

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98195

*Center for Urban Horticulture, GF-15
Washington Park Arboretum*

February 18, 1993

Ms. Mary Thorne, President
Arboretum Foundation XD-10
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mary:

With this letter I would like to officially propose an idea that we have discussed recently concerning short-term actions that we can take that will lead the Washington Park Arboretum to the "promised land."

On January 20, Dean David Thorud, Professor John Wott, and I met with several members of the University of Washington central administration, including Provost Laurel Wilkening and Vice-President Tallman Trask. In that meeting I stressed the importance of the Arboretum to the teaching and public service missions of the University, and stated that we are now at a proverbial crossroads, at which I would like us to move ahead toward a planning process intended to produce, to use the Arboretum Foundation's phrase, a world-class public garden. As you are aware, this development requires 1) greater dedicated administrative attention than I, as Director of the Center for Urban Horticulture, alone can provide; and 2) reliable support of essential staff and operations that in some cases are not or only partially supported by University budgets. In a perfect world, the University would be able to increase Arboretum budgets to immediately shore up those areas and to hire a full-time staff Director of Arboreta to work primarily at Washington Park. Provost Wilkening and friends responded very favorably to our extolling of the Arboretum's virtues but confirmed that, indeed, we do not live in a perfect world. Subsequent to that meeting, she 1) gave us permission to dedicate increased faculty time to the administration of the Arboretum; and 2) encouraged us to submit a proposal to them, for increased funding, after the state legislature has determined the University's budgetary fate this spring.

My expectations for the next few years in the Arboretum are these:

- 1) a comprehensive master plan that a) articulates an ambitious vision for the physical and programmatic development of the Arboretum, b) realistically assesses the resources necessary to achieve and maintain that vision, and c) critically examines management relationships between the University, the City of Seattle, and the Arboretum Foundation in the light of changing circumstances in the future;

- 2) development of plant collections and displays not anticipated to be adversely affected in the near future by implementation of a new master plan;

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- 3) increase of interpretive signs and brochures plus educational programs that make our collections accessible to the public;
- 4) maintenance and increase of the strong academic teaching relevance of the Arboretum to the University of Washington and to other area educational institutions that do or could utilize the grounds and collections;
- 5) a dramatic increase in the stable funding base, such as endowment, that will permit implementation of the first phase(s) of the master plan;
- 6) development of a Mission Statement for the Arboretum, with the active support and participation of the University, the City, the Foundation, and diverse client groups;
- 7) continued maturation of the Arboretum Foundation as an increasingly active partner in the work of the Arboretum; and
- 8) solution to several persistent issues, such as a) the relative maintenance responsibilities of the University and the City, b) the use of the greenhouse, and c) the management of the Graham Visitor Center.

Regarding the resources needed in the near future to achieve these goals, the first issue concerns the direct administration of the University's programs, operations, and staff in the Arboretum. I propose to name Professor John Wott Director of Arboreta, with office space on site at Washington Park. He would serve in this capacity for perhaps five to six years, until we have accomplished the above goals and are in a position to responsibly hire a staff Director. He will manage directly the achievement of the goals enumerated above, and he and I will work together on many of the planning issues, just as I do with all program areas in the Center for Urban Horticulture. Professor Wott's knowledge and experience with regard to the Arboretum's goals, programs, history, and constituents will be invaluable assets as we meet the challenges of the next few years.

The second resource issue that requires clear understanding before we proceed concerns support of essential staff and operations. As you are aware from our previous discussions (and from my detail accompanying our funding request to you last year), staff and operations support that I regard as necessary to a solid foundation for progress goes substantially beyond what is currently covered by University budgets. Professor Wott and I will continue to stress these needs to the University administration, and any increased support for the Arboretum from that quarter will be applied directly to that essential staffing and operations presently not covered. In addition, we will continue to seek outside funding, to be applied in the same manner, from sources such as Institute for Museum Services grants for general operating support and such as development of new endowment. With all that, it is likely that the Arboretum Foundation, as well, will be requested for help in this area.

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Staffing in the plant records office, hortorium, public education program, facilities management, tree care, and gardening (both full-time and seasonal) are essential but not completely stably-funded, despite the University's current direct support of Arboretum personnel to the amount of ca. \$322,000 per year (not including Professor Wott as Director); unbudgeted staffing costs ca. \$108,000 per year (not including arborist and facilities manager). Fiscal support of operations that is presently unbudgeted amounts to \$50-80,000 per year, depending on the programmatic activity in a given period. The less of this necessary support we request from the Foundation in a given year the better, especially because that frees Foundation funds for expenses related to planning and special projects; but we all should be aware that the Foundation will likely be requested to help substantially in this area over the next few "transition years."

In addition, it goes almost without saying that funding to support the actual master planning process must come from sources outside the University proper. Our leadership will do its share toward obtaining such support.

Our proceeding together on master planning and related developments as outlined above depends on 1) the University's commitment to Professor Wott as Director of Arboreta and 2) the Foundation's commitment to financial support, as necessary, for the planning process and for fundamental staffing and operations not currently covered by University budgets. It is understood that the University staff also will help pursue funding in these areas. I hope we can come together on this very soon so that we finally can start this ball rolling.

So, the foregoing represents my ideas for laying the groundwork for the planning and development of the Arboretum. I wish the University were in a position, financially, to contribute even more substantially, but I believe that the increased administrative attention and dedication provided by Professor Wott will propel us forward so that together we may realize the goals I have outlined above. Finally, thank you and the rest of the leadership of the Arboretum Foundation for our continuing discussions of all these matters (and for helping supply me with advice and ammunition for my advocacy of the Arboretum).

It is a pleasure to work with you all, and I look forward to big things in the future.

Yours sincerely,



Clement W. Hamilton, Director
Center for Urban Horticulture

cc: D. Thorud
Prof. J. Wott