



Department of Wildland Resources

Exit interviews and questionnaire surveys conducted with graduating senior students: Academic Year 2008-09

In December of 2008 and April of 2009 the graduating seniors met for working luncheons with the Department Head. Those meeting in December (N = 8) were graduating at the end of the fall semester and those meeting April (N = 13) were graduating at the end of the spring semester. Before each luncheon, students were asked to complete an anonymous written questionnaire and deposit it in a box at the luncheon. All attendees at the luncheons completed the questionnaire. During each luncheon, the Department Head used the attendees as a focus group to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the academic services provided to students by the Department throughout their undergraduate years.

Numeric responses to the questionnaires in spring and fall were combined and are presented in Tables 1 & 2.

Table 1. Provision of services to students by the department. Responses could be ‘strongly agree’ (SA), ‘agree’ (A), ‘neutral’ (N), ‘disagree’ (D), or ‘strongly disagree’ (SD). Respondents were from graduating seniors of AY 2008-09 (N=21). Values in cells indicate the number of times each response was selected.

* 1 student gave no rating for this statement.

Responses:	SA	A	N	D	SD
My advisor was generally helpful in guiding my progress through the program.	7	6	2	3	3
My advisor was usually available when I needed Suggestions.	10	4	4	2	1
I feel that little or no student advisement is needed. *		1	1	11	7
There was too much repetition of course content across classes.		7	8	6	
I feel laboratories in courses are necessary to apply skills and knowledge learned in classrooms.	11	8	2		
Course field trips and field exercises are important for professional development.	17	4			
The best teachers were able to illustrate classroom principles with examples from their research.	6	10	2	3	
I feel the WILD Department has a responsibility to help its students find employment.	4	7	6	4	
The WILD Department did an adequate job of informing students about the outlook for jobs in the field.	4	8	5	4	
I received adequate assistance from the WILD Department and/or CNR in applying for and locating jobs in my field.	2	9	8	1	1
Professors heavily involved in research tend to neglect their teaching duties.	1	3	8	9	

Table 2. Success in providing skills required for managing wildland resources. Scores range from 0 (completely unsuccessful) to 10 (completely successful). Respondents were combined from graduating seniors of AY 2008-09 (N=21). Values in cells indicate the number of times each score was selected.

*1 student gave no rating for this statement.

Scores:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ability to deal with economic considerations of natural resources.				1	2	3	4	2	6	2	1
Ability to assess how much use ecosystems can withstand and still be productive on a sustained basis.						2	3	4	6	4	2
Skills in observing a terrestrial ecosystem and determining its current condition.			1	1			3	5	4	5	2
Ability to observe a landscape and evaluate how past uses and events have affected current conditions.						2	1	2	9	4	3
Understanding of the economic valuation of environmental services (clean water, aesthetics, recreation, pollination, C storage, etc).				2			6	4	3	2	4
Understanding of conservation biology and managing for threatened and endangered species.						1	2	5	7	3	3
Ability to deal with political processes associated with resource management decisions.			1	2	2	3		4	4	3	2
A working knowledge of sources of information available to wildland managers.			1		3	1	2		1	6	7
The ability to use computers.				1		1	1	1	5	6	6
Skills in applying sampling theories and evaluation techniques to analyze field problems.	1	1				2		8	6	1	2
Knowledge of plant identification and the ability to apply that knowledge in the field.							1	2	3	8	7
Skill in recognizing and dealing with problems of soil erosion and watershed management.			2	1	1		6	4	4	2	1
Ability to systematically solve problems from a broad ecological perspective.					2	1	3		8	5	2
Ability to apply management principles to solve problems in field situations. *						2	1	1	9	5	2
Ability to incorporate social attitudes to address environmental management problems and issues.						1	2	2	7	8	1
Ability to critically read, analyze, and use information in the scientific literature.						1		6	2	8	4
Ability to make persuasive and effective public presentations.							5	4	5	4	3
Skills and practice in technical report writing.					3		2	2	6	4	4
Skills in communicating research findings in one-on-one discussions with people from non-scientific backgrounds.		1		2		1	4	4	8	1	
Ability to think holistically and identify the consequences of management practices on the entire ecosystem.							2	4	4	8	3
Ability to analyze a problem by examining its component parts, then organizing data and information into a coherent whole.						3	1	3	8	4	2
Motivation to stay current in the field by continually updating knowledge and skills.						2	4	1	3	7	4
Motivation to maintain involvement with professional organizations in the field of your major.				1	1		2	1	2	11	3
Commitment to professional standards and ethics.						2			7	5	7
Broad general knowledge of world environmental management problems.				1	1	2		2	7	7	1
Knowledge of current sociopolitical issues in wildland management.							3	5	5	6	2
Overall success across all categories:	1	2	5	12	15	30	58	76	139	129	78