodies for our institution.</p> <p>YES x 2</p>
Do you think you institution would participate in an SAF program to accredit forest technology educational programs?	<p>Yes, we look forward to it.</p> <p>YES x 2</p> <p>Definitely</p>

<p>What effect would the proposed SAF program to accredit forest technology educational programs have on your institution's interaction with SAF?</p>	<p>Positive None beyond the current level, as a recognized school. None BETTER RAPPORT AND FAMILIARIZATION WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY. Make it stronger</p>
<p>If accreditation becomes available, would you further support SAF developing a Certified Forest Technician credential similar to the current SAF Certified Forester?</p>	<p>Yes, I think it would be appropriate to coordinate an easier process for a student graduating from an accredited Forest Technician program to become a certified forestry technician. This would be a great benefit to encourage programs to maintain accreditation. NO YES x 3</p>
<p>Are there additional comments for items or concerns that were not covered in the questionnaire?</p>	<p>We are extremely supportive of this change and look forward to meeting the standards for full accreditation. Not at this point. I don't plan to return the survey since I feel we have had sufficient input through CEFTS to this point. To summarize my position, I am o.k. with either recognition or accreditation. While the later is more expensive, perhaps the benefits are enough to warrant it. I presented the idea of accreditation with revised procedures and fees to our administrators. They are receptive, so GRCC's recommendation is for the change. No</p>

APPENDIX E

SAF Task Force on Forest Technology School Accreditation Questions on Accreditation Fees – Summary of Responses

Questions:

- Would your institution support accreditation of your forest technology program if the annual fee is \$500 and the continued accreditation review fee is \$2,500?
- Would your institution find it easier to support one annual fee of \$750 that combines the two fees above?

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	Rod Brown	We consider the SAF proposal of \$500/\$2,500 unacceptable. It seems completely out of line to charge the tech programs the same as the universities, when their programs (and budgets) are usually several times as large. As a percentage of total budgets, I'm guessing that it would be 10 to 30 times as great for the tech programs as for the existing accredited programs. Is there room for compromise? We could probably stand an annual fee of \$200 plus a review fee of \$1,500. Anything more would be very hard to justify. Perhaps it is unfair of me to say so, but it seems that the SAF fee proposal is just another way of saying that they are uninterested in accreditation of the tech programs. I can hardly see how anyone with any knowledge whatsoever of our tech school budgets could think that their fee proposal is reasonable.
Allegany College of Maryland	Steve Resh	Terry, the increase as outlines is considerable and I would need to run these numbers past the folks at the college to get their reaction. In either case, I would be much more comfortable with an annual, flat fee that I can put in my budget and forget about.
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	Brigitte Parsons	Dabney S. Lancaster Community College proposes an annual fee that is consistent from year to year, regardless of accreditation reviews. It makes it easier to budget and receive continued support.
Glenville State College	Kathy Butler via Charles Sypolt	I don't know that it makes much difference, Rick. Perhaps the \$750 each year is an easier way to budget, but only if there is a commitment that it will not change for 10 years. Otherwise, the other way (\$500 a year and then the review fee) seems to me to be the better way to go.
Green River Community College	Dick Hopkins	Our Assistant Dean of Trades & Technology at Green River Community College agrees that an averaged annualized fee would be easier.
Haywood Community College	Doug Staiger	I support the first payment proposal of a \$500 annual fee and a \$2,500 accreditation fee.
Horry-Georgetown Technical College	Brian Clark	My institution does not have a problem with either of the fee structures. If we had a preference, it would be the \$500 / \$2500 option. Hope this information helps.
Lurleen B. Wallace Community	George	Currently the Forest Tech program at LBWCC has only one instructor. I believe we are not eligible for accreditation.

College	Showalter	
Pennsylvania College of Technology	Mary Sullivan	The impact will pretty much be the same either way for us. I would suggest some sort of publication prior to the increase that would allow us to "sell" the benefit of accreditation to upper-level administration.
Reedley College	Kent Kinney	<p>I have not received advice back from my college administrators yet. I will do my best to offer an answer to your questions.</p> <p>SAF recognition is considered by our program staff to be very beneficial. It has helped attract students. It sometimes encourages our school district to support our requests for staff, facilities, and course approval. However, the school district probably does not realize many of the direct benefits to the program and students. It is likely that payment of annual fees will be difficult for our forestry program to obtain budget approval for. Funding for our forestry program has been strong for several years. However, California is projected to reduce education budgets quite substantially by the next fiscal year. If this expenditure is approved, the source will likely be from funds that would normally go toward classroom supplies and fieldtrip transportation costs.</p> <p>There is not enough difference between \$500 and \$750 for me to recommend either amount as a preferable option. I would hope that, if the lower annual fee is assessed, our institution would pay an addition \$2,500 every ten years.</p>
Spokane Community College	Spicker, Monica	<p>Spokane Community College would prefer a less expensive option to the annual fees than those proposed by SAF, since the visit is already a major expense jump from the previous model. We recognize that perhaps the initial fee structure was inadequate, but neither should it be as expensive as the full university accreditation. It would also be preferred to have a regular annual fee so that budgeting is facilitated.</p> <p>While areas such as nursing have high accreditation fees like those proposed, in general fees aren't this high for other program areas.</p> <p>For example, the North American Wildlife technology school accreditation fee structure is much more reasonable (80\$/year on average, but with no visit). We have a wildlife tech program and the requirements for accreditation with NAWTA not only overlap with SAF standards, but some of the proposed benefits to students seem to be more tangible (There are ongoing discussions that graduates of accredited NAWTA schools become certified wildlife technicians by the Wildlife Society). We will be pursuing accreditation with this organization (of which Lori Schmidt is the current president!). If SAF accreditation becomes too expensive, we may be happy with only holding the NAWTA accreditation. http://www.nawta.org/</p>
Thompson Scholl of Applied Science, University of New Hampshire	Matt Chagnon	I think that it would be easier for us to have the same fee (\$750) each year. That way we can budget for it on a yearly basis. UNH is funny in that it does not like us to save up for things for the future. It wants us to spend our budget each year. Its a good thing I don't run my personal finances like that!
Vermilion Community College	Lori Schmidt	VCC's preference is for an annual fee of \$750 for Accreditation, with the understanding that there will be additional expenses during the accreditation year site visit.
Wayne Community College	James Slye	I hope to have accreditation at our institution at some point in the future. We had SAF recognition early on (before my time) and I am not sure how that was dropped. Any information you have on that topic would be of interest to me. However, I want to pursue accreditation and think that \$750/yr would be a more acceptable number for us. We could budget that as a recurring item.

