

Budget Realignment Task Force Reports 2-9-07

#4 CURRICULUM TASK FORCE REPORT

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The Committee was concerned about future impacts on the educational quality of current COF offerings and degree programs. We would like to see a careful planning effort so that structural realignment of the College minimizes impacts to all individuals that contribute to the curriculum. Hopefully any budgetary impacts will be shared by higher administration levels of the College. Estimated cost savings are really only guesses and the full consequences have not been fully developed. Unintended consequences for some of these have the potential of not saving anything and perhaps costing the College more than the proposed savings.

Options:

1. Reduce the number of temporary instructors and either eliminate some courses or require that they be taught by tenure/tenure track faculty.

There are a fairly large number of courses across all departments that are currently being taught by temporary faculty. These courses need to be assessed as part of a College-wide curriculum review as to their relevancy for future undergraduate degrees. Some of these courses may be retained, some may be dropped. In addition, some courses that are offered multiple terms might need to be taught only one term of the year, especially if temporary instructors are involved in their offering.

The College may need to make more efficient use of current faculty and full-time instructors to teach essential core classes. This might include faculty that currently have limited teaching FTE or are engaged only in graduate education. For instance, FOR 240 (Forest Biology) is an essential course for several of the College's majors, but has been taught by temporary instructors for several years. Assignment of a currently tenured faculty member (or a team of faculty) course may be necessary for its continued offering.

We estimate potential savings if this policy is implemented to be ~2.0 FTE (~\$150,000-200,000/year).

2. Move the funding model for the Interdisciplinary Natural Resource Program (248 students) to the Provost level.

Funding for this program currently comes through contributions among 4 Colleges that participate in its offering. COF is currently the largest contributor. Difficulties with curricular actions, differential record keeping, and lack of consistent college degree requirements result in an inefficient administrative structure.

This program could be funded much like the Graduate Program in Environmental Sciences, with COF providing office space and some degree of administrative support (as it currently does). Cost saving to COF ~\$100,000/yr

3. Consider moving faculty members to OSU-Cascades in support of the ORLT and NR Programs.

Failed searches in each of these programs over the past several years have limited the potential for growth at the Cascades Campus. Having OSU-Cascades pay these individuals, but maintaining their tenure home in COF would reduce FTE on the Corvallis Campus. Cost savings could amount to 2 FTE (~\$200,000/yr). Impact: Transferred faculty would essentially be lost to the Corvallis teaching pool, leaving gaps in some of our curricula.

4. Assess student resource fees for all COF majors and course fees for some COF courses.

COF could impart a fee to all students within the college that would help to support various infrastructure needs such as computer labs, technology labs, field equipment, and student activities. In addition, courses which have historically had field trips and high transportation costs paid for by departments could require a \$50/course fee to support vehicle rental. Courses that use expensive equipment in the field or in the lab could have additional fees added. Cost savings through revenue generation could amount to ~\$50,000/year (rough estimate).

(Note from a committee member: if we were to assess a resource fee of \$400/student/term, we would generate close to \$600,000/year. This is a high end fee but it shows the potential. Not sure about course fees. But we should be able to assess that fairly easily).

5. Consider development of additional ECampus courses that are attractive to students outside of the university, and support development of additional graduate programs that might be available via distance.

Currently, departments and instructors receive a fairly generous return on distance course tuition. (\$85/credit hour/student returned back to the departments that house the instructors of record). Increasing offerings, development of a Professional Masters Program in Natural Resources, and additional graduate certificate programs could provide a source of revenue for COF. Revenue generation could amount to ~50,000/yr (rough estimate).

6. Consider moving Forest Engineering to the College of Engineering.

Shared financial responsibility for this program with COE could lower costs to COF. The committee was not sure on potential cost savings, but the idea was offered and asked to be put in the report.

7. Consider combining four departments into two (FR + FS, FE + WSE) or eliminating departments altogether and simply having degree programs within the College of Forestry.

This option might result in reduced expenditure on administration, and allow more of the budget to be devoted to teaching and research activities.

#5 TASK FORCE REPORT – INTELLIGENT CONSUMERS

Viviane Simon-Brown, Nathalie Gitt, Susan Morre, Rand Sether, Roger Admiral

LOWERING EXPENDITURES BY BECOMING INTELLIGENT CONSUMERS

Our committee is focusing on two areas. First, we are identifying areas of short-term small cost and resources efficiencies, such as centralizing supply purchases (ie paper, ink cartridges, computers.) Second, to encourage long-term behavioral change, we will offer information on sustainable living choices, through tips in the COF newsletter, highlighting efficiencies already in place, and encouraging sustainable behaviors in the workplace.

