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A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE PRODUCTS CURRICULUM IS PROPOSED

Floyd Manwiller

It has been a long-standing philosophy of the Department of Forestry that all graduates earning a BS degree be qualified Forest Resource Managers. In keeping with this philosophy, students in the Forest Products option take many of the Resource Management courses, and to meet their interest in wood utilization, take the six products courses. This curriculum has prepared our graduates well for production positions in industry and the vast majority do take industrial positions in wood utilization rather than in Resource Management.

However, the last visiting Society of American Foresters accreditation team felt that the products curriculum was lacking some coursework required of Resource Managers. The team also stated that the current curriculum did not prepare students for professional careers in the marketing of forest products. More recently a Board of Regents review team suggested evaluation of the course mix in the products option. They recommended that courses from other departments be required to better fit student needs. Students presently have 20 credits of free electives. We informally advise them to use a majority of the electives to more fully prepare themselves for a career in the area of their interest. With the credits available a student could earn a minor in another department. However, the choice of option is made late in the sophomore year and by then it is often difficult to acquire the prerequisites needed for a minor. Also, a considerable number of students transfer into Forestry with electives used up by courses not required in our curriculum.

To address the expressed concerns and better prepare our Products graduates for a challenging career, we are consider-

ing a major change in philosophy and coursework for the option. In the curriculum as now envisioned, the student would choose an option on entering Forestry. Products students would take 14 Forestry credits in common with Resource Management students. All Products students would also take a core of approximately 25 credits, composed primarily of our current Products courses. A student would, in addition, choose between one of three areas of specialization: Production Management, Sales and Marketing, or Product Development. Each area would have required courses of 18 to 22 credits, depending on the area, and approximately 13 to 17 credits of electives. Products students would not attend the three-week fall camp but would participate in a one-week industry tour.

The new curriculum will be implemented with the 1999 catalog and will affect students entering the program beginning with the 1999 fall semester. We must have the new curriculum in final form by September 1998 so we have one year to confer with departments in which our students will be required to take courses and to seek advice from alumni and friends.