



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

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August 15, 2008

To: Phyllis M. Wise, Provost and Executive Vice President
Douglas J. Wadden, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Planning
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Gerald J. Baldasty, Vice Provost and Dean
James Soto Antony
Associate Dean for Academic Programs
The Graduate School

RE: Review of the Department of Biological Structure

At its meeting of November 15, 2007, the Graduate School Council met with the chairperson of the team that reviewed the Ph. D. program offered by the Department of Biological Structure, G. Stanley McKnight (Professor, Pharmacology), review committee members Robert Steiner (Professor, Physiology & Biophysics and Obstetrics & Gynecology) and Elton T. Young (Biochemistry) and with the department Chairperson, John I. Clark (Professor of Biological Structure) and Ronald E. Stenkamp (Professor of Biological Structure). John T. Slattery, Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Education, School of Medicine, was also in attendance. The program review process included a charge meeting on February 23, 2007, between members of the review committee and administrators involved in the review. The site visit, held on March 6-7, 2007, included in-person participation by external reviewers David Copenhagen (Professor, Ophthalmology) of the University of California-San Francisco and Stephen P. Sugrue (Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology) of the University of Florida.

In 1996, with the approval of the Graduate School, the department decided to suspend recruitment directly into the program and to work with interdisciplinary doctoral programs in Molecular and Cellular Biology, Neurobiology and Behavior, and the Medical Scientist Training Program for Ph.D. training. Since that time, the faculty has considered whether to re-instate its graduate program or to continue its involvement with the interdisciplinary degree programs for doctoral student training.

At the November 15 Council meeting, Professor McKnight outlined findings and recommendations from the Review Committee Report (submitted April 17, 2007). The

committee found that the Department of Biological Structure has a strong professorial faculty with an impressive record of grant funding. Active new faculty have been hired and the department is successfully collaborating with graduate programs that are the source of doctoral students. Since the faculty's access to graduate students is limited compared to other units that offer graduate programs, the committee was concerned about the implications for junior faculty in the development of their research programs. The committee urged the department to develop a strategic plan which would better integrate doctoral students.

The committee indicated that the department manages well a significant teaching obligation within the School of Medicine that includes "basic service courses in anatomy for professional students and preclinical students." In addition, the committee noted a disconnection in the department in that two faculty tracks exist--faculty who teach and those who are involved in major research programs. Five department faculty carry the largest teaching load within the School; the quality of teaching is exceptional, and these faculty have earned several teaching awards. The situation, however, has come at a great cost to the department and is not sustainable for the long term. The committee raised the issue as to whether the department could achieve its research mission while simultaneously continuing the heavy teaching load. The committee recommended that the School of Medicine develop a strategic plan to support the department's efforts in this important instructional responsibility.

The Council voiced support for the Department of Biological Structure. Council members explicitly praised the distinguished leadership of the departmental chairperson. The Council recommended: 1) that the department address the disconnection between teaching and research faculty and, 2) that the department in conjunction with the School of Medicine develop a 10-year Strategic Plan that addresses its service and teaching responsibilities and specifically the issue of teaching anatomy within the department and the UW. The Council supported the review committee's recommendation that the Department of Biological Structure Ph.D. program be continued with the next program review to be held in 2017-2018.

We concur with these comments and recommendations.

- c: John T. Slattery, Vice Dean, Office of Research and Graduate Education,
 School of Medicine
 John I. Clark, Professor and Chair, Department of Biological Structure
 Ronald E. Stenkamp, Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator, Department
 of Biological Structure
 Biological Structure Review Committee
 Graduate School Council
 Jacob K. Faleschini, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate
 Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School