

Education Committee report: October 2025

National Association of University Forest Resource Programs (NAUFRP) Executive Committee meeting, Hartford CT.

Andrew J. Storer, Education Committee Chair
storer@mtu.edu

1. SAF Accreditation - Education Policy Review Committee

Key personnel at SAF:

Erin Turner, Director of Credentialling.
Su Ann Shupp, Accreditation Manager.

The education committee chair continues to serve on the Education Policy Review Committee (EPRC) of SAF and was reappointed in December 2023. In addition, the chair was appointed as liaison to the Committee on Accreditation (COA), a new position designed to assist in information sharing between these two groups. The chair has been asked to continue to serve on the EPRC for the upcoming year during which significant updates to the accreditation standards are anticipated.

Since the March 2025 Education Committee update to the NAUFRP executive committee, the EPRC has met on two occasions, and the EPRC liaison has met with the Committee on Accreditation.

Since the March 2025 update, SAF has decided to withdraw its application to CHEA. This stems in part from CHEA currently not changing its accreditation standards in response to the evolving landscape of federal and state legislation and regulations. They would continue to require that programs post certain materials on their website. Many programs have reviewed their webpages with their institutions and chosen to remove certain content that would have been required by CHEA. With both federal executive orders and state legislation changing so rapidly, SAF has decided it would be in the best interest of accredited programs and SAF as an accrediting body to withdraw the CHEA application for the time being.

Discussions about accreditation of minors and other programs has continued.

- Minors: A minor can be accredited as long as it meets all the requirements of one of the four current SAF Accreditation Standards: Forest technology, Forestry, Urban Forestry, or Natural Resources and Ecosystem Management. These minors are linked with majors that address the accreditation standards. The EPRC advises that SAF should not be in the business of accrediting minors using a different set of standards from those available for Forest Technology, Forestry, Urban Forestry, or Natural Resources and Ecosystem Management.
- Niche micro credentialling: This work will not be competition with the current credentials. They will be housed in the Professional Development and Membership Engagement Department.

As liaison to the Committee on Accreditation, the following concerns/suggestions were heard. These will be considered by EPRC as the accreditation handbook is updated in 2026.

- Site Visits and Related Issues - With handbook updates, to what extent do we need to make changes, and what other guidance may we offer visiting teams and programs. This includes guidance for writing the visiting team report.
- Online Programs - COA conversations are very much in line with EPRCs' over the last few years. These center around the limited time in the forest, exposure to faculty and how to do forest-level planning when people only spend a few days in the field.
- 2+2 and 3+1+1 – There is an increase in candidate and pilot programs that use these models. Questions include which institution awards the degree? And where content is taught vs where the degree is awarded? There is less concern about 2 + 2 where both are accredited compared with 3 + 1 + 1 models. The accreditation standards revision is a good opportunity to provide guidance to the visiting teams. The focus will be on outcomes SAF wants to see from the programs vs prescriptive methods to reach them. This would help the visiting team and COA.

2. Education Committee planning

The education committee chair has largely functioned as a committee of one, and work has focused in the area of SAF accreditation. The representation of NAUFRP on the EPRC of SAF is valuable and helps keep opportunities for two-way communication between NAUFRP and SAF open. The upcoming year will be busy with the updates to the accreditation handbook. The role as liaison to the COA is a new one, and the current SAF convention will be the first time that the liaison from EPRC to the COA has participated in the COA meetings where reports on programs being considered for accreditation or reaccreditation are reviewed. The education committee chair will report to the NAUFRP executive committee about the value of this liaison role at the March 2026 executive committee meeting.

As the executive committee identifies other areas where the education committee can serve the needs of NAUFRP, it will be useful to consider adding to the membership of the education committee. Potential topics include tracking graduates from our programs, building on the session relating to AI in forestry education from the Fall 2024 General Assembly, as well as the continued work on enrollment trends led by Terry Sharik and Tara Bal.