APPENDIX F

***Revised Draft Accreditation Handbook:
Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for
Accrediting Educational Programs in
Forest Technology***

February 19, 2008

Changes highlighted in yellow

DRAFT
STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES
FOR
ACCREDITING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
IN
FOREST TECHNOLOGY



Revised February 19, 2008



Society of American Foresters
5400 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) is the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, SAF is the largest professional society for foresters in the world.

The SAF first established guidelines for recognizing educational programs in forest technology in 1971. The SAF Council adopted the Standards and Procedures for Recognizing Educational Programs in Forest Technology in 1982. In 1982, the SAF Council also established the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation to evaluate and periodically review programs for the teaching of forest technology and to make decisions concerning SAF's accreditation of such programs.

The Recognition Standards were revised in 1997 and the Recognition Procedures and Guidelines were revised in 1999, 2000, 2004 and 2008. The SAF Council approved the current revisions to the Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology in June 2008 for implementation beginning August 1, 2009.

Address all inquiries concerning the Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology to the:

Science and Education Program
5400 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 897-8720 ext. 123
E-mail: clarkt@safnet.org

Fax: (301) 897-3690
www.safnet.org

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN FOREST TECHNOLOGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Titles and page numbers are hyperlinks to text)

	Page
PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS	20
Standard I: Program Objectives	21
Standard II: Curriculum	21
Standard III: Faculty	21
Standard IV: Students	21
Standard V: Program.....	21
Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas	40
Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities	21
PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES	21
Accreditation Status	21
Application Process and Eligibility	21
Accreditation Period	21
When and How to Apply	21
Step 1: Self-Evaluation Review	21
Step 2: On-Site Visit	21
Responsibilities of the Program Head – On- Site Visit for Accreditation Review.....	13
Selection of the Visiting Team	13
Responsibilities of the Visiting Team Chair	44
Representative Agenda for SAF Technician Program Accreditation Visit	45
Visiting Team Consultation	45
Accreditation Status Time Line	46
Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation Action.....	22
Reference to Accreditation Status in Institutional Publications	22
Progress Review Reports	22
Substantive Change Reports	22
Fees and Charges	22
Explanation of Fees and Charges.....	14
Receipt of Fees and Charges.....	48
Appeal of SAF Accreditation Status Decisions.....	22
Procedures for Responding to Complaints Against Accredited Programs	22
PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORTS	23
Assembly.....	51
Narrative	51
Documentation.....	52

Suggested Narrative Content and Documentation for Each Accreditation Standard	52
Standard I: Program Objectives	52
Standard II: Curriculum	53
Standard III: Faculty	54
Standard IV: Students	54
Standard V: Program.....	55
Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas	56
Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities	56



Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology

PART I: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Society of American Foresters (SAF) was founded in 1900. SAF is the national organization that represents all segments of the forestry profession including public and private practitioners, researchers, administrators, educators, forest technicians, and students. The Society's Mission is to advance the science, technology, education, and practice of professional forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

The SAF first established guidelines for recognizing educational programs in forest technology in 1971. The objectives of the SAF technology education accreditation program are to:

1. Seek continued advancement in the quality of technical forestry education.
2. Give students, employers, SAF members, and the general public assurance that graduates of SAF-recognized programs have been instructed in the basic knowledge and skills, as well as environmental ethics and values.
3. Provide prospective students, employers, SAF members, and the general public assurance that a quality educational environment is available at SAF-recognized programs.
4. Establish, maintain and improve standards to guide and measure achievement for programs.

The seven Standards describe the essential elements of a forestry technology education program: program mission, goals, and objectives; curriculum; forestry program organization and administration; faculty; students; parent institution support facilities. Although rigid adherence to the standards described here is not mandatory, programs are expected to meet the minimum criteria. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs, when identified and documented, will be evaluated against the intent of the minimums established.

The word shall as used in these standards is defined to mean a required or mandatory criterion. The word should is defined to mean a recommended criterion.

Standard I: Program Objectives

To be accredited by SAF, educational programs in forest technology **shall** be offered as two-year, associate degrees or their equivalent in contact hours and content. They **shall** consist of classroom, indoor laboratory, and field laboratory experiences necessary to develop field competence. Correspondence and pre-forestry programs do not qualify.

The program **shall** have clearly defined, publicly stated objectives expressed in terms of the educational results it is seeking to achieve. These objectives should express:

1. The specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought to be imparted to the student,

2. Consistency with the objectives of the parent institution,
3. Responsiveness to the needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve, and
4. Sensitivity to the role of forest technology in meeting the increasingly diverse needs of society and the profession of forestry.

Standard II: Curriculum

The forest technology curriculum must provide a variety of educational experiences. Subject matter described below may be incorporated differently by different programs. What may be a separate course in one program may be part of a more comprehensive course in another. Well-planned experimentation and development are encouraged. Innovative or nontraditional approaches and programs, when identified and documented, will be evaluated against the intent of the minimums established.

1. The program **shall** provide for a minimum total of 800 contact hours of instruction in forestry and related technical development courses, of which a minimum of 530 hours is devoted to indoor and field laboratory instruction. (A contact hour is a clock or a classroom hour allocated for lectures and scheduled indoor and field laboratories.)

2. The forest technology curriculum **shall** include instruction in these technical subject areas:

- a. Dendrology
- b. Forest Ecology
- c. Silviculture
- d. Protection
- e. Measurements
- f. Land Surveying
- g. Aerial Photo Interpretation
- h. Woods Safety
- i. Harvesting Techniques
- j. Multiple Use of Forest Land
- k. Forest Management Practices
- l. Principles of Human Resource (Personnel) Management

Broad content descriptions of these subject matter areas follow (Depth of instruction should reflect regional priorities and practices):

Dendrology: Field identification of regionally important species by leaves, twigs, bark and fruit characteristics; knowledge of family, genus, and species of each specimen; knowledge of species association and succession; knowledge of the major commercial species of trees in North America and their uses; understanding of the use of dichotomous keys.

Forest Ecology: Plant succession; site; soils; silvics; environmental protection; weather and climate influences; relations of trees to other organisms; biodiversity; ecosystems.

Silviculture: Methods of regeneration; site preparation; planting practices; intermediate treatments; nursery practice; seed orchards; pesticide use and application; prescribed burning; pre-commercial thinning, commercial thinning, and harvest cutting.

Protection: Fire management; regional problems and control of insects, diseases, and animal damage; threats to forest health.

Measurements: Forest measuring equipment; log scaling practices; forest product measurement; sampling statistics; cruising and inventory techniques; log rules and volume tables; log and tree grading; growth measurement; computer applications and usage.

