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November 7, 2007

To: Phyllis Wise, Provost
Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean

RE: Review of the Interdisciplinary and Policy Dimensions of the Earth Sciences (IPDES)
Graduate Certificate Program

At its meeting of May 31, 2007, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team that reviewed the IPDES Graduate Certificate Program (Thomas M. Hinckley, Professor, Forest Resources, and David R. Montgomery, Professor, Earth & Space Sciences) and with Sandra O. Archibald, Dean, Evans School of Public Affairs, Ed Miles, IPDES Program Director, and Victor Yagi, Graduate Program Coordinator for the Program on the Environment. The program review included a charge meeting on October 10, 2006, between UW members of the review committee and administrators involved in the review. The subsequent site visit, held on October 30-31, 2006, included external review committee member William Clark from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Speaking to the Graduate School Council on May 31, Professors Hinckley and Montgomery summarized their findings from the Review Committee Report (submitted November 13, 2006). This included the description of IPDES as a high quality, interdisciplinary program with relevance beyond the basic sciences that is worthy of approval to continue. The committee reiterated the recommendation that the program be reviewed again after five years in order to assess whether it will have expanded to reach critical mass and will have implemented a number of tactical adjustments detailed in the Review Committee Report. These adjustments include establishing models for both sustainable funding and program leadership that will help institutionalize the program. Details of the committee's findings and recommendations can be found in the November 13, 2006 report.

The IPDES Program Director underscored for the Council that current resources will not support expansion of the program, and that IPDES was originally conceived as an experiment to determine "proof of concept" rather than with the goal of creating a permanent program.

Although concerns about institutionalization had been regarded as premature, they will be explored following on the Review Committee's recommendations. A more detailed response can be found in the IPDES Response to the Review Committee Report (submitted December 14, 2006).

The Council's primary recommendations are that: 1) IPDES prepare a plan for succession of leadership, and 2) IPDES develop a plan for expansion. The Council also recommends that: 3) the program reconcile student goals with a method of measuring student progress, and 4) the Council of Environmental Deans consider ways to institutionalize the program.

The Council approves continuation of the IPDES Program and re-review in 5 years (2011-2012), with an interim report back to the Council in 2 years (2008-2009). This report should directly address the program's progress on the issues of leadership succession, expanding the student base, and establishing sustained funding. The Council recommends considering termination of the program at the time of the interim report if sufficient progress has not been made in these three areas.

cc: Council of Environmental Deans:

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

Sandra O. Archibald, Dean, Evans School of Public Affairs

Bruce Bare, Dean, College of Forest Resources

Daniel S. Friedman, Dean, Architecture & Urban Planning

Ron Irving, Interim Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Matthew O'Donnell, Dean, College of Engineering

Julia K. Parrish, Director, Program on the Environment

Edward L. Miles, Director, IPDES Graduate Certificate Program

David Brown, GPSS President

IPDES Review Committee

Graduate School Council

David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School