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December 4, 2013

To: John T. Slattery
Vice Dean, Research and Graduate Education, School of Medicine

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

RE: Department of Pathology 2012-2013 Review

This memorandum outlines the recommendations from the 2012-2013 review of the Department of Pathology. Detailed comments can be found in the documents that were a part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, department, and administrators (December 5, 2012)
- Department self-study (February 25, 2013)
- Site visit (March 28-29, 2013)
- Review committee report (April 29, 2013)
- GPSS report (April 8, 2013)
- Department response to the review committee report (May 24, 2013)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (October 27, 2013)

The review committee consisted of the following faculty:

Lynne Robins, Professor, UW Department of Biomedical Informatics and Medical Education (Committee Chair)

Neil Nathanson, Professor, UW Department of Pharmacology

William Coleman, Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Paul DiCorleto, Professor and Chair, The Lerner Research Institute, and Chair, Department of Molecular Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on October 17, 2013. Specific comments and recommendations regarding the Department of Pathology Molecular Basis of Disease Ph.D. degree program include the following:

Program Strengths

Overall, the Molecular Basis of Disease Ph.D. program is healthy and progressing toward becoming a School of Medicine-wide program focused on translation-oriented research.

1. Chair's commitment to graduate education and faculty mentoring.

The Department Chair, Dr. Thomas Montine, has revitalized and expanded the doctoral program by actively recruiting faculty doing translation research from other departments, established a junior faculty mentoring program, and secured new sources of funding to support first-year graduate students.

2. Quality of Director, Co-Directors, and administrative staff.

The reviewers praised the work of the Director, Dr. Dan Bowen-Pope, who will retire next year and will be replaced by Dr. Nick Crispe, who has a history of mentoring graduate students. The two newly appointed co-directors are also doing a good job mentoring, advising, and teaching grad students. The Graduate Program Administrator was commended for keeping the program running smoothly.

3. Quality of Faculty.

Faculty are actively engaged in research and well-funded. The department is among the top pathology departments nationally as recipients of NIH research grants. The research faculty are highly rated by students, who described the intellectual climate as "collegial" and "were pleased that faculty discussed and shared their research."

4. Number and quality of applicants.

The number and quality of program applicants has been less than optimal in the past, but is increasing, possibly due to changes in resources, recruitment strategies, and the focus on translational research. The recruitment of underrepresented minorities is strong.

Challenges and Risks:

Areas the review committee noted that could be improved included the quality of recruitment, financial support and instruction for trainees, mentoring and advising of students, and mentoring of program faculty.

1. Learning objectives, course evaluation, and scheduling.

Areas noted as opportunities for improvement included that the faculty develop learning objectives for all courses, conduct regular course evaluations, make an effort to offer all courses that are listed in the catalog, and schedule classes at times that are convenient for students, especially those who must travel from off-campus sites.

2. Writing and presentation skills.

Students do not receive formal training or mentoring in writing, nor do they have an opportunity to give a seminar-length presentation prior to their dissertation defense. The committee endorsed establishing a programmatic approach to teaching scientific writing skills, requiring that students publish an article in a peer-reviewed journal prior to graduation, and instituting a series of seminar length talks with feedback from faculty and peers.

3. Student teaching opportunities.

Because there are no undergraduate students in the department, it is difficult for graduate students to gain needed teaching experience. The committee encouraged the department administration to explore creative ways to help students gain at least

minimal teaching experience, perhaps in the context of a revised graduate level pathology course.

4. Career counseling

Students expressed a desire for guidance in preparing resumes or CVs, and help searching for appropriate positions, including those outside academia. The committee recommended that the department provide links to information on preparing job applications and organizing events where students can meet and interact with industry representatives and prospective employers.

5. Assessment of student progress

The committee recommended that students be required to submit a progress report and undergo an evaluation every year to ensure that they are on track, and should meet with their dissertation committee every 6 months rather than annually.

6. Requirements for participating faculty

Requiring that all participating faculty hold an appointment in the department hampers the addition of new training faculty due to the lengthy process of obtaining adjunct appointments. Additionally, the requirement that faculty must have “substantial funding” may preclude participation by young, dynamic faculty members. The department is encouraged to re-evaluate these requirements to allow the use of start-up funds, or partnering between junior and senior faculty to support graduate students.

7. Enhancing mentoring for graduate students

As the program has expanded, it has taken in clinical faculty who have no training or experience in mentoring graduate students, as well as a more diverse group of trainees. The committee recommended that there should be a defined structure for mentoring training faculty and instruction on how to integrate students into a laboratory group.

8. Building a sense of community

Students are generally located at multiple sites, and some have felt isolated. Suggestions for remedying this situation include a monthly social hour and/or research seminar, developing a handbook that provides comprehensive information about the MBD program, and utilize the program website as a central repository of information, including explicit requirements for MSTP and MD students.

9. Transition in program administration

The new MBD director faces a steep learning curve. The committee recommended that the department provide a plan to support the new MBD director during the transition phase.

Areas of Concurrence

In his response to the review committee report, the Professor Thomas Montine agreed with most of the specific findings of the review committee, corrected misconceptions (e.g., the requirement that all mentors have R01 funding), and provided thoughtful responses to all of the review committee’s concerns regarding student recruitment, support, and training.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

We concur with the review committee recommendation that the next review for the Department of Pathology Molecular Basis of Disease Ph.D. program take place in 10 years (2022-2023 academic year).

We also support the committee recommendation that, since the program is currently in a transitional state, it would be beneficial to conduct an internal review in three years (2015-2016 academic year). It would give the department an opportunity to determine progress in addressing the committee's recommendations and how well the changes implemented meet the faculty and graduate students' needs.

We concur with the Graduate School Council's comments and recommendations.

- c: Gerald Baldasty, Senior Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs,
Office of the Provost
- Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs,
Office of the Provost
- Thomas Montine, Professor and Chair, Department of Pathology
- Nick Crispe, Professor and Graduate Program Director, Department of Pathology
- Pathology Review Committee
- Graduate School Council
- Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School