



Alaska Society of American Foresters

Cook Inlet Chapter
Dixon Entrance Chapter
Juneau Chapter
Sitka Chapter
Stikine Chapter
Yukon River Chapter

Dr. Carol Lewis, Dean & Director
UAF School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences
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Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7200

Dr. Carol Lewis,

The Alaska Society of American Foresters (AK-SAF) would like to commend the University of Alaska for the number of high quality forestry professionals that it has trained over the years. The Alaska Society contains many proud Alumni of the UAF forestry program. Our ranks also include current and retired faculty and staff from UAF.

It is our understanding that the School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences is considering major changes. We at the Alaska SAF understand the need for academic programs to stay dynamic and relevant to professional and enrollment trends. As the University contemplates changes to the program, the Alaska SAF would like to underscore the importance of SAF accreditation. The SAF accreditation program has been of great value in helping recent forestry graduates demonstrate their credentials to potential employers. The majority of forestry jobs in Alaska involve working for either State or Federal agencies. Both State and Federal organizations place great weight on SAF accreditation. In fact, it can be very difficult for a graduate from a non-accredited program to get a government job in Alaska. We feel it would be a great shame to give out-of-state graduates an advantage over Alaskans. Likewise, sending our Alaskan students out of state for higher education in forestry would constitute a substantial brain drain that causes us great concern.

Furthermore, the Alaskan SAF sees a great opportunity for the UAF to expand and enhance an applied forestry program. Universities nationwide are shrinking, transforming, or eliminating their forestry programs. Programs at other universities are becoming diluted in regards to training in the fundamentals of forestry science. There is still a great need for these skills! In fact, with the population of working foresters aging nationwide, there will be a great need for new forest managers. The School has the opportunity to restructure its forestry program to be the premier program in nation. The AK-SAF would be honored if UAF continued their academic support of its accredited forest education program. Therefore we would highly recommend continued support of and recruitment of the best and brightest forestry faculty and students. Please offer the opportunity for young Alaskans and others to learn how to manage the forest resources that continue to be part their lives.

Respectfully,

Kathryn Pyne, State SAF Chair and UAF Alumnus
and
The Alaska SAF Executive Committee