#2 TASK FORCE REPORT – ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT UNIT ORGANIZATION

SUBJECT: Administrative and Service Unit Restructuring Group
Lesley Nylin, Kira Hughes, Scott Ferris, Rose Lacey, Penny Wright, Terralyn Vandetta, Alison Moldenke, Kim Stutzman, Harold Zald

The Administrative and Service Unit Restructuring Group had an excellent meeting on Wednesday morning (2/6) – it is a good committee in terms of composition and free sharing of ideas of concerns. Following your summary of our charge, we had a brief discussion on budget issues and I launched into my house analogy (our need to move into a smaller “house” rather than continuing to chip away at the big old one). I think that continues to be one of the few ways to view budget constraints in any positive light, and the committee concurred that there will be some positive opportunities associated with such a “house move.”

We first discussed, and at length, the “no-departments” model and its implications, strengths and weaknesses. In the absence of any detail regarding numbers of positions by department and service unit, we don’t have a firm estimate on cost savings at this time but will strive to do so by the end of the month. However, it is safe to assume small immediate savings only from:

- Not filling and/or eliminating a few administrative positions (or at least parts of FTEs),
- Not filling a few open staff positions that would be redundant with the elimination of departments,
- Maybe some immediate voluntary 1.0-to-.75 FTE transitions, though this will not always save proportional OPE, and

- Maybe some early retirements stimulated by the reorganization itself or special campus-wide buyout programs – after which folks could work on 1039 appointments, or not.

Most savings will come in the longer-term *via* partial- and full retirements, voluntary FTE and position reductions, and normal attrition over several years as program foci emerge and stabilize, and the dust settles from the house move in general. I'll venture about \$1 million in savings by the third year, but we will need to run the numbers, and such an exercise may be premature given the work of other committees (e.g., program foci)

The committee did think that the “no-departments” model could certainly be a functional new structure for our degree programs and outreach programs and core research programs, but perhaps not as dispersed as they are currently, particularly in research. Again, other committees are thinking on these topics and we can work better after input from them. We are hesitant ourselves to start “naming names,” focusing rather on the future house structure as a whole. Overall, we are excited by the idea of renewing focus on core mission and programs, many of which are multi-disciplinary, and generally lowering the walls between departments. This will benefit of our undergraduate and graduate students, and our college as a whole. It also streamlines the interactions with various support and service units.

Service Units:

The committee talked a great deal about the service unit model that has already emerged following recent budget cuts in communications, media center, computer services, College Forest and business office. These centers are highly valued among faculty and staff, unique aspects of the College of Forestry ‘experience’ for our students and alumni, would be impossible to duplicate with something else on campus, and they are already pretty lean and mean. They currently have a structure with “basic” functions supported by state funding and “extended” functions that can be purchased from external grants. There is very little room for cost savings here. Indeed, business office functions and responsibilities will actually increase with the elimination of departments, and some staff may choose (and we will need them) to move into that service unit rather than stay with a “program”. Regardless though, we can always improve and find ways to modernize – this restructuring is an excellent excuse to do that.

Two-department Model:

The committee considers the “two-department” or “two-school” model (as presented and pondered so far) to mainly have disadvantages. On the good side, having two departments would keep us more in line with the OSU bureaucracy and would decentralize some administrative functions (as they are now); however, we don't know where the logical split would be and philosophically worry about any “split.” Undergraduate vs. graduate, or teaching vs. research, would be artificial for most faculty that do both and creates a separation that we think would be to the detriment of student

engagement...and where is extension? A discipline split along the lines of management vs. science, or brown vs. green, would also be artificial to most faculty that do both and would heighten some walls already here in the college. Maintaining two departments also only takes us about ½ way to the cost savings discussed above. Therefore, we still ponder and await a decent proposal for some split. And obviously, three departments would be too little change from the current house and represent too little cost savings.

