

Visiting Committee Meeting

November 18, 2008

Attendees

Committee Members: Brian Boyle, Mark Doumit, Tom Hanson, Roger Hoesterey, Court Stanley, Doug Sutherland, Bettina Von Hagen (via teleconference), Barbara Wright, and Janet Wainwright.

Faculty: Bruce Bare, Gordon Bradley, Steve West, Aaron Wirsing, Bob Edmonds

Staff: Ramona Hickey, Tom Mentele, Caroline Rosevear

Brian Boyle called the meeting to order at 10:20 AM and began introductions.

New Faculty

Steve West introduced new faculty member, Assistant Professor Aaron Wirsing. Aaron's primary research is in predator ecology and prey behavior and their connections toward conservation. He will deliver the College of Forest Resources' March 5, 2009 Winter Lecture in Kane Hall.

State of the College

Dean Bruce Bare discussed the issues facing the college over the next few months. The college has seen double digit growth in both the ESRM and PSE programs. Last year's enrollment was 216 undergraduates and now there are 250 students, an almost 16% increase. There are 150 graduate students, so the total enrollment is about 400 students. The largest college enrollment in the past 20 years has been 500 students. There is growth in all programs and we expect that it will continue to grow. Our new faculty members are receiving more research grants, which allow us to fund more graduate students. The slack economy also draws people back to graduate school. The college is also receiving more publicity, which attracts undeclared majors and those from community colleges. There has also been a 40% increase in student credit hours (SCH) which include courses our faculty teach in the college as well as in other colleges. Generation of SCH by our faculty has a big impact on the UW and helps secure our position within the larger university.

There are questions remaining about the status of the state budget since the numbers are not known yet. The University has to turn back 10 million dollars in an across-the-board budget cut from this year's budget. Depending on the severity of cuts in the state general fund for the coming biennium, and how tuition rates are determined, the college will likely absorb additional budget reductions after July 1st.

College of the Environment

The faculty recently voted almost 2 to 1 to join the new College of the Environment (CoEnv) as a core unit. This vote followed several presentations by Provost Phyllis Wise and President Mark Emmert who both spent time with the faculty, advocating joining the CoEnv. Those talks with the faculty clearly had an impact with the final faculty vote. Provost Wise has said that there will be a national search for the Director for the new School of Forest Resources, but not until the new dean of the College of the Environment is hired. Presently, no search is underway for either position and much uncertainty surrounds formation of the new college and school.

Bettina Von Hagen asked how CFR's vote compared with other schools in terms of reluctance and enthusiasm.

Bruce answered that Atmospheric Sciences with about 15 faculty members was the most enthusiastic to join. Steve West added that a strong driver for their joining was that as a small part of Arts and Sciences, their sway is small while as part of the College of the Environment, they would have a stronger influence. The Department of Earth and Space Sciences has also decided to join as a core unit.

Bruce Bare said that Marine Affairs has voted to join. The Schools of Oceanography and Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences have not voted to join as core units.

Tom Hanson asked if the six units were the only ones going to be added to the college or if there would be more.

Bruce said that is what the CoEnv looks like now. However, the Program on the Environment and a new social science unit are also envisioned as part of the new CoEnv. All of these core units will still retain their existing programs for at least five years before any coalescing would begin. The plan is to seek money from the Legislature as part of the UW's biennial budget request. Other areas such as policy, biology, engineering, and business are not conceived as core units but are expected to collaborate with the new college's programs.

Bruce then moved on to discuss the status of the open faculty positions within CFR. The position for the Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management had 105 applications and five participated in on-campus interviews. The position was offered to one candidate but negotiations did not succeed. Given the faculty hiring freeze, we are awaiting approval from the Provost to proceed with another offer. The Bio-Resource science faculty position was offered to a candidate in June 2008 as a joint position with Chemical Engineering. However, the candidate declined our offer. Chemical Engineering has now reopened the search for this position and we have a member from our college on the search committee..

Another open position is that of Director for the UW Botanic Gardens. Following a faculty search, we offered the position to two candidates, but both candidates declined. Bruce discussed this situation with Provost Wise and proposed converting the directorship from a faculty position to a professional staff position. Current director Sandra Lier has agreed to extend her stay past June 30, still working at 40%. Her new title will be Executive Director, UWBG. Until the faculty freeze is removed, we are unable to commence a search for a permanent director or a new faculty member.

