

RELEVANCY OF CERTIFIED FORESTERS TO  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY FOREST RESOURCE PROGRAMS  
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In 2019 the SAF Board of Directors authorized creation of a team to explore how to incorporate the Certified Forester (CF) exam into SAF forestry and natural resource academic programs exploring costs, outcomes, and measures of success. As part of the effort, the team chose to survey the membership of the National Association of University Forest Resources Program leaders (NAUFRP) to provide insight into the value of SAF's CF to graduating students.

[NAUFRP](#) is a non-profit organization that represents 80 of the United States' most prestigious universities and their respective scientists, educators and extension specialists. Membership is composed of the directors of forest resource programs in the 50 states and 8 U.S. territories. NAUFRP strives to provide information in response to the public's need to understand forest resources management. NAUFRP has long standing relationship with SAF and its membership.

A brief 10-question survey was developed by the SAF committee to NAUFRP members seeking feedback on the opportunities for member institutions to encourage and provide CF exams to graduating students. The survey was sent directly by NAUFRP to its member institutions with a total of 25 survey responses being completed.

### **Summary**

Seventy-six percent of NAUFRP respondents supported the concept/idea of their graduating students taking the SAF C F exam to gain Candidate Certified Forester (CCF) status. Seventy-two percent of respondents saw potential value of their students passing the CF exam as being a measure of academic success. Yet, only 16% would be able to cover a portion of the costs for the CF exam and had many questions on the professional value of the CF.

### **Survey Results**

- One hundred percent of NAUFRP respondents indicated that their universities have an active SAF Student Chapter.
- Sixty-four percent of respondents think it would be appropriate for the CF exam to be administered to their graduating students.
- Seventy-six percent of respondents support the concept/idea of students taking the CF exam.
- Forty percent of respondents thought the best time for their students to take the exam was during their last quarter/semester before graduation. Twenty-eight percent were interested in offering the CF exam to graduating alumni.
- 68-80 percent indicated the need for SAF study guides; prep sessions, and help with promotion/registration for CF exams.
- 40-64 percent of respondents need CF exam promotion assistance from SAF including such items as personal student invites; recruiting flier and social media.
- Dean, department head or SAF student advisors were identified as the "champions" for student CF exam recruiting.

- Seventy-two percent of the respondents indicated that CF exam results could be used as one measure of academic success.
- Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated that costs of administering the exam would be passed on to the students.

**Comments provided by respondents:**

1. What value would CF exams provide graduating students?
2. We need to know more about the CF program to assess its value. Is there some market analysis? Is there public employer support?
3. Can we see the exam and learn how it is structured?
4. We are interested in providing CF exam opportunity to interested students who are willing to pay the fee and will help in providing assistance.
5. Will the CF exam results be available for each student?
6. The CF status is not important in our region, where many states already have licensing requirements.
7. How does the CF exam replace the need for forester licensing – how does it work?

**Survey Questions**

1. Does your college/school/department have an active SAF Student Chapter?
2. Do you think it would be appropriate for the SAF Certified Forester exam to be administered to your graduating students?
3. Would your college/school/department support the concept/idea of your students taking the SAF Certified Forester exam?
4. When is the best time for your students to take the CF exam?
5. What support from SAF would your college/school/department need to give the CF exam?
6. If the exam were not required, what assistance or information would your college/school/department need to encourage your students to take the CF exam?
7. Who at your college/school/department would be the best “champion” for implementing the CF exam for your students?
8. Could your college/school/department use the students’ results of the CFM exam as a way to measure/document academic success?
9. In terms of covering the costs (est. \$260/student) of administering the CF exam our college/school/department would:
10. What additional information would your college/school/department need to implement the CF exam for your students?