Who we are:

- A team of researchers with expertise in arboriculture, horticulture, urban forestry, and urban ecology
- Drawing on experience in collegiate instruction at 4 universities: Virginia Tech, West Virginia University, University of Maryland, and Virginia State University
- Guided by steering committee of national leaders in urban forestry and allied professions

What we are doing:

- Developing research-based strategies for moving the urban forestry profession forward
- Research is centered around several nationwide surveys of college students, urban foresters, and allied professionals
- Interviews, focus groups, and discussions are being held with key stakeholders to inform our study and recommendations
- Study results and recommendations will be released in summer 2017

Why we are doing it:

- Urban forests are increasing in their scale, complexity, and importance in the United States
- Workforce demographics will change dramatically over the next decade with a large flux of Baby Boomer retirements
- College students and early-career professionals have few support mechanisms to support their recruitment and advancement
- Urban forests risk an “expertise crunch” in the next decade

http://urbanforestry.frec.vt.edu/2020  sdd@vt.edu
Urban Forestry 2020: A STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT FOR GROWTH OF THE PROFESSION

Highlights—Allied professionals survey:
• Allied professionals use professional support mechanisms heavily and associate them with professionalism very strongly
• Allied professionals view professional support mechanisms as notably absent in urban forestry and as an under-developed profession

Highlights—College student survey:
• Student awareness of urban forestry as a career is poor and impression of it as a career choice is correlated with awareness
• Exposure to urban forestry as a career choice is lowest for suburban students, females, and the very wealthy

Highlights—Job postings analysis:
• Less than 10% of urban forestry job postings that require a B.S. degree would be considered entry level
• The vast majority (83%) of advertised urban forestry positions will accept work experience as an arborist in lieu of a college degree

Highlights—Employer survey:
• Most important skills for entry-level urban foresters: tree ID, public relations/customer service, and oral communication
• Most lacking skills for entry-level urban foresters: media relations, multicultural competency, community outreach, & working in groups

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