Another open position is in Wildland Fire Ecology, previously filled by Jim Agee, where a research assistant/associate professor position has been created. Currently, we are assembling applications from interested candidates.

We expect that all open faculty positions will remain within the School of Forest Resources, but a new dean (of CoEnv) could reallocate those positions to other departments within the new college. Some of our positions may be lost. The interim dean of CoEnv is working with a faculty committee to define the organization of the new college, as well as its mission and vision. We expect that each core unit will be granted a high degree of autonomy within the new college. Details on the proposed curriculum for the new college and the organization of the advanced research institute are still lacking. If the Provost and the majority of the Faculty Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting agree, she can start the RCEP process early in 2009. Bettina asked about the student response to the College. Bruce said that there has not been any student input or evidence of student support within CFR. This will not impact the students since CFR programs will remain intact. Bettina responded that the benefits of the new school would allow for a more integrated study. A more holistic approach would be intriguing to students. Bruce agreed that future students will likely view it positively if the integrated curriculum evolves as suggested.

Steve West said that in time there would be a fairly flexible approach and that some students may still be more interested in a disciplinary approach. Work is still required to provide a balanced model in order to retain the strength of current groups while providing the broader approach. All the core units have to offer their current degrees for at least four years so students can finish programs in effect when they started.

Mark Doumit asked if there was any way to influence CoEnv's development such as its dean search.

Bruce said that there is some discussion about this in the afore-mentioned faculty committee and these discussions could have an impact on the dean search. The dean search is not underway and neither the job description nor the college has been defined. There are still many steps left, but the UW wants to start admitting students into CoEnv at the beginning of autumn quarter 2009. An interim dean can oversee this. For the next five years, an undergraduate degree from the College of Forest Resources will remain as a Bachelor of Science in Forest Resources degree with a major in either Environmental Science and Resource Management or Paper Science and Engineering.

Bruce said that there is some uncertainty in this process that is beyond CFR's control. For example, the faculty would like to re-examine the name for the new school. Any name change must be approved by the Provost, President, and Regents. At this time, we are using the name – School of Forest Resources – in discussions with the Provost. Bruce then talked about the changes at Washington State University and its impact on SAF accreditation. If WSU eliminates its forestry program, there will be no SAF-accredited Bachelor of Science forestry degree in Washington. Senators Hargrove and Jacobsen are interested in this development.

Forestry Education in Washington State

A recent meeting regarding forestry programs in the state attracted WSU, and Washington state technical and community college representatives, who offer forestry, natural resource, or environmental science programs, as well as WFPA. The discussion focused on what each program was doing and what CFR offered in the ESRM degree. Some had not heard about the college's Masters program. There was much discussion about different models. At CFR, there is the 2+2 model, where the student completes basic general education requirements in the first two years and finishes the last two years in the technical upper division program. The 2+2+1 model adds a master's degree in the fifth year. There are other combinations like the 3+1+1 model, with three years spent at the community college, one year at the UW and one year for the master's degree. There is a lot of confusion regarding this three year plan, since there is a two-year forestry technical degree at some community colleges. However, with the forestry technical degree, a student may not complete the pre-university general education courses so he/she might stay an extra year after transferring to the UW. Alternately, these students could stay a third year at the community college to complete their general education requirements.

Mark Doumit said that in this economic climate, it is difficult for anyone to advocate for a new program over the program they already have. There is a real opportunity to move forward positively in forestry during what could be a very negative session. The committee voiced a strong interest in making it easier for students to get forestry degrees, especially those from rural communities. The four-year ESRM major is designed to be more transfer friendly.

Steve West said that there is a mix of students who follow the traditional 2+2 model and with recent ESRM curriculum changes, more people graduate with a BSF degree in four years. The requirements are now easier to meet. Now, in five years, you can have both a BS and an MFR (FM) degree.

Tom Hanson said that his members fully supported the cooperation between the community college and the University. Court Stanley said that of his employees, the ones who have had the most impact were those who had both a technical (community college) forestry degree and a BS (theory) degree from the UW.

Bruce Bare said that the Society of American Foresters now accredits two-year forest technician programs, so for example, Green River Community College could (if accredited) promote its program as SAF-accredited. He believes this could result in considerable confusion among students who may be seeking an accredited four-year BS or Master's degree.

Mark Doumit mentioned that the meeting also covered Oregon State University's program. OSU has five different SAF-accredited programs, which is very attractive to students. He suggested that there might be a way to negotiate an SAF accreditation for those community colleges offering a forestry tech degree. Steve West said that the requirements are different and that there still might be a five-year degree.

