Report to the Strategic Alignment/Budget Reduction Review Committee

ESS Division
March 15, 2010

- Faculty in FERM and AREC Departments are in early conversations about potential to establish an economics focused policy analysis institute that addresses land and ocean issues relevant to the ESS Division. The institute would have the potential to increase research funding, attract top students, and add visibility to OSU’s leadership in this area. ESS Deans recommend this group be directed to work with public policy faculty in CLA to develop an integrated center or institute that crosses Divisions.

- FES Department is facilitating dialogue and preparation of a pre-proposal to NSF for an environmental synthesis center. This is stimulating substantial interaction among the campus community and if successful will result in a internationally prominent multi-college, multi-OUVS institution program with potential of increasing grant productivity and returns by millions of dollars per year. ESS Deans support this initiative and together with other deans and VPR have funded a consultant to help develop the pre-proposal. ESS Deans recommend continuing support if OSU is asked for full proposal.

- CoF has participated in conversations with CAS about restructuring and consolidation of undergraduate and graduate plant sciences degrees on campus. The efforts have the potential to increase the efficiency of delivering courses that meet the needs for several units on campus and to refine degree programs that are attractive to students and meet the needs of Oregon and beyond. ESS Deans recommend continuation of this dialogue.

- The FES Department RRM faculty has had exploratory conversations with HHS about opportunities for curricular and programmatic alignment that would promote healthy lifestyles through natural resource focused recreation activities. This should continue as RRM faculty restructures their undergraduate degree into an option in the NR degree.

- CoF and FW faculty have led discussions about alternative administrative models for organizing natural resources faculty and programs within the ESS Division. Some models may have the potential establish units with substantial capacity for generating research support and to reduce administrative overhead costs within the ESS Division. CAS will make a proposal as part of its restructuring. ESS Executive Dean recommends that OSU consider examining current college structure and missions in the ESS Division re: Earth Sciences (as proposed by COAS and Geosciences), Food and Agriculture, and Forest and Natural Resources (would align all natural resources programs at OSU in a single college). Timing of this conversation is not as crucial as other actions needed in the near term.

- CoF faculty from all three colleges in ESS are active in preliminary discussions with colleagues across campus about responding to an RFP from DOI that would establish a Regional Climate Center at OSU with collaboration by UW, WSU, PSU, UO, and Idaho. OCCRI Director Phil Mote is on point. ESS Deans recommend continuation of this initiative.
• CoF faculty have been active in conversations with CAS colleagues about the potential to create a School of Applied Economics. CoF Dean, DH FES, DH FERM and three CoF economists met on Mar. 15 to assess how far to go with this. ESS Executive Dean recommends continued conversation that more fully engage CoF and CAS economics faculty with aim to (1) strengthen applied economics capacity, (2) improve equity in how admissions, financial support and coordination of course offerings, and (3) maintain as much interdisciplinary strength as currently exists in CoF.

• CoF faculty has participated in conversations with COAS and Geosciences faculty about creation of a College of Earth Sciences. This proposal should be considered in light of how to best align programs with missions for colleges in the ESS Division mentioned above.

• CoF faculty has participated with COAS colleagues in conversations about the establishment of an Earth Systems Science Institute that would function as a semi autonomous research institute. ESS Deans recommend continuation of this exploration.

• CoF Dean and faculty from all three ESS colleges are collaborating with colleagues in the Division of Arts and Sciences and the University Honors College to create an Institute for Environmental Humanities.

• CoF faculty has participated with COAS colleagues in conversations about ESS graduate and undergraduate degree programs. ESS Deans recommend that faculty delivering the Environmental Sciences undergraduate and graduate degrees and Natural Resources undergraduate degree be brought into this conversation with the aim of creating strong and compelling degrees in environmental, earth and natural resources sciences at reduced delivery costs.

• CoF faculty in Student Services has engaged in conversations with similar faculty in CAS about how to support each other’s efforts. ESS Deans recommend continuing this conversation.

• The FES and Horticulture Departments are interacting with the Oregon Department of Forestry to create educational opportunities in Urban Forestry and Ecology. CoF and CAS Deans recommend continued exploration. CoF and CAS Deans have initiated process to bring their degree programs into the INTO Program by Fall 2011. If graduate programs join that process, ESS Deans recommend COAS be added to the conversation.

• A letter of intent was submitted to the OSU Research Office to submit a proposal for the NSF Major Research Instrumentation Program. If selected and the proposal successful, the funds would provide for development of an Integrated Multi-scale X-Ray Computed Tomography System. This initiative was supported by researchers representing six colleges located in all four OSU Divisions, including a substantial representation of the ESS Division.