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June 22, 2014

To: Lisa J. Graumlich, Dean, College of the Environment

From: David L. Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (2013-2014)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences in the College of the Environment. Detailed comments on the review can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, program, and administrators (October 8, 2013)
- School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences self-study (December 13, 2013)
- Site visit (February 6-7, 2014)
- Review committee report (March 10, 2014)
- School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences response to the review committee report (April 4, 2014)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 15, 2014)

The review committee consisted of:

John M. Marzluff, Professor, UW Environmental and Forest Sciences (Committee Chair)
Parker MacCready, Professor, UW School of Oceanography
Bonnie McCay, Professor, Department of Human Ecology, Rutgers University
Mary Power, Professor, Department of Integrative Biology, University of California Berkeley

The School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS) offers the Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. At the time of the previous academic program review in 2003-2004, SAFS was part of the College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences. In 2010, the School joined the new College of the Environment as one of its seven academic units.

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on May 15, 2014. After discussion, the Council recommended a ten year review (2023-2024) for all the school's degree programs. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the program include the following.

Program Strengths

The review committee found that the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences enjoys international recognition for excellence in teaching, research, and service to a broad range of stakeholders.

- Quality. The school exerts global leadership in the field, and its expertise in fishery stock assessment is unmatched.
- Climate. SAFS has a warm, collegial atmosphere fostered by faculty and staff who genuinely value the contributions of each SAFS member, including undergraduate majors. The positive climate was reflected by students, faculty, stakeholders, alumni, employers, and administrators.
- Leadership. The Director, Associate Director, and Curriculum Chair were repeatedly praised for their collegial and effective leadership, exhibiting transparency, fairness, and effectiveness.
- Faculty. Faculty excel at research, teaching, and service. Likewise, Research Faculty members are happy with their interactions in SAFS, are successful in raising research funds, and are respected and valued by the tenure-track faculty.
- Graduate Students. Applicant numbers are strong, graduates have good job prospects, and graduate students are well supported, both intellectually, personally, and financially.
- Undergraduate Students. Students are a self-described "happy family" who feel a strong connection to the school and to each other. They know their professors and feel comfortable reaching out to them and the graduate students for help. They like the small class sizes and the capstone research experience.
- Administrative Staff. Staff function well and feel appreciated by the faculty.
- Post-Docs and Research Staff. These groups are critical contributors to the school's successful research programs.
- Facilities. Friday Harbor Labs, the Alaska Salmon Program, and Big Beef Creek in Puget Sound provide students the chance for experiential learning in the natural history of aquatic environments.
- Stability. The school has thrived in a new facility, and also in face of a sea change in university administration, organization, and funding.

Review Committee Recommendations, Including Program Challenges & Risks

The review committee made 16 overarching recommendations addressing issues voiced by faculty, students, and staff. The committee highlighted four to be the most important. These included:

- Communication. Increase transparency of college-level policies for school-level constituents, especially around hiring and finances.
- Marine Biology. Examine the Marine Biology Major so that it enhances the present collegiality of SAFS and Oceanography.
- Student Learning. Sustain and enhance the exposure of SAFS students to fieldwork
- Website. Update the SAFS website.

In addition, the Graduate School Council noted the committee's comments on the following:

- Programmatic Focus. SAFS has gradually narrowed its programmatic focus, with modern genetics, quantitative modeling, and stock assessment slowly replacing aquaculture and hatchery management. With this shift, the school's historical strengths in organismal biology and natural history may not be maintained.
- Faculty Hires. The school's shifting programmatic focus should be considered when new positions are being filled. Any new faculty hires should be diverse in terms of research area, gender and ethnicity.
- Teaching Opportunities. The school should provide teaching opportunities to graduate students as well as postdocs and research staff.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The school agreed broadly with the recommendations outlined by the review committee. In particular SAFS outlined the following:

- Marine Biology. Both SAFS and Oceanography have been involved in the planning for the Marine Biology Major, and SAFS does not see the introduction of the Marine Biology Major as a threat to their interactions. In general, SAFS agrees that it should examine the breadth of the classes that exist on campus and work with other units to improve class offerings.
- Programmatic Focus and Faculty Hires. SAFS agrees that narrowing focus is a concern regarding future hires. SAFS also commented on the challenge of maintaining diversity, while expressing a commitment to increasing faculty diversity.
- Student Learning. SAFS outlined their outreach and experiential activities to enhance student learning in response to committee comments.
- Website. Maintaining the website is a priority and SAFS has begun taking action to address this.
- Teaching Opportunities. SAFS agreed that teaching is a valuable experience for young scientists. The school noted the challenges of including postdocs and research staff in teaching activities, including funding restrictions from grants and tight deadlines for research accomplishments.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences on its impressive programs and recommends continuing status for all degree programs in the school, with next review in ten years (2023-2024).

In addition, the Council encourages the College of the Environment Dean's Office to note the broader recommendations from the review committee and, where appropriate, to work with the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences to address any issues that impact its programs.

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Ana Mari Cauce, Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs
Bruce Nelson, Associate Dean for Research, College of the Environment
André Punt, Director, School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences
UW Members of the academic program review committee
Members of the Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President