Land Surveying: Hand compass; surveying equipment and procedures; pacing and chaining; map reading; deed and title search; land descriptions; computer mapping; global positioning systems (GPS); geographic information systems (GIS).

Remote Sensing: Acquisition and processing of the primary data derived from various sensors– identification and interpretation; area determination; scale; height measurement; type mapping; road location; bearings and distances.

Woods Safety: Basic first aid; identification of hazards; hand and power tool safety; pesticide herbicide safety.

Harvesting Techniques: Harvesting Systems; cost analysis; logging plans; wood identification; wood products; road layout and construction; best management practices (BMPs).

Multiple Use of Forest Land: Wildlife; fish habitat; recreation; wilderness; watershed; timber; range; minerals; public conflicts and public participation.

Forest Management Practices: Timber appraisal; contracts; forest management principles; principles of ecosystem (landscape) based management; regional forest management regulations; sustainable forest management concepts/certification; record keeping and basic accounting.

Principles of Human Resource (Personnel) Management: Human behavior: groups, individuals; motivation; leadership; team building and dynamics; planning; decision-making; rating and evaluation; controlling the work force; conflict resolution; and ethics.

3. In order to advance the basic attainment of the students, the curriculum shall also include general education requirements. The curriculum shall provide instruction in oral and written communication, mathematics, natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and business and computer skills.
4. Course syllabi and outlines shall be maintained that clearly state instructional objectives, activities, and resources to be utilized during instruction. Such documents shall be reviewed at least every three years and revised when appropriate, and dated.
5. Technically accurate, up-to-date instructional materials, textbooks, and computer and electronic related resources shall be utilized by students to support instruction.
6. Instruction in safety shall be provided as needed in advance of indoor and field laboratories.
7. A forestry-related work experience of reasonable duration, such as on-the-job training or comprehensive field projects, shall be required before graduation. The experience should simulate working conditions of typical employing organizations, i.e., full-day schedules with appropriate assignments.

8. Online course hours will be designated as a lecture component when calculating instruction hours for SAF Recognition. An online course cannot meet indoor and field laboratory instruction.

Standard III: Faculty

1. The forest technology faculty **shall** consist at minimum of two full-time (minimum 9-month contract per year) instructors dedicated primarily to the success of the forest technology program and its students. The member of the forest technology faculty deemed to be the head of the forest technology program, i.e., is responsible for administrative and academic supervision and direction, shall hold a bachelor's or higher degree in forestry. All personnel teaching or assisting in forestry or forestry-related subject matter **shall** be qualified on the basis of formal training or extensive practical experience.
2. During the academic year, the teaching ratio between full-time-equivalent students taught by the forest technician faculty and full-time-equivalent teachers on the forest technician faculty should not exceed 20 to 1. A full-time-equivalent student is calculated as one whose schedule equals 30 semester, or 45 quarter, hours per academic year.
3. The number of students per faculty or qualified staff member should not exceed 25 in indoor and field laboratories, and should not exceed 12 in laboratories where hazardous equipment, such as logging or sawmilling equipment, is used.
4. Faculty members **shall** participate in continuing professional development through or participation in various professional, scientific, technical, or scholarly endeavors such as professional or public service, research, consulting, continuing education, and publication.

Standard IV: Students

1. The program, within the guidelines of the institution, **shall** formulate student recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation policies that contribute to the realization of the program's objectives and that meet or exceed the minimum standards of the parent institution for equivalent programs.
2. The program or institution **shall** provide opportunity for academic and career guidance and counseling to the student.
3. The program or institution **shall** provide opportunity and encouragement for student participation in activities that will develop technical skills, leadership, and cultural awareness.

Standard V: Program

1. Where the forest technology program is offered at an institution having a baccalaureate program in forestry, the technology faculty **should** be separate and distinct from that of the baccalaureate faculty. The purpose of this separation is to give the technology faculty visibility and control of the program's content.
2. A technical advisory body **shall** be in operation and function under written guidelines that specify the length of a member's term, responsibilities, and the operational procedures. The advisory body should meet at least once a year. Consideration should be given to including members from representative professional associations such as SAF or the Canadian Institute of Forestry/Institut Forestier du Canada, forestry baccalaureate programs, forest industries, public forestry agencies, and the interested public.
3. General cooperative working relations should exist and be maintained with regional industries, organizations, and agencies.

4. The program should have adequate technical, secretarial, clerical, and custodial support.

Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas

1. Students shall have ready access to library facilities having current forestry literature, including: forestry journals; forestry-related journals, such as soils, recreation, range, wildlife, surveying; research publications; current forestry and related books as well as the Internet.

2. The instructional program **shall** have a separate, identifiable budget that considers the program's needs. Included are:

- staff compensation;
- facility operation and maintenance;
- equipment and material purchase and replacement;
- consumable supplies;
- travel and per diem;
- transportation for field trips;
- in-service education; and
- professional improvement

In cases where the forest technology program's budget is part of an overall division or department budget, the budget administrator **shall** provide documentation concerning how the budget/financial process operates, how the needs of the forest technology program are evaluated and accommodated, and budget figures. The forest technology program shall document recent equipment/supplies purchases, professional development, and any other expenditures that can be identified.

3. The institution or the program **shall** assist in placing students and conduct periodic follow-up surveys of graduates. A file should be maintained at the program level regarding student placement and subsequent employment and educational status.

Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities

1. An outdoor laboratory or school forest **shall** be available and utilized. It should be readily accessible and within reasonable commuting time. Such forests may be privately owned, or under public control, for which instructional use agreements have been contracted.

2. The classroom, shops, and laboratory facilities **shall** be adequate for the number of students in each class section. The training equipment **shall** be consistent with that found in contemporary forestry organizations employing forest technology graduates.

3. Modern audio-visual aids, computer graphics, instructional materials, computers, and training equipment **shall** be available and used in the instructional program.

4. Transportation **shall** be arranged by the program and available to students for scheduled, off-campus class activities.

5. Classroom, shop and laboratory facilities, and equipment should be arranged for effective teaching, class control, safety, and economy.

PART II: ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Accreditation Status

A forest technology program will be accredited if it demonstrates to the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation that it:

1. Has an educational program that leads to a two-year associate's degree or its equivalent in contact hours and content, and meets or exceeds all of the standards,
2. Operates at a satisfactory level of quality consistent with its stated objectives,
3. Exhibits sufficient resources and facilities to support existing and planned activities at a satisfactory level of quality,
4. Demonstrates that resources and facilities will continue to be adequate in the future, and
5. Encourages program improvement, periodic self-evaluation, and continuing compliance with *SAF Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology*.

