

The Ten Year Review Report submitted by the visiting committee in August 2006 came at an important and opportune time for the College of Education (COE). Over the past three years, the College has hired ten new faculty members, and in the next three years, it is possible that up to nine faculty will be hired. The College Dean, Patricia Wasley, just accepted reappointment for her second five-year term. The College also appointed a new Associate Dean for Academic Programs, whose primary responsibilities center on program improvement and simplification. Given these facts and the quality of the report submitted by the review committee, we have found the process of engaging with the analysis and the recommendations of the report truly instructive.

In this response, we address the report's overall recommendations, discuss a timeline, and identify our priorities. While discussing these recommendations, we focus on the eight principal recommendations highlighted by the report. In doing so, we address each of the major issues/themes raised. In the final section, we describe our current operations and how they relate to teaching, curriculum, and student relations.

Reconsider and revise current structures and procedures in the PhD program to improve recruitment, advising, support, and satisfaction of PhD students.

Plans are already underway to examine academic programs for 2006-2007 with the intention of simplifying them and strengthening their focus. The College is considering several alternatives: increasing the number of core courses for PhD students; reviewing advisee loads and assignment policies; and increasing opportunities for students to socialize informally with faculty in an extra-curricular setting. We remain open to continued discussion regarding ways to improve our programs.

While we believe that students who met with the visiting committee were not reflective of the overall student satisfaction level in the program, we do believe that the report raised important issues relating to possible program improvement.

Under the current governance structure, the faculty president and the Dean establish the agendas and priorities for the faculty meetings. The current President, Professor Marge Plecki, has already prioritized program renewal as a major part of her agenda. These issues were discussed at length at the Fall Faculty Retreat on October 6, 2006. At the faculty retreat, the Associate Dean for Academic Programs presented a “map” which graphically displayed all of the COE programs. The faculty President formulated three questions designed to move the simplification/improvement conversation:

1. As we debate current and future trends in scholarship and practice in our fields, are these the programs we want to offer, and are we offering them in the right way?
2. How can we improve our programs? In particular, the discussion focused on raising the quality of the doctoral program.
3. How might each program capitalize on the strengths across the College and University?

The faculty discussed these questions in their respective area groups. This was followed by some cross-area discussions. Several promising ideas emerged during the faculty meeting. For example, the Special Education faculty considered possibilities for streamlining course offering and requirements at the master’s level in order to create more space for doctoral seminars. The Curriculum and Instruction faculty discussed the possibility of reducing the number of program areas from eight to four, thus presenting a more coherent and unified structure to students. Similar ideas came from the COE’s two

other areas. It was clear from the retreat that the faculty is committed to improving programs for all students and for doctoral students in particular

Associate Dean Tom Stritikus will be assisting areas in establishing priorities and plans for program renewal and simplification. The timeline calls for developing a coherent plan for this year and moving toward making changes in the following year with program improvement and simplification as a top priority.

Continue to strengthen resources to recruit and retain a more diverse faculty and student body

Strengthening resources for recruiting and retaining a more diverse faculty and student body continues to be one of the major goals of the COE. To address this challenge, we must clarify our process for establishing hiring priorities; build our ability to attract high-quality, diverse colleagues; and retain them once they come to us. To attract a more diverse student population, we must strengthen our recruitment practices, continue to refine the admissions process, and continue to increase the financial support available for our students. Once students are enrolled, we must provide them with top-quality faculty/staff advising and support. We must continue to refine our own skills in teaching, learning, and assessment to work well with a diverse student body. We are committed in the long and short term to addressing these challenges. In particular, the Dean remains committed to using development resources for the purpose of raising funds for student support, and she has identified this as one of her goals. It should be noted that COE faculty have an ongoing faculty funded diversity scholarship for students in the Masters in Teaching program. Nearly 75% of the COE faculty contribute to this fund.

In attempts to move and clarify the equity/diversity agenda, the Diversity Committee will be reconstituted as a full committee under the Dean's auspices. The diversity committee will be chaired by the Associate Dean for Programs ensuring that the work of the committee finds its way into programmatic, curricular, and administrative discussions. Additionally, the Dean has allocated financial resources to support committee activities. This means that both its membership and its responsibilities (in terms of reports and liaison arrangements) will be more fully defined. Discussions will continue within the faculty governance system about how to more fully incorporate diversity perspectives within the work of standing committees and areas.

Encourage and structure more voice in administrative and governance matters for students and staff

It should be noted that in previous years, we expanded student participation in the standing committee structure. The COE administration fully supports the newly formed Associated Students of the College of Education (ASCE). On October 9, ASCE held a fall forum to educate and recruit members, as well as to establish priorities for this year. ASCE designated the last Monday of every month for regular students meetings. At the faculty retreat, Associate Dean Stritikus stressed the importance of ASCE and other student groups and encouraged the faculty to consider including an ASCE representative on the faculty council, as well as increasing student participation in the faculty search process. Since ASCE requires some time and space to establish their own priorities, we have not formally moved to considering these options.

