



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

*The Graduate School*

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April 23, 2002

To: Lee L. Huntsman  
Provost

From: Marsha L. Landolt   
Dean and Vice Provost

Re: Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Program Review

*Summary and recommended action*

At its meeting of December 7, 2001, the Graduate School Council met with members of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering review team, the acting chair of the Department, and Dean of the College of Engineering. The Graduate School Council commended the program for its strong leadership throughout a period of difficult transition and for its "crucial role" in addressing some of the region's most pressing problems, from earthquake preparedness to traffic congestion and water resource management. The Council recommended continuation of all degree programs in the Department, with its next review in 10 years (2011). I concur with the Council's recommendations and comments.

The self-study, the report of the review committee, and the Department's response are attached.

*Background*

Civil Engineering at the University of Washington dates back to 1898. Acknowledging the size and importance of the environmental subdiscipline, it changed its name to the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in 1998. The Department offers the B.S. degree in Civil Engineering (BSCE), the Master of Science, the M.S. in Engineering (MSE), the M.S. in Civil Engineering (MSCE), and the Ph.D. Approximately 110 BS, 45 MS and 9-10 PhD degrees are awarded annually. The Department houses approximately 150 graduate students, and both its graduate and undergraduate programs consistently rank in the top 25 nationally among 163 programs at graduate degree offering universities. The graduate program is likely to grow if the Department follows the suggestion of the American Society of Civil Engineers' that the MS become the profession's entry degree. Departmental research foci include some of the most

pressing issues facing the Pacific Northwest region; research expenditures range from \$5-6M annually.

Since the 1990 review, the Department has endured a substantial reduction in faculty, from 39 to 28. It has managed these reductions by concentrating its efforts on certain key themes and combinations of expertise. The faculty continue to be very highly regarded nationally, with approximately one-third having been recruited by other schools in the past three years. The Review Committee was impressed by how much the Department has been able to maintain and achieve relative to the support offered by the University. The team did, however, raise several concerns, including salary compression, continued reductions in faculty number, and mentoring of junior faculty.

The Department has substantially reformed both the Bachelors' and Masters' degrees, and, in the opinion of the review team, should now turn its attention to improving the Doctoral program. The review team suggested that the Department pool resources in order to improve its recruitment of highly qualified PhD students and promote ways for all graduate students to be more involved in departmental governance and other program-wide activities. In addition, the team recommended that the Department and College work to direct alumni giving to the graduate program; current giving tends to focus on the undergraduate program.

The review team also encouraged the Department to continue enhancing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration in research and teaching. In order to facilitate this collaboration, it suggested that the University reassess the process by which the return of overhead (RSA) is allocated to Departments, adopting a method that more appropriately recognizes the essential contributions of key collaborating faculty, rather than simply of the principal investigator.

The Department responded positively to the Review Committee's comments and recommendations; it and the College have already acted on several. The Department is taking steps to enhance its Ph.D. program and enrich its offerings to potential graduate students. It has also spent significant time discussing its governance system in recent months. Other recommendations will be addressed most effectively once the new Chair is in place.

#### Enclosures

c: Richard McCormick, President  
Denise Denton, Dean, College of Engineering  
Debra Friedman, Associate Provost for Academic Planning  
John Slattery, Associate Dean for Academic Programs  
Members of the Review Committee:  
Nicholas Chrisman, Geography (Chair); David Montgomery, Earth and Space  
Sciences, Mark Tuttle, Mechanical Engineering; Nicholas Jones, Civil  
Engineering, Johns Hopkins University; Richard G. Luthy, Civil Engineering,  
Stanford University  
Graduate School Council  
Scott Rutherford, Chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Augustine McCaffery, Assistant to the Dean/Manager  
Heidi Tilghman, Assistant to the Dean