Application Process and Eligibility

To be considered for accreditation, the program must meet the following:

1. Be in an institution accredited by its regional commission on accreditation (or appropriate provincial review for Canadian programs),
2. Have offered the forest technology program for at least three years and graduated classes in that program for at least one year, and
3. Require for completion of the degree study in a curriculum meeting the criteria established for curricula in the **Part I: Accreditation Standards**. The decision to seek initial or continued SAF accreditation is that of the forest technology program, as supported by the chief administrative officer of the institution.

General application and review processes for initial or continued accreditation includes:

1. A letter, with the application fee (See Fees, below), from the institution's chief administrative officer requesting an accreditation review of the forest technology program.
2. A program self-evaluation report prepared in accordance with SAF guidelines.
3. Review of the self-evaluation, review of visiting team report, and other appropriate materials by the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.
4. Final action by the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. Upon request from the chief administrative officer, programs are permitted to withdraw voluntarily from any status of accreditation at any time before final action by the Committee (See Fees section, below). Programs that voluntarily withdraw following Committee action will have this decision published by the Society.

Accreditation Period

Accreditation is granted for a specific time. This period may vary among institutions and among curricula within a program due to program changes taking place or being contemplated.

Once a forest technology curriculum is accredited, it is subject to periodic review as determined by the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. Continued accreditation requires comprehensive self-evaluation at least every 10 years. Between comprehensive self-evaluations and on-site reviews, continued accreditation is contingent upon on-going compliance with the SAF Accreditation Handbook: Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology. Notification of substantive program changes occurring between reporting periods is mandatory. The SAF Associate Director of Science and Education will request substantive change information annually (see also *Substantive Change Reports*). The Committee may also require periodic progress review reports to show actions taken to correct or respond to identified concerns.

When and How to Apply

It is the responsibility of the institution and program's administrators to be thoroughly familiar with the Standards and Procedures for Forest Technology School Accreditation and to consult with the SAF Associate Director of Science and Education to verify readiness before application.

For programs currently accredited, the SAF Associate Director of Science and Education will notify the institution's chief administrative officer by January 31 of the year before accreditation expiration. The letter will advise the officer of the pending expiration, ask whether the officer wishes to have the forest technology program reviewed, and outline the procedures to be followed. A copy of **Standards, Procedures and Guidelines for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology** will be enclosed. A copy of the letter, with enclosures, will be sent to the head of the forest technology program.

The letter will also ask if there are circumstances that might warrant postponement of the review. Postponement may be considered in cases of temporary but significant organizational, personnel, or other changes, or to enable coordination with other internal or external reviews. Whether a postponement is warranted will be at the discretion of the SAF Associate Director of Science and Education in consultation with the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation chair. Postponement will not exceed one year without consideration by the full Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.

The institution's chief administrative officer must write the SAF Associate Director of Science and Education by April 1 to formally request an accreditation review before accreditation expiration. SAF will conduct an accreditation review only at the request of the chief administrative officer. The letter must be accompanied by the appropriate application fee of \$500 (see Fees and Charges).

Upon receipt of the chief administrative officer's request, the SAF Director of Science and Education will write the head of the forest technology program to transmit guidelines and due dates for the self evaluation, establish dates for the panel review, and offer advice and assistance in preparing for the accreditation review. The self-evaluation report and supporting documentation are due by February 1 of the year accreditation expires, or for an initial accreditation review to occur during the year.

Step 1: Self-Evaluation Review

Self-evaluation is the essential first step in the accreditation process. The SAF Standards and Procedures for Recognizing Educational Programs in Forest Technology provides important considerations for the self-evaluation and procedures for assessment by a review panel. The aim of a program self evaluation is to demonstrate compliance with SAF Accreditation Standards and Procedures, to determine accountability and to provide the basis for program planning and improvement.

A program's ability to candidly assess its strengths and opportunities for improvement is vital to accreditation. The self-evaluation report should include materials that demonstrate evidence of critical thinking, planning, development, and implementation over a specific period of time. Guidelines for preparation of the self-evaluation report are presented in Part III.

The self-evaluation report is considered the property of the institution and SAF will not release its contents unless authorized, in writing, to do so.

Step 2: On-Site Visit

The on-site visit by an SAF review team is the second stage in accreditation following completion of the self-evaluation. SAF's policy is to employ visiting teams as information gathering and verifying bodies. The team validates the self-evaluation and gathers information on less documentable items such as morale, motivation, leadership, cooperation, and the learning environment. The visiting team's function is to analyze, for the use of both the institution and the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, the program's strengths and opportunities for improvement, the quality of its performance, the effectiveness of its procedures, and the adequacy of its resources for sustaining its performance. The visiting team does not make decisions regarding the accreditation of a program.

The report and opinions of the visiting team are given great weight and respect in the accreditation process. However, as described later, the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation makes the final decision. The SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation may substitute its judgment for that of the visiting team in instances where the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation feels the evidence fails to substantiate the team's findings or analysis, or where additional facts have come to light since the onsite visit.

The visiting team will evaluate the program in terms of the mission, goals, and objectives that the program seeks to attain, provided these are consistent with the Accreditation Standards. The visiting team's independent insights, based on careful reading of the program's self-evaluation and the brief but intensive on-site review, can serve to:

1. Confirm and validate the conclusions of the self-evaluation;
2. Identify any areas in which the program is in questionable compliance with the SAF Standards;
3. Call attention to opportunities for program improvement;
4. Assure the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation that the institution has been responsive to recommendations resulting from previous reviews and reinforce the program's commitment to the continuing pursuit of excellence.

Responsibilities of the Program Head – On- Site Visit for Accreditation Review

The forest technology program head has the responsibility to:

1. Be thoroughly familiar with the SAF Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology, the Accreditation Guidelines contained in Part III, and other related documentation.
2. Keep all of the institution's appropriate administration, faculty, students, and staff informed of the accreditation process, its significance, and its progress.
3. Accept, or challenge for cause, review team members assigned by SAF.
4. Mail copies of the self-evaluation report and supporting documentation directly to the visiting team members and the SAF Director of Science and Education at least 30 days in advance of the visit.
5. Mail three additional sets of the same materials to the SAF office and one copy to each member of the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.
6. Make arrangements for lodging and on-site transportation for the visiting team well in advance of the visit.

The program head may choose to utilize suitable institutional facilities for the team's lodging and meals, or seek the assistance of the institution's alumni or the local SAF chapter members.

