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Monitoring Natural Resource Education for Professional Accreditation

Pierre Zundel¹ and Ted Needham²

University accreditation is fundamentally an educational program quality monitoring and assurance process. The purpose of this paper is to examine forestry university accreditation as a means of monitoring quality. Accrediting natural resource educational programs is in a state of transition in North America and hence confusion and uncertainty. This analysis will enhance our understanding of accreditation so workable approaches can be developed that lead to continual improvement in the quality of natural resource education. We will analyse accreditation from four perspectives: 1) different theoretical approaches to system monitoring - i.e., Inputs vs Outputs vs Process monitoring; 2) accreditation within the context of an education design system, looking at: Student > Program > Outcomes; 3) reviewing the historical development of accreditation in the US and Canada, and; 4) comparing educational accreditation with forest certification approaches.

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