

Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program Overview

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program is to increase recruitment and retention of early-career forestry professionals by: pairing university and community college students with a professional mentor, providing networking and training opportunities, and offering insight into a forestry career. The Program recognizes that a diverse and expanded workforce is essential to addressing current and future challenges facing the field. We encourage support for underrepresented groups in the profession, including women, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQIA+ by: providing training on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) for participants, pairing participants based on shared professional interests and identity (when requested), and showcasing the diversity of identities and specialties that exist within the field of forestry.

Navigating professional forestry and natural resource careers after graduation can be challenging for students and young professionals, and this program aims to provide a network of support as they establish a career within these fields. Tailored mentorship eases the transition from school to the professional world, and has the potential to increase recruitment and retention rates in forestry and natural resources.

Program Overview

The Program supports students at community college and university forestry programs throughout California. In 2023, participating schools include Bakersfield College, Cal

Poly Humboldt, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, College of the Redwoods, Feather River College, Reedley College, Shasta College, and UC Berkeley. Forestry students at four-year universities must be a sophomore, junior, or senior to be eligible to apply, while all forestry students at community colleges may participate. Mentors and students are paired based on career goals, personal interests, and identity (where applicable). The Program facilitates mentor-mentee relationships by offering monthly discussion topics, facilitating active communication between mentor and mentee, and providing opportunities for professional development. Formal Program activities occur during the academic year (October to June), with potential for mentorships to continue past the end of Program activities.

The Program was founded in 2020 with funding from the California Licensed Foresters Association and is currently funded through a CAL FIRE Workforce Development Grant administered through the Placer County Resource Conservation District. Reference last year's [annual report](#) for an overview of past participants and Program activities.

The Program is led by a Program Manager and a volunteer Steering Committee composed of forestry professionals and a student representative. Professional development resources and trainings include:

- Introductory Session to review program goals, structure, and requirements
- Annual training on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice
- Workshop on resume building and interview skills
- Regular career panels highlighting different sectors of the field
- LinkedIn Learning access for professional training
- Additional workshops as requested or suggested by Steering Committee
- Student stipends to support field visits with mentors or attendance at forestry-related conferences/trainings.

Program recruitment begins in August (to coincide with the start of fall classes). The Steering Committee works with professional forestry organizations, state, federal, and private partners to seek volunteer Mentors from the professional forestry and natural resource community.

At participating 4-year universities, sophomores, juniors and seniors in a forestry major are eligible for the Program. All forestry students at participating community colleges are eligible.

Applicants provide information on career goals, personal/professional interests, and identity to guide pairing. The Steering Committee will review and assign mentorship

pairs within 20 days of the end of the application period, with the goal of pairing all applicants by mid-October.

Participants are required to meet monthly (at a minimum). Meetings may be virtual or in person. If at any time throughout the program either party is not satisfied with their experience, they should contact the Steering Committee as soon as possible. Mid-year and end-of-year surveys will be administered to all program participants to evaluate program progress and needs.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for oversight and successful implementation of all program activities including:

- Recruiting program participants
- Forming a Pairing Committee to pair students with mentors
- Outreach to participating schools (faculty and student representatives)
- Facilitate mentorship pairings based on common interests, professional goals, identity and experiences.
- Facilitation of initial meetings to catalyze mentor-mentee relationships
- Providing mentors with professional mentorship training.
- Arbitration and resolution of conflicts that may arise between the mentor and mentee.
- Managing the annual budget
- Review status of partner organization status annually and coordinate fundraising efforts.

The Steering Committee consists of seven (7) voting members including the Chair, Vice-chair, Financial Officer, a student representative, and three (3) members at large. A single representative from CLFA shall be included in the voting members of the Steering Committee and up to four (4) additional voting members as decided by Steering Committee members. The student member of the Steering Committee must have participated in the Program previously to serve on the Committee.

2023/2024 Steering Committee Members:

Renaldo Arroyo - Bakersfield College

Louis Cimmino (Student Representative) - UC Berkeley

Nic Dutch - UC Cooperative Extension

Joseph King - Sierra Pacific Industries

Katie Low (Chair) - UC Cooperative Extension
Mary Mayeda (non-voting) - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Corrie Munger - CA Licensed Foresters Association and UC Berkeley
Christie Pollet-Young - SCS Global Services
Ricky Satomi (Past Chair, non-voting) - UC Cooperative Extension

Faculty Representatives

Representatives at participating colleges and universities commit to the following:

- Support the principles and intent of the program as outlined in this document
- Circulate Program applications, event notifications, and surveys to students at their school
- Recruit a student representative at their school to assist with outreach to students on campus
- Work with the Program Manager and Steering Committee to address any communication issues with students on campus.

2023/2024 Faculty Representatives

Renaldo Arroyo - Bakersfield College
Valerie Elder - College of the Redwoods
Rachelle Hedges - UC Berkeley
Erin Kelly - Cal Poly Humboldt
TBD - Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Melissa Markee - Shasta College
Kayla Rodriguez - Reedley College
Bridget Tracy - Feather River College

Roles and Responsibilities

This program is founded on a personal commitment between mentors and mentees to mutually support each other and the advancement of the forestry and natural resource field. The responsibilities listed below provide guidelines for mentor/mentee partnerships. All communication that exceeds the formal facilitated meetings is under the sole direction of the individuals involved, independent of the Program. Mentors and mentees should meet monthly (at a minimum). Meetings may be in-person, by phone, or video conference.

Responsibilities of Mentors¹	Responsibilities of Mentees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commit time and energy to support a current student by providing mentorship based on a mutually developed communication agreement. ● Help the mentee identify their academic and professional goals. ● Give constructive feedback that can allow the mentee to grow personally and professionally. ● Assist mentee in identifying how to access resources that will allow the student to build a professional network. ● Promote skills development by providing a “workplace perspective” based on the mentee's established goals and objectives. ● Encourage independence, an appreciation for differences, and reflect a positive attitude throughout the process. ● Share with mentee relevant job opportunities, forestry-related conferences, or educational talks/events. ● Communicate with the Steering Committee if they no longer wish to be part of the program or are having difficulties reaching or connecting with their mentee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commit time and energy to develop a relationship with mentor based on a mutually developed communication agreement. ● Consult mentor for support and professional resources, but not necessarily counseling or specific advising purposes. ● Be open and committed to the mentoring process, and ask meaningful questions about their mentor’s career path and decision-making. ● Accept feedback and learn from it, and implement new knowledge into their academic and professional habits. ● Have realistic expectations of the mentoring relationship, understanding that networking does not always end with a job offer or other tangible takeaway. ● Communicate with the Steering Committee if they no longer wish to be part of the Program or having difficulties reaching or connecting with their mentor

¹ Adapted from Arcadia University: <https://www.arcadia.edu/arcadia-alumni/volunteer/mentor-program-guidelines>

Mentor

Mentors are active members of the professional forestry and natural resources field. The primary goal of this program is for mentors to share their early career experience with mentees to help with professional development and career advancement.

The mentor-mentee relationship is a personal commitment with both parties responsible for its success. Mentorship pairs are encouraged to determine the method(s) of communication that best suits the mentor and mentee's needs. It is recommended that mentors meet with mentees on a regular basis to help current students navigate the challenges of working in the field of professional forestry and natural resource management in the immediate years post graduation.

Suggested Activities:

- Commit to participate as a mentor for a minimum of one year, with the hopes of forming a long-term relationship.
- Share progress, address concerns, or make suggestions for future program improvements with Steering Committee
- Meet with mentee at professional organizational gatherings (e.g., CA Women in Timber Mixers, Society of American Forester local chapter meeting, California Licensed Forester Association breakfast group meeting, Association of Fire Ecology)
- Introduce the mentee to professional networks where there are shared interests, values, or professional development opportunities
- Assist mentee with job searches
- Resume Review
- Host a field day with mentee

If you have any additional questions as a mentor, please reach out to the Program Manager, Allison Erny (allison@placerrcd.org).

Mentee

Refer to "Program Overview" for eligibility requirements for student applicants. The goal is to develop one-on-one relationships supporting the mentee's career and professional development needs. Mentees are paired with a professional mentor based on their career goals, personal/professional interests, and personal identity.

The mentor-mentee relationship is a personal commitment with both parties responsible for its success. Mentorship pairs should determine the method(s) of communication that best suits the mentor and mentee's needs, and respect the agreed upon communication process. Mentees are required to meet with their assigned mentor at least once a semester. Meetings may be in-person, by phone, or video conference. It is recommended that mentees meet with mentors on a regular basis to help current students navigate the challenges of working in the field of professional forestry and natural resource management in the immediate years post graduation.

Suggested Activities:

- Share progress, address concerns, or make suggestions for future program improvements with Steering Committee
- Meet with mentor at larger organizational gatherings (CA Women in Timber Mixers, Society of American Forester local chapter meeting, California Licensed Forester Association breakfast group meeting, Association of Fire Ecology, Forest Pest Council, Vegetation Management Conference, Forest Stewards Guild, Disturbance Regime Guided Silviculture Group, and other Field Day opportunities)
- Consult with mentor on potential career pathways
- Work with a mentor on updating and reviewing resumes, and practice for job interviews.

If you have any additional questions as a mentee, please reach out to your student Steering Committee representative, Louis Cimmino (louis.cimmino@berkeley.edu).

At the conclusion of each mentorship cycle, the Steering Committee will review and update this document as needed. Last updated: 8/22/23

Acknowledgements

Funding for this program is provided by the CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Business and Workforce Development Grants.



With support from the organizations below.



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