7. Prepare an agenda and schedule appointments with key personnel well in advance of the visit, and alert administrators, faculty, students, staff, and others as to the nature and purpose of the forthcoming visit and request that they make time available as needed to meet with the team members.
8. Provide both a private meeting room for the visiting team for the duration of the visit and access, including evenings to supporting data and materials and support services such as word processing, printer availability, photocopying, and reference materials.
9. Provide final written comment on the visiting team's report. If requested, attend the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation's meeting.

Pay visiting team expenses, including travel of the team and accompanying staff, lodging, meals and miscellaneous expenses related to the visit.

Selection of the Visiting Team

SAF visiting team members will be selected on the basis of interest, experience, training, and overall knowledge of assessment processes. Of primary importance will be the ability to develop and articulate objective opinions and judgments free of self-interest or professional bias. The nomination of qualified persons by individuals and organizations is encouraged at all times.

The SAF Associate Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation chair, will appoint a visiting team following consultation with the forest technology program head, who may challenge for cause the appointment of specific team members.

The team will consist of at least three persons and no more than five persons, including any SAF staff member. All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. The team chair must be a forestry educator with academic administrative experience. At least one team member must come from the nonacademic sector. This practitioner should reside in the program's home or contiguous state or province and be generally familiar with current forest technology practice in organizations employing forest technicians. Selection of this individual may be made in consultation with the local SAF state society chair. No visiting team member may be an alumnus, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member should have even the appearance of a conflict of interest. The third participant must be a member of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. In addition, a member of the SAF staff may accompany the team and serve in a support capacity. The staff liaison to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation shall accompany all visiting teams considering initial accreditation or re-accreditation when the committee deems this presence useful.

All team members must be SAF members or hold SAF committee appointments as public representatives. No team member may be an alumnus, past faculty member, or employee of the institution being reviewed. No team member may have even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

The program head may request a team consisting of more than three members and suggest general specialty areas to be represented by these additional members. Appointment of such additional members is at the discretion of the SAF Director of Science and Education, and, as with other team members, at the institution's expense. Additional team members may be appointed by SAF for purposes of training, and SAF will be responsible for the travel and related expenses in this instance.

Responsibilities of the Visiting Team Chair

The team chair will organize the team, consult with the program head to confirm the final agenda, conduct the visit in accordance with SAF Handbook for Visiting Team Members, and complete the visiting team report in a timely

manner. On-site the team will meet with administrators, faculty, students, employers, and others; visit facilities; and review records and documents as necessary to accomplish its objectives. Under the direction of the chair and before leaving the campus, the team will conduct an exit interview with appropriate officials to verify its findings.

Within two weeks of the visit, the team chair will circulate an edited draft of the visiting team report to the team members and the SAF Director of Science and Education and request comments. See timeline below for additional deadlines.

The visiting team report is considered the property of SAF. SAF will not publicly release its contents. However, SAF reserves the right to release the document in its entirety in the event the institution releases only portions.

Representative Agenda for SAF Technician Program Accreditation Visit (*Provided as a guide; programs may suggest alternatives*)

Arrival Day

Afternoon	Team arrives, checks in
7:00 p.m.	Dinner with Program Head Review agenda, logistics, discuss program
9:00 p.m.	Team meeting Review assignments, documentation, and areas of concentration

Review Day

7:00 a.m.	Breakfast, usually with Program Head
8:00 a.m.	Briefing with Program Head
9:00 a.m.	Meet with College Administrator (This would be the president or chief academic officer at your college)
10:00 a.m.	Meet with Forest Technology Faculty (And any other faculty that are directly involved with the program)
11:00 a.m.	Meet with Students
12:00 noon	Lunch with Advisory Committee/Employers/Alumni (I am assuming that the advisory committee includes employers and alumni. Additional employers and alumni could be invited. These are three separate discussions during a 2½ - day visit but I see no reason not to combine them.)
1:30 p.m.	Tour relevant campus facilities/ view equipment
3:30 p.m.	Time for the team to discuss findings
4:00 p.m.	Briefing with Program Head (and Faculty if desired)
5:00 p.m.	Departure

Visiting Team Consultation

Following the completion of the on-site review, visiting team members have a unique perspective on the institution's strengths and weaknesses. The institution may request an "off the record" consultation with visiting team members to discuss the institution's strategic opportunities. A consultative visit occurs after all formal exit interviews are conducted, but must be scheduled in advance to ensure that travel plans can accommodate additional discussion. Consultative discussions will NOT be included in the team's report.

Accreditation Status Time Line

- January – SAF sends notice to chief academic officer of institution, with copy to forest technology program head, that current accredited or candidate status will expire the end of the next calendar year.
- April 1 – deadline for request from chief academic officer of institution for initial or reaccreditation in calendar year prior to expiration of current status; on-site review fee also due at this time.
- Self-evaluation is conducted within 12 months prior to the on-site visit
- Approximately six months in advance, institution and SAF agree on preferred dates for one and a half-day on-site visit, to occur in academic year of the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation decision.
- Visiting team is confirmed once on-site visit dates are set.
- Self-evaluation report is received by SAF and team members at least 30 days in advance of on-site visit.
- 45 days after visit, visiting-team report is due to institution's chief academic officer for comments on report's factual accuracy; copies are sent to the program head, team members, and the SAF Director of Science and Education.
- Chief academic officer's comments are due back within 60 days of receipt of visiting team report. If no comments are received in 60 days, the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will assume the report is accurate.
- Any comments received from the institution will be incorporated or appended to copies of the visiting team report at the team leader's discretion and the final report forwarded to SAF within 30 days.
- At its Fall meeting, the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation reviews all documentation, consults with visiting team chair and program head, deliberates and acts on each request.
- Appeal of unfavorable decision must be made to SAF Council within 30 days of SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation action. Original decision may be affirmed or reversed.

Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation Action

The SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation meets annually in executive session, usually immediately preceding the SAF national convention. The purpose of the meeting is to review and make final decisions on all accreditation activities conducted or reviewed during the previous academic year. In advance of the meeting, the Committee chair will organize the Committee and establish an agenda.

At least 30 days in advance of the meeting, the SAF Associate Director of Science and Education will send the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation members copies of the self-evaluations, supporting documentation, visiting team reports, and any institutional comments. It is the function of the Committee to make an independent analysis of the facts and to determine whether a program's accreditation is granted or continued.

The Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation's final action may include, but is not limited to, the general actions of denial or granting of initial accreditation, continued accreditation, or provisional accreditation; placing on probation; or requesting the program to show cause why accreditation should not be terminated. Provisional accreditation or probation may be recommended when a program, in the opinion of the Committee, has failed to respond satisfactorily to previous Committee requests or when it has deviated significantly from SAF Standards or Procedures. A request to show cause may be made when a program has not responded satisfactorily to conditions imposed on it as a result of significant noncompliance with SAF Accreditation Standards. A provisional, probationary or show cause action must specify the date the institution is requested to respond and the actions it must take to remedy the situation. When the action is to deny, or to provisionally recognize, place on probation or request to show cause, specific reason(s) and/or conditions are clearly stated. The Committee will also decide, where appropriate, the effective dates and duration of the accreditation, the due date for any interim status reports, the specific educational programs to be approved, and any conditions or requests for additional information, such as progress review reports.

The findings of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will be transmitted to the institution as part of the Committee's final action. The documents are considered confidential and the property of SAF. SAF will not publicly release their contents. However, in the event that portions are released by the institution, SAF reserves the right to release these documents in their entirety.

Once the SAF Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation has taken final action, the SAF executive vice president will notify the chief administrative officer, program head, and public of the Committee's decision, as follows:

1. Notification will be made by a formal letter to the institution's chief administrative officer and forest technology program head no later than thirty days following final Committee action. Notification will include a copy of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation's decision and any recommendations or required actions.
2. Publish on the SAF website and in the Journal of Forestry or other SAF publication of the general action, the duration of the action, and the educational curricula involved. Journal notice of denial of initial or continued accreditation will be delayed pending an opportunity for the institution to appeal. Only negative actions, defined as a denial of initial accreditation or continued accreditation, may be appealed (see Appeal of SAF Accreditation Decisions).
3. Notification within 30 days to appropriate state, federal, provincial or accreditation agencies/commissions, as required by law and/or general public reporting procedures adhered to by SAF. Notification of denial of initial or continued accreditation will be delayed pending appropriate opportunity for the institution to appeal, as provided for in the SAF accreditation procedures.
4. Public availability of a list of the SAF-accredited educational programs in forest technology.

Reference to Accreditation Status in Institutional Publications

Both the Society of American Foresters and universities must be clear in specifying which degree programs are accredited when communicating with students, employers, and the public. Institutions with SAF-accredited curricula must use the following statement, or equivalent wording, to describe programs with accredited status publicly in their catalogs or elsewhere:

The educational program(s) in [list curricula, majors, options] leading to the [list degree title(s)] is/are accredited by the Society of American Foresters (SAF). The Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognizes SAF as the specialized accrediting body for forestry education in the United States.

Progress Review Reports

Program heads may be requested to submit Progress Review Reports to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation to show actions taken toward correcting deficiencies or to be responsive to recommendations. The SAF Associate Director of Science and Education will inform the forest technology program head of the format and due date in advance. No fees associated with filing a progress review report.

Substantive Change Reports

It is the responsibility of the forest technology program head to report substantive changes in a technology program to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.

A substantive change is one that may significantly affect the quality or direction of a technology program. It includes, but is not limited to, such factors as:

- a major change in objectives,
- a new or major revision of a curriculum,
- major changes in faculty,
- major revisions of student admissions or retention standards,
- major changes in financial support, or
- major changes in the administration of a technology program.

Preparation of the report should follow the Accreditation Guidelines in Part III of this document by referencing the appropriate standard.

The Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will review substantive change reports at its annual meeting or as necessary. The Committee may request additional information or it may decide that the change is acknowledged with or without reservation, or that other action be scheduled.

Fees and Charges

The SAF Council sets fees and charges. The schedule of fees is as follows:

Initial Application Fee: \$500

Annual Accreditation fee: \$375; billed July 1.

Onsite Review fee: None

Substantive Change fee: None

Visiting Team expenses: Variable; the responsibility of the academic institution under review

Explanation of Fees and Charges

The **Annual fee** is assessed to the program administering the accredited curricula, but is not assessed to each individual accredited curriculum.

~~**Annual and Review fee** revenues help underwrite educational review committee costs, maintenance of Council on Higher Education Accreditation recognition status, marketing of accreditation to prospective employers and students, and other program expenses directly associated with the accreditation process. SAF also allocates a percentage of membership dues revenue to accreditation activities, and absorbs overhead normally associated with these expenses.~~

Visiting Team expenses include travel expenses for the team members including any accompanying SAF staff – lodging, meals, and miscellaneous expenses related to the conduct of the visit. Team member expenses are not to exceed the per diem rate of the institution under review. These expenses are paid by the academic institution under review, and are in addition to the on-site review fee.

Unless otherwise requested, SAF will arrange team travel, reimburse expenses of team members, and subsequently invoice the institution undergoing the on-site visit.

Receipt of Fees and Charges

All review fees and charges are due and payable when invoiced. Late payments may jeopardize a program's application or accreditation status.

Upon request from the chief administrative officer, programs are permitted to withdraw voluntarily from any status of accreditation at any time before final action by the Committee. Programs that voluntarily withdraw following Committee action will have this decision published by the Society. Half the review fee will be refunded if the withdrawal comes before final selection of the review panel. There will be no refund of the application fee once the visiting team has been selected and the forest technology program head notified.

Appeal of SAF Accreditation Status Decisions

An institution may appeal a negative action of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. Appeals are heard and decided by the Society's governing body, the SAF Council, which for this purpose includes a public member representative. A negative decision is defined as a denial of initial or continued accreditation status. Grounds for appeal are limited to allegations that the Committee has made an erroneous decision by:

1. Failing to adhere to Accreditation Standards (See Part I);
2. Failing to follow Accreditation Procedures (See Part II); or
3. Failing to consider or accurately interpret all the evidence and documentation presented on behalf of the application (See Part III).

The status of the program will remain unchanged pending the outcome of the appeal. There will be no public notice of a negative decision until the appeal is complete and the Council has taken final action on the appeal.

The appeal must come from the chief administrative officer of the institution, must be in writing to the SAF president, must specify the grounds for the appeal, and must request a hearing. This request for a hearing must be made within 30 days of the date of the SAF executive vice president's formal letter giving notice of the negative decision.

The institution has 90 days from the date of notification from SAF to submit detailed documentation supporting its position and its request. This documentation will be made a part of the record. It should be organized to state the issues clearly and must contain sufficient detail and information to support the position of the institution. The hearing will be held before the Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting occurring 45 or more days after receipt of the detailed documentation. The institution will be given at least 30 days notice of the time and place. The hearing will be conducted in accord with due process, i.e., the institution will have the opportunity to present its case and to respond to questions. The institution's chief administrative officer may request, at the time of submitting the documentation, that the chair, Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation be available to answer questions regarding the Committee's decision. The SAF and the institution shall each be responsible for its own expenses.

In addition to considering the written documentation and the testimony introduced by the institution at the hearing, Council will consider the institution's self-evaluation report, the visiting team's report, and any other material upon which the Committee based its findings and decision.

