

Program Review

Executive Summary

Forest Technology

Majors Reviewed:

- *Forest Technology, A.A.S.*

AY2021-22



Pennsylvania
College of Technology

A Penn State Affiliate

The Forest Technology (A.A.S.) degree is a long-standing and popular offering at Penn College. The Forestry Technology program was recently reaccredited by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) through December 2031. The curriculum adheres to SAF required course subjects on safety, ecology, biology, wildlife, measurement of forest resources, forest resources policy and economics, silviculture, and forest management. Some highlights unique to this degree are the sawmill, kiln, log truck, skidder, dozer, 180-acre outdoor learning lab, and proximity to multiple state forests. These resources enable the College to instruct students in all aspects of forestry = from seedling germination, proper intermediate silvicultural treatments, necessary harvesting of mature trees, and the formation of forest products from the logs produced. Forest products harvested from logs are further analyzed and processed into value-added materials through kiln drying and secondary processing. Students learn forest production techniques as well as the importance of conservation and forest sustainability through proper management.

Graduates of the Forest Technology program work for government forestry conservation organizations such as the PA Department of Natural Resources (DCNR) and throughout the private forest production industry as forest technicians. Recent years have seen an increase in demand for utility foresters who work for power companies on Right of Way (ROW) clearing and maintenance. Other job opportunities lie within the US forestry Service as technicians and wildland firefighters. Private industry is beginning to look to our graduates to fill employment opportunities in all aspects of their companies' services. This includes procurement foresters, sawyers, and lumber graders in the mill setting. The impact of Penn College Forest Technology graduates is evident in all sectors of the forestry, wood products, and tree care industries.

Faculty continue to promote new opportunities for forestry students to earn industry certifications such as wildland fire fighting, pesticide applicator licensing, telehandler operations, and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) core level certifications.

A summary of significant goals for the next five years is to:

- incorporate new milling techniques with the new sawmill and edger;
- explore lumber grading certifications to offer students;
- explore ways to educate K-12 partners on forestry careers and post-secondary options;

- improve course outcomes assessment efforts to continually improve and enhance coursework;
- update some of the aging forestry heavy equipment;
- expand networking relationships with the forest industry employers and include them in the advisory board; and
- explore options to make the 180-acre property sustainable for future generations of forestry students.