Fewer people – less work done:

Any decrease in departments represents a shift of some important responsibilities to either the dean's office, a service unit, the faculty body, or two surviving departments in that proposed structure. We need those good things that departments do in terms of maintaining the house, engaging students, and providing support to faculty for teaching, outreach and research – they will still need to be done and done well. However, not everything can be continued business-as-usual, just shifted to another layer in a structure (e.g., 10-hour annual performance evaluations). Restructuring at the college-level (AND at the university-level for that matter) has to dump the outdated and silly things we sometimes do, improve and modernize the organization, and accent the core mission in education, outreach and research. Indeed, a restructuring like this is about the ONLY time you can do this in a major way.

That is the current pulse of the committee. We will continue to engage our colleagues for reactions and new ideas, and then solidify these perceived advantages and disadvantages by the end of the month.

#3 TASK FORCE REPORT - Future Program

Submitted to: College of Forestry Executive Committee

Date: Feb. 9, 2007

Contributors:

John Bliss (FR)

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This document is a preliminary report that outlines several ideas concerning program change within the College of Forestry. This advisory team, along with several other advisory teams, was formed at the request of the Dean on February 5, 2007. Our charge

was to assist the FEC as they develop a plan to implement possible budget reductions in the College. The Dean had stipulated that certain criteria must be met, including:

- Student success must be supported,
- College expenditures must be reduced,
- Changes must be legal, and
- Results are needed within 2 years.

In addition, the team included ideas to increase revenue through programmatic change.

The committee was given a deadline of February 11 for an interim report and February 28 for a “final” report, although it was implied that the timeline may evolve. Certainly, more time is needed to determine the advantages and disadvantages of each of the suggestions. We made no attempt to estimate the potential cost saving or revenue gain due to our lack of budgetary information. To ascertain whether any of these suggestions could generate revenue and / or cost savings, we request that the Dean’s office and / or individual departments supply the relevant budgetary information. Due to a lack of sufficient data, most of our ideas relate to the process of identifying program areas for change. What follows is a list of suggestions relating to program change that are organized by theme. There is no implied priority, except where emphasized. These suggestions do not represent a consensus of the team.

It should be noted that some of our suggestions overlap with some of the other advisory teams. Due to the short time-frame, these items were retained in this report. It is expected that the Dean or FEC will respond with further instructions to focus our efforts on specific ideas.

Teaching

We understand that the University’s formula for teaching revenue is complex and is calculated over a longer time-frame than 2 years. Since the entire University is participating in the same budgetary planning as we are, the distribution of teaching revenue should be placed on the table as well. When one considers the possibility of reducing class sizes across campus, during a time of budgetary constraint, by accepting more teaching load in the College of Forestry, we may be able to broker a deal to increase our share of State General Funds within 2 years. Not only does this approach have the potential to increase revenue, but also supports student success.

1. Increase student credit hours taught by College faculty. Some College of Forestry faculty have a very low teaching load compared to other programs, hence a large capacity to increase student credit hours and draw more State general funds into the College. One department has no undergraduate degree program. Teaching opportunities could be realized in other colleges, if not in our own. One example is freshman biology. Several College faculty members are well qualified to teach an entry level biology course. Why should all of these student credit hours be surrendered to the College of Science, when this course is a requirement for our students and the current courses are very large and over-subscribed?

2. There are some redundant courses taught in the College, but in different departments. These courses should be combined. For example, the FE Department recently added forest policy and management courses that have some redundancy with courses offered in the FR Department.
3. Eliminate the practice of hiring instructors for College courses. Use tenured/tenure-track faculty instead, even if they don't have a teaching appointment. This should be implemented immediately.
4. Reassign teaching loads to improve cost efficiency. Faculty members who generate few, if any, extramural research monies should have a higher teaching load. This provides more time to faculty members who are motivated and capable of generating research grants and contracts, particularly those projects that generate full overhead. This scheme must reward faculty for teaching and not be perceived as punishment.
5. Consider teaching some courses (including continuing education courses) through Ecampus, where tuition revenue flows directly to the College, and is in direct proportion to student credit hours.

Research

6. The College is already participating in several of the OSU Strategic Initiatives, but opportunities exist for more College faculty participation. With the assistance of the FEC, assign at least one faculty member per initiative to investigate opportunities for collaboration. Some faculty members need to be "invited" to join collaborative efforts.
7. Some faculty members are doing research that is not innovative / contemporary and not likely to attract significant extramural funding. We should be encouraging more faculty to examine contemporary issues such as, but not limited to:
 - a. impacts of climate change,
 - b. wildfire,
 - c. international forestry and natural resource capacity building in developing countries,
 - d. privatization of public lands,
 - e. ecosystem goods and services valuation and provision,
 - f. broader societal shifts and how they influence natural resources,
 - g. human dimensions of natural resources, especially in the wildland-urban interface,
 - h. life cycle inventory,
 - i. bio-based materials and bio-fuels (such as currently being considered via the proposed BEST Signature Research Center),
 - j. nano-science,
 - k. ecosystems response to changes in natural- and human-induced forcings.

