

Visiting Committee Meeting

19 May 2008

Attendees

Committee Members: Tom Wolford, Court Stanley, Mark Doumit, Brian Boyle, Jim Dooley, Richard Stroble, John Johnston, Doug Sutherland, Cassie Phillips (via phone)

Visitors: Alan Randall, Tom Hansen

Faculty: David Briggs, Bob Edmonds, Clare Ryan, Gordon Bradley

Staff: Tom Mentele, Ramona Hickey

Brian Boyle called the meeting to order at 12:40 pm, and began introductions.

College update

Bruce Bare updated the committee on the enrollment statistics. Through the past three quarters, the ESRM program has increased 35%. The PSE program is up 5.4%. When averaged, the College of Forest Resources' undergraduate enrollment is up about 20 percent with a total of 223 students. The graduate program has remained flat, with an enrollment of 147 students, but enrollment will grow as new faculty grants come in. Dean Bare said that there are currently six open faculty positions and 3.5 active searches underway. One search is for the Director of the UWBG, where Sandra Lier is the interim director. The faculty will rank the acceptable candidates soon.

The other 2.5 positions are a wildlife conservation position and human dimensions of natural research scientist. The closing date is in the fall. Professor Clare Ryan added that there were 200 applicants for the latter position.

Dean Bare said that a recent retirement is Dave Manuwal, who retires on June 15. There are no other faculty members, known at this time, to be retiring next year.

He then continued with the College's part of Campaign UW, which comes to a close on June 30. We have \$20mm million dollars worth of dollars and bequests. That is about 12% over our goal. The campaign will end successfully in June, thanks to all of our volunteers, donors, and friends, who worked with Dean Bare and our development staff to make this possible.

When asked about campaigns in other schools, Bruce said that other organizations had reached out to private foundations whereas the College has had success with alumni donations. Tom added that the interim campaign will focus on securing support for our centers and programs by building stronger relationships with our corporate and foundation partners.

Curriculum

Professor Clare Ryan discussed new faculty-approved ESRM options. All the ESRM students take a core class: ecology, socioeconomics, and sustainability. Ryan added that the faculty have been working to organize research groups with options: Sustainable Forest Management, Landscape Ecology and Conservation, Restoration Ecology and Environmental Horticulture and Wildlife Conservation. This idea allows students to create their own course of study and to organize themselves into tracks. Next year this will go into action. Next year there will also be a capstone requirement, so students will have to complete a capstone or a thesis as part of their ESRM degree, in either an individual or team project.

Jim Dooley asked about the MFR program being SAF accredited, but not the undergrad level. He also questioned the impact of WSU eliminating their forestry program.

Ryan answered that students might attend UW instead.

Professor Gordon Bradley said that the undergraduate program is parallel to what the SAF accreditation requires. It is a solid forest management program. He and Ryan also added that the faculty members option

leaders were self-selected, since the options are their areas of focus.

Dean Bare said that these options fit the university's philosophy. In other schools like business, you can graduate and get a job or pursue an MBA. He said that the College has moved into that league and pushed the degree into a professional level. Bare said that while SAF accreditation could be sought, it was not necessary. Students are prepared at the undergraduate level. CFR is one of only nine places in the country that have an MFR. Bare said they are trying to make the MFR the main program in Forestry.

Brian Boyle raised the point that engineering has a PE licensing procedure. Bare answered that engineering is going through the process of a fifth-year for a professional degree and the rest of the programs are slowly coming on board.

Ryan said that the lead faculty are good contacts for those with ideas for capstones like how to attract projects and how to identify them to students. When asked if the faculty had ever reached out to nonprofits for comments on the curricula, Ryan answered that the options were planned after many years of asking employers what kind of skills these businesses need. The best measure of success will be evident in the students—can they write, speak, and perform.

Dean Bare then said that SAF will return and report on the learning goals by July 1st. That report will go back to the SAF accreditation committee. Bare added that CFR is not on probation, but SAF wants the process such as assessment procedures and course learning goals to be documented.

Ryan said that the report includes a pre- and post-assessment of things students want to take away from a class, as well as measuring traditional aspects such as course evaluations and a senior year check in with students through focus groups or surveys. There is an evaluation rubric that sets out the goal of each capstone. Ryan said that there will be data on seven to eight core and option classes along with focus group feedback.

