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To: Joel Berg, Dean, School of Dentistry

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

RE: Review of Department of Oral Health Sciences (2015-2016)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of Department of Oral Health Sciences in the School of Dentistry. 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, department, and administrators (May 18, 2015)
- Self-study (September 1, 2015)
- Site visit (November 16-17, 2015)
- Review committee report (December 8, 2015)
- Departmental response to the review committee report (February 11, 2016)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (May 5, 2016)
- Departmental letter providing additional context regarding preliminary Graduate School Council recommendations (August 23, 2016)
- Second Graduate School Council consideration of review (December 1, 2016)

The review committee consisted of:

David A. Stahl, Professor, UW Civil & Environmental Engineering (Committee Chair)

Christian A. Sidor, Professor, UW Biology

Paul C. Dechow, Professor and Chair, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University
Baylor College of Dentistry

Christopher A. Squier, Professor, Department of Oral Pathology, Radiology & Medicine, University
of Iowa

The Department of Oral Health Sciences offers the following degrees: the Master of Science and the Doctor of Philosophy in Oral Biology. Offerings include a Thesis MS, Dental Hygiene MS, the PhD, and a concurrent DDS/PhD program. This is the first review of the Department of Oral Health Sciences which was formed in 2011 out of a merger of the Department of Oral Biology and Department of Dental Public Health Sciences.

A member of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on May 5, 2016. Final recommendations are presented at the end of this document.

Specific observations and recommendations regarding the program that were called out by the Council include the following:

Program Strengths

The Review Committee detailed several notable strengths of The Department of Oral Health Sciences.

- Oral Biology offers the only PhD program within the School of Dentistry and thus it is the basis for the high scholarly ranking of University of Washington Dentistry.
- The program has an excellent record of training PhD students (24 in last 10 years, 13 current PhD students and 5 in the dual DDS/PhD degree program) who have gone on to successful careers in their area of specialization.
- Graduate students are enthusiastic supporters of the degree program.
- The program directly addresses a national shortage of dental school faculty.
- The department has successfully retained competitive NIH training grant funding.
- The merger (in 2011) of the former Department of Oral Biology with the Department of Dental Public Health Sciences, to create the new Department of Oral Health Sciences, provides enhanced interdisciplinary opportunities to bridge between basic sciences and clinical studies.

Program Challenges & Risks

The Review Committee identified several challenges and risks in its review.

- The merger has resulted in only incremental synergies in research and education. A new direction reflecting changing opportunities has yet to emerge.
- Inadequate funding for the program (identified in the 2005 review as a significant problem) remains the challenge.
- Core faculty have retired without replacement. The small faculty with specialized expertise are having increasing difficulty in covering program needs.
- There is a shortage of well-funded laboratories to provide adequate research opportunities for

the students and a lack of internal bridge funding increases vulnerability in the face of funding fluctuations.

- Existing facilities are adequate but a plan is needed for future renovations.
- Support of graduate students is a problem. RA/TA supported is limited. There is a reliance on the laboratories and funding of adjunct faculty.
- The high cost of a DDS (average \$241K of debt) makes the dual PhD/DDS degree less attractive for students potentially aiming for a career as a faculty member rather than as a practicing dentist.
- The MS program currently has a small (perhaps unsustainable) enrollment (3).

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The Department of Oral Health Sciences generally concurred with the review committee recommendations. Specific responses and areas of disagreement included:

- The department expressed concern with any significant expansion of the program given the continued inadequate resources.
- The department agreed with changing the degree title from “Oral Biology” to “Oral Health Sciences” (or similar) to reflect an increased scope.
- The department agrees with the goal of engaging all faculty engaged in research within the school of dentistry to reflect its school-wide scope, including the use of joint appointments to facilitate greater engagement and commitment of faculty who manage research portfolios related to the graduate program’s mission.
- In light of the small current enrollment in the master’s program, the committee recommends that the School of Dentistry review all its masters programs, including the MSD (which was not in the remit of the present review). The program notes that this is the only dental hygiene program in the WWAMI group and that it fulfills an important role in providing instructors for training programs.
- The review committee recommended various changes to the recruitment, interviewing, and orientation of students in the program, but the program notes that for financial reasons the proposed changes would be difficult to implement and that they feel that they are adequately communicating with prospective students.
- The review committee recommended internal changes in the running of the graduate program.

The program agrees and will evaluate how to implement such changes.

- The review committee recommended that a better funding model for first year students is needed. The program agrees but sees no clear path to achieving this without additional resources.
- The review committee recommended that all PhD students progress towards publication of their work. The program agrees that this is consistent with current models for graduate education but believes that the traditional dissertation is serving their international students better.
- The review committee recommended a program of continuous remodeling to address the issue of aging facilities. The program acknowledges the problem and will begin a process of systemic review of infrastructure and facilities.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends Department of Oral Health Sciences on the strength of its faculty and students. After discussion, the Council made the following recommendations:

- The Department should submit an interim report to the Graduate School Council during the 2020-2021 academic year. The interim report should outline how the Department is working to address the challenges outlined by the review committee report.
- The interim report should include a strategic plan. The strategic plan should address the recommendations of the review committee in the context of the School of Dentistry's financial state during the 2020-2021 academic year. In addition, the strategic plan should include modeling and description of potential scenarios for the Department's financial sustainability based on information that is available at that time. The strategic plan should include plans for the financial sustainability of the Department even in the case of the continued financial state of the School of Dentistry.
- Based on the review of the interim report and strategic plan in 2020-2021, The Graduate School Council may make further recommendations for Departmental action prior to the next full academic program review.
- Full academic program review will be conducted in ten years (2025-2026).

We concur with the Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Gerald Baldasty, Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost
Douglas S. Ramsay, Chair, Department of Oral Health Sciences
Richard B. Presland, Associate Professor, Department of Oral Health Sciences
Members of the Graduate School Council
Wesley Henry, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
GPSS President