In response to staff concerns about communication in the college, Dean Wasley approved the formation of the Staff Council in the fall of 2002. Made up of one representative from each area or work group, the staff council continues to meet regularly. They assumed responsibility for planning

and executing quarterly staff meetings in which information from each area is shared and the dean or associate dean provides information in a broader context. In the spring of 2006 an ad hoc group of managers and directors began meeting informally with the purpose of exchanging information and addressing issues of concern. This provided a broader context for those responsible for managing the major infrastructure support areas of the college.

Allocate both conceptual and material resources to ensure the success of the newly redesigned Office of Student Services, including examining the relationship of this Office to the Director of Development role.

We are always looking for ways to improve students' experiences within the college. Since the OSS reorganization of 2001, the student services office has not achieved the kind of customer service orientation that promotes good, long lasting relationships between our students and the college. A year ago, at a planning session on the improvement of student services, we conceived of a new structure to blend the Office of Student Services with Development. Since several staff members of OSS have previously worked in successful private institutions, we are aware of the important and deliberate way they blend these two offices in order to build alumni relationships from the moment new potential students begin the application process. Public institutions like the University of Washington spend far less time on such arrangements than private institutions do. We believe that a closer relationship results from better experiences for students. Since the new conceptualization of OSS and Development and Alumni Relations, we hired a new Associate Dean, a new Director of Development, a new Director of Student Services, and we are about to hire an Assistant Director for Alumni Relations. It seems

premature to determine whether we should abandon the new conception of the office until we have all the players in place and have time to consider the effectiveness of this organizational structure.

Allocate the resources necessary to design and launch the newly envisioned undergraduate minor in education

The Deans of the Arts and Sciences and Education have tentatively agreed to allocate the necessary funds to launch the Education, Learning, and Society (ELS) Minor. Each college will be contributing half of the operating budget required for staffing and administration of the minor, course development, TA support, a director, and advising. The ELS minor is currently in the COE approval process and will be presented at a November COE faculty meeting. A vote will occur at a January faculty meeting.

It should be noted that the minor is not, nor was it ever to be, housed in the Ethnic Studies department. The ELS Minor will be co-housed between the College of Arts & Sciences and the COE. We believe that this scenario will create a vibrant interdisciplinary degree that will strengthen our connection with Colleges across the campus.

Improve resources allocated to mentoring junior faculty, especially with regard to balancing teaching and research

Unquestionably, faculty in professional schools have to respond to multiple demands. The pressure for scholarly productivity can often be in conflict with the demands from our public constituents: K-12 schools; state-level organizations, etc. To assist junior faculty, we offered course reductions, formal

and informal mentoring from faculty, and start-up and follow-up funds from the Associate Dean for Research. We will continue to explore ways to increase resources for junior faculty.

At the Administrative Cabinet (Chairs, Deans, and Faculty President) retreat, the Dean asked each Chair to discuss challenges and opportunities in the mentorship of new faculty. A key issue that surfaced from that discussion was to help junior faculty more efficiently streamline their research, teaching, and service. One suggestion involved tapping the expertise of senior faculty who have been successful in this task to assist with mentorship of junior faculty. In addition to these discussions, the role of Associate Dean for Research continues to play a key role in the support of junior faculty. For example, the Associate Dean for Research acts more systemically now by offering support in the development of early career awards.

Area chairs will be asked to address this issue in more depth in Administrative Cabinet meetings, focusing on processes currently at work and understanding the needs of the junior faculty. The College will create a mechanism for junior faculty to communicate concerns to chairs and deans confidentially.

Seek resources to extend the College's capacities in the area of electronic technology for both instructional and administrative purposes

Plans are underway for a more targeted series of programs to engage faculty during the coming year, primarily through use of "faculty mentors" who will both demonstrate and serve as resources for enhanced technology use. To address the needs relating to the tracking of students, the College has made a commitment to hire an institutional researcher to improve access to and use of the College and

University databases. We anticipate making the appointment sometime during the coming year. There is also a need to fully restructure the College's on-line application system to make it more secure and allow it to continue to connect with the Graduate School. We are currently exploring our options about how best to rebuild the online application.

Collective Visioning

The Dean of the COE has indicated that collective visioning and future planning are a central part of this year's tasks for the faculty. During the course of this year, the Dean will work closely with the faculty to shape the specifics of the next five years. In order to share her own thinking in advance of our collaborative conversations, she will send four memos to the faculty on the following topics:

- What forces are influencing colleges of education? What goals does the provost have for us?
- What would an essential college of education look like?
- How might we focus our efforts so that our programs and research fuel our actions as committed, engaged leaders in education in our state?
- What can we be best at?