Bruce said that some employers are concerned over the dropping of the UW's SAF-accredited BS program several years ago. However, CFR has an SAF-accredited master's program. He pointed out that a few states that license foresters require that graduates come from an accredited program. This is not the case in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, or Alaska. Thus, he is unaware of employers not hiring UW graduates because they graduate from a non-accredited BS program. Further, graduates from our

ESRM major who elect the Sustainable Forest Management option are qualified to become SAF-certified foresters. Thus, they may obtain the same professional status as any forestry graduate, whether their college program is accredited or not.

As Doug Sutherland had to leave the meeting, Brian thanked Doug for his service and commitment to great relations between the DNR and the College. Doug remarked about the great work that the college has done and how the employees of Department of Natural Resources have benefitted from the success, such as the new graduates who become employees and the graduates who continue to work. When the employees see that the Commissioner of Public Lands is interested and involved, they become involved as well, an important ingredient for ongoing success. Doug said that the Visiting Committee brings a sense of involvement, and regardless of what happens, it is important to continue the Visiting Committee.

Bruce thanked Doug for his involvement and advice and helping rebuild CFR's relationship with DNR during his eight years as Commissioner of Public Lands. His service has benefitted both the College and citizens of the State of Washington.

UW Botanic Gardens

Bruce discussed creating a better private funding arrangement that will lead to better support of the public and private aspects of the UWBG. The Arboretum Foundation was founded 75 years ago and, for the most part, was the principal private fundraising organization for the Washington Park Arboretum. When the UW initiated its "Campaign UW" capital fund raising campaign in 2000, we begin to experience instances where both groups were approaching donors on behalf of the UWBG and the Arboretum. This eventually led to facilitated meetings between the partners to improve the coordination of private fund raising. As a result of the meetings, there are going to be coordinated priorities related to what the Arboretum needs and what the Union Bay facility (CUH, UBNA, Miller Library, Union Bay Gardens, etc.) needs and how that fits in with the needs of the donors.

Barbara Wright, who became Arboretum Foundation president and VC member in July, said that there have been very candid conversations and there are different types of energies to coordinate. The Pacific Connections Garden is the first new Arboretum garden in 50 years and energized the foundation as a team.

Bruce said that the Japanese Garden is the next new improvement and will open in the spring. It has been a very positive experience and we have presented a joint report to the UW Regents and Seattle City Council on the progress and status of all of our work.

Federal Requests Submitted to UW for Review

Bruce moved on to discuss our federal appropriation requests. Each year, CFR has gone to Congress for federal earmarks. For FY10, we have submitted requests to the UW on behalf of CINTRAFOR, ONRC, Wind River Canopy Crane, cellulosic bio-fuels research equipment, and a curatorial building in the Arboretum. This is one of the buildings approved in the master plan and something worth getting started.

Tom Hanson asked if RTI was included. Bruce explained that RTI was initially supported by the Family Forest Foundation and the WFFA who wanted funding to support university science to address a range of forest management issues. Over the past three years, interest has shifted to support for a forest land data base, rather than RTI itself. Therefore, we no longer submit requests for RTI funding and RTI funding now comes from competitive grants and contracts.

State Requests for FY 10-11

Bruce explained that CFR would submit requests to the Legislature in support of the following projects:

- Washington State parcel database
- NW Environmental Forum
- Bio-fuels research equipment
- Extension of Future of Washington's Forest Study
- Pilot LiDAR Studies in eastern and western Washington

In addition, ONRC and CINTRAFOR will seek continued state funding for their programs and the UWBG will seek matching funds for a plant curator staff position.

We are also seeking a revision of the RCW language related to the Institute for Forest Resources. The language needs to be modernized to permit an effective Institute to function.

Northwest Environmental Forum 2008

Brian Boyle discussed the recent Northwest Environmental Forum held at the Semiahoo Resort in Blaine. 90 people attended and after the two-day session, there were a set of recommendations and specific action requests. Brian discussed the executive summary and the Forum findings. The report is available at www.nwenvironmentalforum.org.

Graduate School Review of the College of Forest Resources

Steve West said that every ten years graduate school assessment is conducted, and now it is our turn. A site visit is scheduled February 23-24, 2009. The committee will talk to individuals and groups and will respond with their report. They will have a month to prepare a report and the college will have a month to respond to the Provost. There have been numerous structural and organizational changes and those changes have prepared us for the future.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM.