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Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

MEMORANDUM

From: Dean, GSEAS
To: Provost Steve Lerman, Chair Program Review Committee
Via: Doug Moses, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs
Subject: Response to the OC Program Review & Departmental reports

This memo constitutes my response to the July 30, 2018 external review report of the Oceanography Department (OC) that was carried out July 10-11, 2018; and to the subsequent departmental response dated October 6, 2018.

The committee of three prominent oceanographers list several warnings and recommendations to which the Oceanography Department at NPS has formulated a response. One quote from the report synthesizes what is expounded upon later in the text: "The Committee consensus based on our visit was that NPS is in severe danger of losing its existing expertise in Physical Oceanography, an outcome that would leave the Navy dependent upon civilian institutions to educate the officer corps in defense relevant areas." While the committee states: "The high quality of OC's present tenure track staff is not an issue"; it also warns "the Committee found a decidedly precarious OC Department on the verge of a downward trajectory, and at risk of losing key personnel and programs in a 3-5 year timeframe."

While I acknowledge several of the issues raised in their report, I believe some are already being dealt with by the Oceanography Department (HR issues related to the technical staff), and others constitute a laundry list of issues I will not address other than to say improvements are happening. I am hopeful that red tape associated with purchasing, DURIP's, and visitors have been ameliorated somewhat, and will continue to be further streamlined.

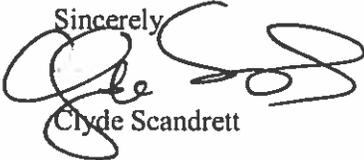
At the heart of most issues raised is the lack of resources within the department. This manifests itself in how many T/TT faculty should be employed, start-up packages for T/TT as well as research faculty, compensation for instruction and thesis advising, and funding for seagoing oceanographic research. As noted by the departmental response, an increase in the teaching fund base would help, but underfunding of departments at NPS is school-wide, and in any event is a zero sum game. Oceanography has too few students to justify additional T/TT faculty but is required to cover a wide range of topical areas in order to meet the education needs of its Navy sponsor. Given that there is a real requirement to increase the span of instruction to areas that cannot currently be met by present faculty and staff, the only plausible remedy is to find a way to increase the number of research faculty within the department. To do so would also address the loss of research faculty over the past several years as noted by the reviewers.

I have four recommendations related to the resource issue. The first is that NPS should secure additional resources from its sponsor to support the Navy's investment in graduate education. A ten percent increase in funds would go a long way towards filling fiscal gaps in mission budgeting, helping not just the Oceanography Department, but all departments within the school. A second recommendation is that NPS should separate indirect and direct funding streams

when producing its fiscal year budgets for the four schools. While pooling indirect and direct funds for the command directorates makes sense, it fails to credit those schools that generated the funds. Not only does the current “pooling” ultimately misdirect funds with respect to the schools, it additionally removes the incentive on the part of PI’s to generate the funds (note: this idea was recommended by the NPS Committee on Indirect Costs in their 30 April, 2018 report and is supported by the NPS Dean of Research). A third recommendation is that NPS should pursue acquiring additional indirect funds by requesting authority to levy “Section 219” overhead charges that could be ploughed back into departments and improve their resource deficits (again, this is a recommendation of the Committee on Indirect Costs and is being pursued legislatively through the SECNAV and ASN/RDA). Lastly, and a recommendation alluded to in the departmental response, is to directly seek sponsor funds or support in other ways as explained below.

RADM Okon is the Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command (CNMOC) and Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy (N2N6E). He will be at NPS for the METOC curriculum review in the first week of December. In his dual-hatted role, I would recommend the department ask that he (1) support establishment of one or two sponsored chairs (one with polar expertise and possibly a second), (2) provide modest funding (either O&M,N or RDT&E) for curriculum enhancement similar to what is done for other NPS curricula, and (3) facilitate at-sea research experiences in support of student thesis work.

The action items listed by the departmental response address several issues that are within the control of the department, and I support. Those outside their control that are resource driven (recruit and retain quality research faculty, change the current NPS pay model, and obtain operational funds from the dean) I will do what I can to support. I believe that an increase in the number of research faculty within the department is critical for continuance of its quality program, and am hopeful that resources will be found to make this a reality.

Sincerely

Clyde Scandrett