



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The Graduate School

G-1 Communications

Box 353770

Seattle, Washington 98195-3770

Telephone: (206)543-5900

Fax: (206)685-3234

April 23, 2004

To: David Thorud
Acting Provost

From: Gail L. Dubrow
Associate Dean for Academic Programs

Re: School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences Program Review

Summary and Recommended Action

At its meeting of January 29, 2004, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team reviewing the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences; with the Director and Associate Director of the School; and with the Dean of the College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences. The Council recommended continuation of the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy degree programs, with the next review in 10 years. The unit has undergone a positive transformation since its last review ten years ago, so that in spite of significant losses of faculty and staff the review committee found a more cohesive, coherent, and unified faculty. In light of the unit's progress, the Council recommended strategic investments in the School that would allow its continued development.

I concur with the Council's recommendations and comments.

Background

The School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences offers Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Aquatic and Fishery Sciences. The School was established in 1919 to prepare people for practical work in the service of government, the State, and private industry related to the propagation and marketing of fisheries products, as well as the management of fishery resources. While the program maintains traditional strengths in marine fisheries, it has diversified its capabilities through program changes and recent faculty hires. Current areas of emphasis in the School include conservation, ecology, genetics, molecular science, and ecosystem science. The School currently has 26 active faculty members, with approximately 100 undergraduate majors and about 120-130 enrolled graduate students (65-75 masters, 55-65 PhD).

The review committee included five members, three internal and two from peer institutions. The committee was chaired by Linda Chalker-Scott, Associate Professor in the College of Forest Resources, and included as the other internal members Merrill Hille, Professor of Biology, and John Ferguson, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The external members of the committee included Jim Kitchell, Professor of Zoology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Edward D. Houde, Professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. They carried out the review during spring quarter 2003, including a review of the self-study and a two day site visit scheduled April 6-8, when they met with faculty, students, and staff.

The review team found that the School has been very successful at overcoming the problems, described in the 1991 review, that had worked against a healthy, vibrant academic program. The current report describes a revitalized program with excellent faculty and staff, along with high-quality and enthusiastic students, both graduate and undergraduate. Morale and efficiency have increased, as have optimism and collegiality among faculty. In general the School is now “leaner but stronger” than it was ten years ago. Curricular changes and new faculty hires demonstrate a healthy trend of academic diversification within the School. This also reflects national trends in the field, with its increasing emphasis on ecology, conservation, biodiversity, habitat protection and restoration, as well as user conflicts and resolution. The School enjoys a global reputation as a premier institution of education and research in the marine fishery sciences. The Council commends the School for its work to increase gender diversity, and it encourages the School to increase outreach to attract students and faculty from racial and ethnic minorities.

The Council considered several challenges the School still faces. The reviewers found that in spite of recent efforts to be more inclusive, there remains a sense of isolation in the unit, especially among staff. The School should reexamine its internal communications and governance structure in order to appraise this problem. Some faculty have expressed the desire, as reflected in the review committee report, to move the Center for Quantitative Science (CQS) back into the School from its current location in the Office of Undergraduate Education. Placed in broader perspective, the review highlighted the need to reassess the location and function of CQS in relationship to all areas of natural resource management. The School should also take steps to reevaluate its resource commitment to the Alaska Salmon Program, since the review committee identified this as an area in need of stabilized support. The Council strongly recommends increased attention within the School to building cross-unit connections in order to create more productive relationships with other units.

cc: Lee Huntsman, President
Elizabeth L. Feetham, Acting Dean, Graduate School
Arthur R.M. Nowell, Dean, College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences
David A. Armstrong, Director, Aquatic and Fishery Sciences
Members of the Review Committee
Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Assistant to the Dean, Graduate School