Proposed Consolidation of College Centers and into a UW Forest Center

Brian Boyle introduced Professor David Briggs, Director of the Stand Management Cooperative and Precision Forestry Cooperative.

Bruce Bare said that there has been an internal discussion for almost two years on the proliferation of centers and programs within the last 25 years. Bruce said that the question is, are there efficiencies that can be managed and shared amongst professional staff. When different center directors go to Olympia looking for support, legislators can be confused about the college's needs. This led to a group of faculty to create a draft. Briggs praised the number of excellent centers and co-ops in the College that are doing well for their client bases. He added that they are disciplinary-focused and aimed at a specific set of clients, which poses a problem when the College attempts to transcend these disciplines. Briggs said that the talent is scattered and not organized to address larger scale issues. There needs to be a response team to build a bridge between disciplines and larger issues. Briggs then distributed handouts to illustrate how the Forest Center would be organized. Centers would be able to continue with their research but contribute to the overall expertise cluster. Briggs then added that the next step would be to receive feedback.

Discussion moved to the centers not included such as WRCC, Water Center, Pulp and Paper, UWBG. Briggs said that these centers have a different mission than the Forest Center. Briggs mentioned that there's a similar program at OSU focusing on intensive plantation silviculture. That program is looking for gaps and how science can be brought into policy.

Dean Bare said that the College wants to integrate and present a more unified approach to the external world. They want to retain the identity of each of the competent centers so that people would not see their directed dollars co-mingled, but also allow for interdisciplinary integration.

Briggs said that funding would come from the top down. It would provide more security for professional staff. Briggs further said that the governing board would assure organizations like SMC and PFC that their stakes would be properly protected.

Dean Bare said that if CFR joins the College of the Environment as a school of Forest Resources, it puts the name brand on these centers and a new Dean will not likely move them around. He added that it would show that CFR has paid attention and so the UWFC would belong in a forest school.

When asked how state and federal agencies would benefit, Briggs replied that if agencies had an issue they wanted to deal with, they would have one point of communication instead of figuring out which center focuses on that problem.

John Johnston asked what kind of authority the governing board would have and Briggs responded that that discussion has not taken place yet. He added that there are placeholders, but the details have not been addressed.

Boyle said that if the Northwest Environmental Forum is a component, it would be worth considering what it would be in the future.

Referring to the handout, Briggs noted that the components box was what he was thinking of in defining what UWFC would do and the context of how to respond to those issues.

Doug Sutherland said that the College of Forest Resources comprises one small part of the UW. If the idea is to bring these components together as a combined influential group, that might cause it to become a competitive group for legislative funding. He added that if the group were given authority to gain grants, it would attract other areas of the UW. Success has been achieved with significant individuals in the legislative body. He said he was conflicted if the existing system or this would offer a better approach or if it would create competition with the campus. He also said that that it would be wise to develop and sell the concept and in selling the concept, it would bring in equivalent funding.

Mark Doumit added that by adding prominent people, there would be a risk of approaching those with a non-partisan view.

Dean Bare explained and discussed rewording the Forest Research Institute statute. Sutherland responded that it might fall in line with how legislators think. He said that there is less negative pushback when simply adding onto already established statutes. There are already people looking at RCW's for any conflicts.

College of the Environment

The Visiting Committee had an extensive discussion about the proposed College of the Environment. Provost Wise intends to present the College concept as a skeleton, and she will appoint an interim dean.

Issues raised include:

Unlike other schools, the College of Forest Resources loses the identity of a college.

The Provost has a concept of COE but not a structure or business plan. The proposal does not have the broad representation of the concepts it includes and has narrow disciplines.

There is concern about what will happen to students looking for a job, what kind of degree they will have and how graduates will enter a very important workforce.

With the end of the fundraising campaign, some alumni will wonder how their donations were spent.

The original Visiting Committee letter sent to the Provost and the President supported the concept but presented its downsides. The response from the President and Provost was pro-forma. A new letter to the Board of Regents was discussed at length. It was agreed that there needed to be a clear negative message with a clear positive alternative in a new letter, and the clear message needed to say that we do not agree with the proposal. It was agreed that a new letter to the regents would be drafted and Committee members would be asked to agree to be signators.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.