

K-12 Outreach – Informal Survey of NAUFRP Members

Report summarizing results

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**** This is intended as an internal document to provide information for NAUFRP member institutions ****

Purpose of Exercise: To develop an overview of activities undertaken by forestry programs to engage with K-12 and how these are evaluated, and to brainstorm potential new approaches.

Product: Results will be summarized and shared with NAUFRP members (this document).

Note: This is not a scientific survey. It was conducted as part of a workshop at the NAUFRP General Assembly in Fall 2019 in Louisville, KY. Participants completed the survey as part of working in breakout groups to share ideas about what is effective in outreach to K-12, and how these activities might be assessed.

Question: What is your view of how the forestry profession is perceived in your geographic area? (Check box) 1 = Very positively, 10 = very negatively.

Range: 1-9, Mean 3.86.

East	Range: 2-7
Midwest	Range 1-9
South	Range 1-4
West	Range 1-8

Question: How aware are K-12 students of opportunities for careers in forestry? (Check box) 1 = Very aware, 10 = Not aware.

Range: 3-9, Mean 6.45.

East	Range: 4-9
Midwest	Range: 3-9
South	Range: 3-9
West	Range: 3-8

Question: Who has primary responsibility for K-12 outreach in forestry at your institution? (Options: University extension, University recruiting, Academic units, Other)

University extension	6/29	5 listed as only group with primary responsibility
University recruiting	11/29	4 listed as only group with primary responsibility
Academic units	13/29	9 listed as only group with primary responsibility
Other	7/29	Responses included state DNR and forestry groups, project learning tree, special programs (career fairs, summer camp etc.)

Question: Who has primary responsibility for K-12 outreach in forestry in your academic unit? (Recruiter, Faculty, Academic Advisor, Outreach Specialist, Other)

Recruiter	8/29	5 listed as only group with primary responsibility
Faculty	9/29	5 listed as only group with primary responsibility
Academic Advisor	9/29	4 listed as only group with primary responsibility
Outreach Specialist	6/29	3 listed as only group with primary responsibility
Other	4/29	Responses included department head/chair (both as only one with responsibility), student ambassadors, multiple ways.

Question: To what extent are K-12 outreach efforts assessed for their effectiveness?

1 = No assessment, 10 = Fully assessed

Mean 3.46, Range: 1-9

Of 28 responses, 4 scored above 5, and 17 scored 3 or lower.

Question: How satisfied are you with the K-12 outreach at your institution?

1 = Very, 10 = Not satisfied

Mean 7.00, Range 2-10

Of 29 responses, 21 scored as 6 or higher (6 scored as a 10)

Question: How satisfied are you with the K-12 outreach in your academic unit?

1 = Very, 10 = Not satisfied

Mean 6.17, Range 2-10

Of 29 responses, 19 scored as 6 or higher (3 scored as a 10)

Question: What factors most limit the K-12 outreach in your institution or academic unit?

Open response

Most frequent responses related to:

Personnel/Staffing

Funding

Time

Sample comments: faculty view it as additional duty, efforts not coordinated, lack of K-12 expertise, no student ambassadors, cap on enrollment, lack of leadership/commitment.

Prompt: Briefly describe the two most significant K-12 activities that your unit engages in AND how these are assessed.

Wide range of responses describing different activities. These were categorized into some general groupings listed below.

Activity type	Number
4-H programs	4
School visits	5
Project learning tree	7
Science festival	2
Programs for teachers	3
Field or other residential camps	8
Open houses	4
Environmental outreach center	2
Student ambassadors or similar	4

Note that this list is for ones considered to be most significant. Some programs include some level of assessment, often when partnering with others. Most programs either not assessed, or assessment was not mentioned.

Prompt: Discuss with others what K-12 activities they are involved in and how these are assessed, and discuss ideas for new K-12 outreach programs and how these might be assessed. Briefly describe two of these that you would be most interested in implementing.

Wide range of responses describing different activities. These were categorized into some general groupings listed below.

Activity type	Number
None	8
Alumni ambassadors	1
Student ambassadors or similar	6
Social media	4
Project learning tree	2
Field or other residential camps	3
Special programs (often collaborative)	8
Teacher workshops	6

General Observations:

Respondents indicated that perceptions of the forestry profession are very variable, and this variation also exists within regions. Awareness of careers in forestry among K-12 students also varies, but no respondents indicated very aware, and the mean response was towards the not aware end of the scale. Major responsibility for K-12 outreach is mostly with the academic unit and/or the university, with 1/3 of respondents indicating that it lies solely with the academic unit. Most respondents were dissatisfied with

K-12 outreach to some extent at both the institutional and academic unit level. The barriers to such outreach include funding, personnel, and time. Assessment of these outreach activities overall is very limited.

Many institutions partner with other groups to enhance K-12 outreach, including project learning tree, state agencies, and other state organizations. Field and other residential experiences for K-12 are considered significant outreach activities. Outreach programs that people are interested in implementing include student ambassador programs, teacher workshops, and special programs of various types that often include collaborators. Almost 1/3 of respondents did not identify any new outreach activities that they are interested in implementing.

Given the limits of personnel, funding, and time, K-12 outreach may benefit from involvement of students as ambassadors, collaboration with other organizations, and working with teachers. Increased effort to assess the effectiveness of these programs in impacting perceptions of forestry related careers and increasing applications and enrollments in forestry programs will optimize the use of limited resources for these activities. As a number of respondents pointed out, it is essential that outreach activities are inclusive of underrepresented groups. Efforts that focus on underrepresented groups will be essential if the profession is to better represent society as a whole.

Thank you to the NAUFRP members who contributed to these data.

They include representatives from: Auburn University, Clemson University, Colorado State University, Humboldt State University, Iowa State University, Louisiana State University, Michigan State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State, Northern Arizona University, Salish Kootenai College, Southern Illinois University, Stephan F Austin State University, Suny ESF, University of California - Berkeley, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Idaho, University of Minnesota, University of Montana, University of New Hampshire, University of Tennessee, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, Virginia Tech, Washington State University.