The Council shall issue a written statement of its decision on the appeal, including the facts and reasons that are the basis for its action, and respond to the program's grounds for an appeal within 45 days after the hearing. The Council's decision in an appeal case may be to:

1. Uphold the decision of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation,
2. Recommend remanding the decision to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, with reasons to explain this action, or
3. To overturn the decision of the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation.

In this action, all decisions of the Council shall be final.

If the decision to deny accreditation status is upheld, the program may reapply only after it is prepared to demonstrate that it has corrected the deficiencies noted in the Council action. In any event, it must wait at least one year before reapplying.

Procedures for Responding to Complaints Against Accredited Programs

The SAF is concerned with accredited program's performance consistent with the SAF Accreditation Standards, program accountability, and program integrity. SAF cannot intervene in internal procedures of institutions or perform as a regulatory body but will respond to documented complaints. The SAF's review of complaints is based upon the Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology.

A complaint to the SAF about a candidate or accredited program must:

1. Be typewritten, signed, and addressed to the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation in care of the SAF Associate Director of Science and Education.
2. Clearly identify the individual, group, or legal entity making the complaint.
3. Present substantial evidence that a program has made substantive changes affecting its quality or has been or is engaging in practices that violate SAF Standards and Procedures for Accrediting Educational Programs in Forest Technology; such evidence should state relevant facts, and, when possible, cite written materials and individuals for corroboration.
4. Demonstrate, when reasonably possible, that a serious effort has been made to pursue the issue with the institution or program and that all review procedures provided within the institution and the program have been exhausted.

The SAF Associate Director of Science and Education, in consultation with the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation, will review the complaint. If it does not appear to be within the scope of the SAF's policies and jurisdiction, the complainant shall be so informed within a 30-day period of receipt of documentation. If the complaint appears to be within the scope of the SAF's policies and jurisdiction, the complainant will be notified within a 30-day period that the complaint is being forwarded to the institution and program for response. The chief administrative officer of the institution will be requested to respond and advise the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation what action has been or is being taken to resolve the issue. The reply from the institution should be responsive. If no reply is received from the institution within the following 45 days, a second and final request will be sent.

The Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation will review the response from the institution at its next scheduled meeting and determine whether the matter should be closed or discussed for action. If no response is received from the institution under the above guidelines, the Committee shall act, which may include a request why accreditation should not be terminated.

The complainant will be informed periodically of the steps taken by the SAF in investigating the complaint, including any action taken by the Committee. If appropriate, material relating to a complaint will be filed and reviewed at the time of the next regularly scheduled review.

PART III: GUIDELINES FOR FOREST TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION REPORTS

The Procedures for SAF accreditation of education programs in forest technology require an accreditation report (report) to be submitted by the program head for review by a visiting team and the Committee on Forest Technology School Accreditation. The report is intended as a document to show compliance with each of the criteria within each of the standards for accreditation. The report should consist of a narrative addressing, describing, explaining, and analyzing each of the criteria, standard-by-standard. Included in the body of the narrative or referenced in appended exhibits should be appropriate documentary evidence showing compliance with the criteria; such as lists, tables, publications, photos, letters, etc.

All SAF Recognition Reports are required to be submitted in twelve bound copies. One copy will be sent to each member of the Committee and three copies to the SAF National Office. Programs are encouraged to submit an electronic version of the report with the bound copy. Electronic versions will eventually be the standard for document transmittal.

Suggestions regarding format, content, and documentation are as follows:

Assembly

All copies of the report shall be bound in some fashion, such as a loose-leaf binder.

Tabs separating and identifying sections and exhibits are helpful.

A table of contents should identify major sections of the report; all pages shall be numbered.

A minimum of 12 copies will be needed by SAF.

The **Title Page** shall include:

- Title of report, including purpose; i.e., initial or continued accreditation
- Name of institution
- Name of program
- Date report prepared
- Name, address, and phone number of program head or other contact persons

Narrative

Shall be organized standard-by-standard, criterion-by-criterion, with reference to the standard and criterion being addressed.

Statements must describe, explain, and analyze how the criterion is met - not just state that it is met.

Reference to exhibits should be by exhibit number and page.

Documentation

Each exhibit shall be clearly numbered or otherwise identified.

Documentation may be incorporated within the narrative or appended as appropriate.

A list of documents providing exhibit number and document title shall be included in the table of contents or the forward to the appendix.

An "*" before a document item in the following section means that documentation is required; all other listed items are suggestions.

Suggested Narrative Content and Documentation for Each Accreditation Standard

Standard I: Program Objectives

Narrative shall include:

1. Name of institution, name of academic unit within institution where forest technology program is housed, title of educational program(s) being submitted for accreditation, full and exact title of degree granted to graduates of the program, full and exact title of degree information carried on the academic transcript of graduates of the program.
2. Statement that program is offered as a two-year, associate degree program or its equivalent and that it is not a correspondence or pre-professional course of study.
3. Detailed statement of the program goals and objectives with specific reference to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought to be imparted to the student.
4. Specific examples of how the program objectives are consistent with those of the parent institution, who the program's primary constituencies are, how the objectives serve those constituencies, and how the objectives meet the needs of society and the forestry profession.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Statements from or references to specific pages in the current academic catalog, brochures, pamphlets, or other documents where objectives are publicly stated and available.
- *2. Copies of current academic catalogs, brochures, pamphlets, etc. showing programs and degrees offered.
3. Excerpts from appropriate institutional reports or other sources.

Standard II: Curriculum

Narrative shall include:

1. General summary of how the current curriculum was developed, current curriculum planning, and changes being considered.
2. Contact hours - number of lecture and laboratory contact hours in program.
3. Technical subject matter areas -
 - a. List of subject areas and which courses in curriculum provide complete or partial coverage of each area
 - b. Statement as to strengths and weaknesses of curriculum to provide coverage of the broad content description of each subject matter area
4. General education - summary of general education goals and objectives and listing of specific courses used to meet these objectives.
5. Course syllabi or outlines - statement of status and review procedures.
6. Instructional materials and textbooks - summary of which courses require textbooks, which do not, which textbooks are used, and what additional or alternative instructional materials are used.
7. Safety instruction - specific examples of all formal safety instruction.
8. Forestry-related work experience of a reasonable duration - statement and examples as to how this criterion is met.
9. Online instruction - online course hours will designated as a lecture component when calculating instruction hours for SAF Recognition. An online course cannot meet indoor and field laboratory instruction.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Copies of current official curriculum, including course descriptions.
- *2. Listing of scheduled lecture and laboratory hours in each course including a listing of any online course hours.
- *3. Copies of current course outlines and syllabi for technical subject matter areas noted in Standard #2, showing date last revised.
- *4. Listing of instructional materials and textbooks used in each course, including reference materials and handouts.
- *5. List of courses that expose students to hazardous situations and the safety equipment or procedures used to minimize those hazards.
6. Internal student/advisor curriculum guides.
7. Examples of final exams.
8. Copies of departmental course book requisitions.
- *9. Examples of work experience documentation required by institution, field project course descriptions, duration, and field project reports or paid work experience contracts.
10. A summary matrix displaying the relationship between required technical subject areas and the college's major courses.