To enhance our ability to discuss the substance of these memos, and to get the very best thinking into the mix, she asked Scott Macklin, Director of Technology, to set up a protected web-

based discussion space so that faculty, staff, and students can share thoughts with the whole community. In addition, the COE administration will collaborate with the faculty president to organize time within faculty meetings for face-to-face discussion about collective visioning. It is the goal of the Dean that these conversations should directly connect with the hiring priorities for the coming years.

Curriculum, Teaching, Student Relations

The college is committed to improving the quality of both the intellectual and social experiences of students. Therefore, we appreciated engaging with the report's findings because it gave us the opportunity to build upon our strengths and to think about areas of potential improvement.

Recruiting

The COE is committed to increasing the number of high-caliber, as well as ethnically and geographically diverse, applicants for the College's academic programs. We recently reconfigured a position in the Office of Students Service to focus more on recruitment. Cynthia Masterson, who previously worked in the Office of Minority Affairs and is a Native American, joined the COE in this position. We are convinced that her energy and strategic thinking will make a difference. Plans are underway to increase recruitment within the university as well as at local and regional institutions. We envision that, in time, recruiting will expand to include selectively targeted national institutions. Initial recruitment priorities will emphasize disseminating information to the campus community through the assistance of the Student Services Specialist / Recruitment position. We will also use a combination approach to connect with prospective students by

- Building campus partnerships to recruit from within the university

- Familiarizing Office of Minority Affairs advisors, community college advisors, Gateway Center counselors and departmental advisors with COE programs & opportunities
- Having a College of Education presence at on-campus, local, & national education and diversity related events
- Utilizing current COE students to represent the college at conferences & community events to personally connect prospective students with the Office of Student Services

In addition, we are in conversations with two other professional schools about the possibility of pooling resources to hire a recruiter. We hope to have an arrangement in place by the end of this year.

OSS

Marty Howell, the OSS Director, addressed the visiting committee after only serving in his position for a few months. Howell's work impacted and improved the operations of the OSS in a multitude of ways: development and preliminary implementation of a strategic plan; revision and publication of a new student handbook; production of graduate degree completion workshops for doctoral and masters students; and reformulation of new student orientation and reception activities. Furthermore, OSS recently conducted a degree completion workshop with key staff from the COE's four areas.

Additionally, OSS will be conducting a series of degree completion workshops for faculty. Associate Dean Stritikus and Howell have started training staff members on issues related to the process side of advising.

It is important to note that, the new student manual outlines all degree completion procedures and responsibilities for students as detailed by the Graduate School, and is posted on the COE website. The

OSS staff started revision and improvements of the website to ensure that clear and consistent information is available. Over the next six months we will be working with area staff and chairs to ensure that all informational material for student usage is consistent with COE and Graduate School procedures.

Advising

The need for consistent advising is a concern recognized by the COE administration. The first thing to note is the OSS Director's assistance in developing a clearer distinction between process advising – which covers such aspects as number of credits required, graduate school requirements, dates to file for graduation, etc.– and content advising – mentorship, which is the primary responsibility of the faculty. OSS is increasing its capacity and ability to meet the process advising needs of students and faculty. OSS has developed a more 'customer service' oriented approach to students. For example, OSS staff have worked to dramatically reduce the turnaround time responding to student inquiries. Additionally, OSS conducted a series of workshops for students for issues related to degree completion.

It should be noted that the COE has several examples of faculty advisers who have been praised for the mentorship of students.

Social/Intellectual Life of Students

One of Associate Dean Stritikus' primary goals is to make OSS a center for student life in the College. Within the physical space of the offices that constitute OSS, a student conference room has been designated. It will be targeted for dissertation defenses and general exams, as well as events, which

bring faculty and students together. OSS will also hold an open house this fall. In addition to the social aspects of the open house, students will be invited to submit ideas or issues important to their studies in education using the WebQ tool. We will display these topics at the open house. We also plan to organize some events throughout the year around student interests. We will continue to explore ways to sponsor events target for students.

Tracking Students

As the committee's report indicates, the COE administration is severely limited in their ability to address this concern because of the lack of central administrative resources. Despite this lack of resources, the Associate Dean is committed to better equip both OSS and faculty advisors to meet these needs. In the short term, the OSS and the technology staff are building a "data warehouse" to combine existing data sources to track all students. In addition, the Dean has secured and allocated resources for an institutional studies position, which will proactively gather data and create new systems for data processing. We will hire for that position in late fall.