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To: Phyllis Wise, Provost
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Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne T. Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean
Thomas W. Gething, Interim Associate Dean for Academic Programs

RE: Review of the Environmental Management Graduate Certificate Program

At its meeting of March 20, 2008, the Graduate School Council met with the chair of the team that reviewed the Environmental Management (EM) Graduate Certificate Program (Timothy Nyerges, Professor, Geography; review committee member Susan Bolton, Professor, College Resources, was not able to attend) and with Clare Ryan, EM Program Director, and Julia Parrish, Program on the Environment (PoE) Director. Bruce Bare, Dean of the College of Forest Resources, represented the Council of Environmental Deans during the discussion. The program review process included a charge meeting on October 18, 2007, between members of the review committee and administrators involved in the review. The site visit, held on November 1-2, 2007, included in-person participation by external reviewer David Inouye, Professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Maryland.

Speaking to the Graduate School Council on March 20, Professor Nyerges outlined findings and recommendations from the Review Committee Report (submitted December 13, 2007). The review committee found the EM program to be well positioned as an interdisciplinary asset for the University at the graduate level. EM provides solid practical training through an innovative keystone experience that is highly valued by students. The current year-long keystone project is made possible by a Luce Foundation grant, but the program must find a new mode of delivery in the immediate future when this funding ends. The review committee report outlines five general scenarios that program leadership might consider for its post-grant future (pages 11-12). Independent of funding, the EM program faces underlying uncertainty surrounding the relatively new reporting lines of PoE to the Council of Environmental Deans and the situation of the EM program in relation to the developing College of the Environment. These circumstances compound unclear lines of communication within EM, its steering committee, and PoE. The review committee recognized that this is due, in part, to the relatively new EM and PoE

leadership, but the reviewers advised the directors to clarify the relationships among the EM program, PoE, and other programs with regard to mission, governance, and budgeting. This may involve augmenting or reorganizing the steering committee, assessing funding options, and considering what faculty resources are available from across campus. A detailed list of review committee recommendations can be found on pages 12-14 of the review committee report.

The EM Director responded that the program has moved forward with a “hybrid” of the scenarios outlined by the review committee. This model involves a two quarter keystone sequence and a revised curriculum. Keystone partners outside the University will be asked to contribute financially in order to participate in the projects, and EM has worked with PoE to redirect some program funds. The program’s ongoing goals include providing regular support for keystone faculty mentors and raising the visibility of the EM certificate across campus. The current administrative location of EM is viewed as appropriate. The PoE director added that the program should focus on serving current students and their needs, and that even after grant funding ends this will remain a well-supported certificate program that can be sustained at the enrollment level of approximately 20 students, but not more. Details of the proposed curricular changes and other issues can be found in the EM program’s response to the review committee report, submitted January 31, 2008.

The Council discussion centered on the relationship between policy and science in the EM curriculum. The question was raised, following up on comments in the review committee report, whether natural science should be a greater part of the certificate program. EM views management as a core element of the program, and while many of the students come from disciplines where they have received a grounding in natural science, the intent is to help train managers who aren’t scientific experts but will be able to work with and manage these experts. The core classes and keystone experience give students with different backgrounds the skills to engage in applied projects in groups containing members with various levels of scientific background, much as they might once they enter the workforce. In addition, there is a quantitative requirement for program admission.

The Council voiced underlying support for the EM program. Council members explicitly praised the program’s success in receiving grant funding and in responding to the review committee report with curricular changes and an assessment of its governance and communication. In light of the potential changes in administrative structure in the near future, the Council recommends a limited program review be conducted in five years (2012-2013). As part of this review, the program should write a focused report that specifically addresses (1.) whether the appropriate balance has been found between management and natural science in the curriculum, and (2.) whether students have access to the classes they need for the program.

We concur with these comments and recommendations.

cc: Council of Environmental Deans:

Arthur R.M. Nowell, Dean, College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences (Council Chair)

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