Many faculty members are already actively researching these issues, but more could be done to promote this work and bring it to the forefront to position the College for the future. Although a change in research direction will probably not

- yield significant revenue within 2 years, there may be opportunities within the next 6 months to initiate new research proposals with a starting date in 2008.
8. Actively promote collaboration in teaching and research within and outside the College. Explore the potential for joint faculty appointments or re-appointments across colleges to reduce salary burden on a single college.

Prioritization and Reorganization

9. The College completed a strategic plan just 3 years ago. A great deal of effort and forethought was invested in the plan. Use the strategic plan as a guide for prioritizing programs; direct dollars toward programs that contribute to meeting College goals (e.g. inter-disciplinary research, innovative teaching, global issues) and away from programs that make less compelling contributions.
10. With the objective of minimizing bias, forget the current structure of the College of Forestry, and plan a new institutional and incentive structure to effectively and efficiently achieve goals as set forth in the strategic plan. This will require development of an implementation plan with input from the College's broad constituency base. Based on society's current and projected needs, what would a new organizational unit require? Reorganization may be modeled as a school with program areas that cross traditional boundaries. The intent is to bring all programs (existing and new) in line with the College's vision for the future. This would need to be done within budgetary constraints. Cost-savings could be calculated by comparing the new organizational concept with the current College structure. Regardless of cost-savings, reorganization would enhance the College's ability to leverage resources for obtaining outside research funds, meet the needs of our constituents, and support student success.
11. Eliminate programs as opposed to reducing the size of all programs. This means fewer programs, but maintains quality and efficiency.
12. Programs with high priority are ones that are unique in the State of Oregon. One example is the Wood Science and Engineering program, but there are others.
13. Combine departments and save some redundant staffing expenses and perhaps forgo some future faculty hires. For example, Forest Engineering and Forest Resources (or Forest Science) could be combined into a single re-named unit that would be similar to other units at peer institutions. Other scenarios could also be a logical fit. However, any combining of academic departments will come with serious disadvantages.
14. Protect selected service programs that build good relationships in Oregon. These service efforts are an important part of the Land Grant mission. We also need public and industry support for political reasons, not the least of which is support for the harvest tax.
15. Seek input on programmatic change from our constituents. Our future and the future of our constituents are intertwined.
16. Eliminate the Media Center, Computing Help Center, and Forestry Communications Group and consolidate essential services into a few support positions that would interface with University resources with similar duties. This

- opportunity would require careful consideration of actual cost savings and lost faculty productivity.
17. Consolidate the Forestry Business Office with the University Business Affairs Office. If needed, train each Department's office manager to facilitate and monitor budgets and related tasks. Perhaps one business affairs professional and a staff member could be retained as liaison personnel in Peavy Hall.
 18. Develop a College-wide centralized undergraduate advising office (much like HHS) and eliminate advising appointments for individual faculty members to give them more time and incentive to attract external funding. Explore the potential of diversity hires for the advising office, as the University has incentive programs for covering some or all of the salary for diversity hires.

Indirect Cost and Fee Generation

19. One criterion for prioritizing programs should be the amount of overhead money produced. Unfortunately, what is best for the public good is sometimes not financially viable.
20. Research programs and co-ops with a narrow clientele who receive exclusive benefits should have a goal of being self-supporting and not subsidized by State funds. While such programs often leverage State monies, they still represent an opportunity cost to the core programs of the College. Reassess the actual cost to the College for these programs.
21. All faculty members should be involved in grantsmanship. One motivation to write grants could be teaching release time. Motivation might also be tied to a conversion of faculty appointments to an FTE less than 1, where the faculty member has a potential to significantly increase salary if the conversion results in an increase in the base pay.
22. Actively promote contract testing using College facilities as a means of generating revenue with full overhead. For example, the WSE Department has some unique testing facilities in the Wood Engineering Laboratory that have the potential to generate more revenue. Student labor can be used, and the students would gain some practical experience working on real life projects. This would require faculty time.