Standard III: Faculty

Narrative shall include:

1. General - statement as to who the forest technician faculty are, how they are organized and administered, role of each faculty member in the program, how the faculty functions as a group, and the faculty's current adequacy.
2. Student/Faculty laboratory ratios - summary statement of average number of students per faculty member in various laboratory course, based on past two academic years.
3. Full-time equivalent student/teacher ratio - calculation, showing figures, of FTE student/teacher ratio

$$\text{Ratio} = (x/y)/z$$

Where:

x = Total credit hour production of forest technician faculty; equal to the grand sum of course enrollment times course credit hours for each course taught by each forest technician faculty member for past academic year, including courses outside forest technician program.

y = Credit hours taken by FTE student; equal to 30 semester, or 45 quarter, hours per academic year.

z = FTE teachers on forest technician faculty.

4. Faculty development - summary with specific examples, of professional development activities of each faculty member over past five years; including dates, locations, and assignments as appropriate.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. A table listing each of forest technician program faculty and containing: name, rank (title), appointment (full-time, part-time; 9 mo., 12 mo.), full-time equivalent teaching assignment and all courses taught or participated in the past academic year, including the type of participation (laboratory, lecture, recitation).
- *2. Current resume for each person involved in teaching or assisting in forestry or forestry-related subject matter; including name, rank, educational background, employment history, professional memberships, and professional, scientific, technical, or scholarly activities for past five years.
- *3. Job descriptions for program head, faculty, and staff.
- *4. Course/lab class enrollments or rosters for past two years.
- *5. Completed FTE documentation sheet.

Standard IV: Students

Narrative shall include:

1. General - summary statement of current and projected student trends; including enrollment, graduation, and employment trends and student body profile.
2. Recruitment, admissions, retention, and graduation policies - summary of these policies including how they contribute to realization of program objectives and compare to parent institution policies.
3. Advising, counseling, and career guidance - summary statement of these activities including who is responsible, role of faculty and others, current pattern of academic guidance, and student opportunities for remedial assistance.

4. Leadership and cultural awareness opportunities - summary statement of specific opportunities including degree of student involvement, organizations, courses, and activities.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Summary tables of enrollments and degrees granted for past five years.
- *2. Copies of official admissions, probation and dismissal, and graduation policies or requirements.
- *3. Statements from individual recent graduates or student/graduate organizations giving their assessment of the program within the context of the standards.
- 4. Summary tables showing mean and range of standardized test scores, such as SAT or ACT, for entering freshmen for past several years.
- 5. Copies of program degree schedules (academic advisor plan sheets).
- 6. Brochures or references on available counseling services or other available advising and career services.
- 6. Copies of current student affairs reports listing student organizations, cultural activities, or course descriptions.

Standard V: Program

Narrative shall include:

- 1. Technology program faculty separate and distinct - summarize how the forest technology program fits in the overall institution and its relation to other units, including reporting and supervising lines of the program head.
- 2. Advisory body - summary statement of role and function of advisory body including its meeting schedule, general size, and make-up.
- 3. Cooperative relations - summary, with specific examples of regional industries, organizations, and agencies the program is working with and in what manner.
- 4. Technical, clerical, secretarial, and custodial support - summary statement of adequacy of this support, including amounts and types available.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Organizational chart showing program position in institution and reporting lines.
- *2. List of current advisory body members with titles and addresses; minutes of recent advisory body meetings; copy of written guidelines showing length of member's term, responsibilities, and operational procedures.
- 3. Listing of technical, secretarial, clerical, and custodial personnel including appointment and function.
- 4. Letters from individuals or groups providing assessment of program.
- *5. Sample work agreements, letters of cooperation, or other documentation showing cooperative activities.

Standard VI: Parent Institution and Supporting Areas

Narrative shall include:

1. General - summary statement of history, mission, accreditation status, and recent changes or trends of parent institution.
2. Library facilities - summary of general library resources and services available with specific reference to forestry and forestry-related materials and services.
3. Budget - summary of institutional and program budgets; including trends, specific reference to adequacy of funds for noted criteria listed in standard, and role of program in development of budget.
4. Student placement - summary statement, with specific examples, of placement services available to students, follow-up surveys conducted, and history of placement success for past five years.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Copies of or reference to institutional mission and scope statement and accreditation status.
- *2. Listing of current forestry-related periodicals and resource materials added during the past two years.
- *3. Copies of program and/or department's budgets for past two fiscal years.
- *4. Table showing placement record of graduates for past five years by employment type and employer type.
5. Brochures on placement services, samples of placement questionnaires, or listing of past employers.

Standard VII: Physical Resources and Facilities

Narrative shall include:

1. Outdoor laboratories/school forest - summary statement regarding adequacy, availability, and utilization; including type, size, and location of forestlands and specific examples of student usage.
2. Classrooms, laboratories, shops, and equipment - summary statement regarding adequacy, availability, and utilization; including type, size, and location.
3. Audio-visual and instructional materials and equipment - summary statement regarding adequacy, availability, and utilization; including types and where they are incorporated into program, with specific references to computer resources.
4. Student transportation - summary statement of adequacy, availability, and utilization of student transportation on field projects; including how students are transported and how transportation is funded.
5. Arrangement of facilities - summary statement of adequacy; including description of facilities.

Documentation shall include:

- *1. Map(s) and/or aerial photographs showing vegetation type, size, and location of field laboratories relative to campus.
- *2. Campus map(s) showing location of forest technician program and other facilities such as library, shops, school forests, etc.
- *3. List of classroom, laboratory, office, shop, or other space utilized by program; including size, use, capacity, and campus unit controlling assignment.

*4. List of copy of current inventory of equipment and vehicles available to program; including campus unit controlling the items.

5. Photos of facilities and resources utilized by program.

6. Lists of films or other audio-visual materials used.

7. Brochures regarding facilities, resources, or materials.

* Indicates required documentation

NOTE: These standards and procedures are reviewed periodically and may be modified when appropriate. Answers to questions regarding clarification, interpretation, or application may be issued only by the SAF national office

