



university of hawai'i

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Tom Olson, Assoc. Professor, Dept. of Nursing
FROM: Paul Wessel, Chair GG
CC: C. Barry Raleigh, Dean SOEST
RE: Comments on UHM/COPR Review of GG

The Department of Geology and Geophysics has scrutinized the program review of the department carried out under the auspices of the Council on Program Review and conducted by Convener Tom Olson (Nursing) and panelists Gary Fuller (Geography) and Randy Larsen (Chemistry). In general, the department is pleased with the report's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and we commend the panelists for their efforts. However, some issues and problems facing the department have not been factually reported or are presented in an ambiguous way; thus, I will provide comments on the relevant sections of the report.

Comments on Section 4 ("Faculty").

1. I wish to clarify the faculty roster and also bring the panel up-to-date on our on-going hirings. The tally of 14 tenured full professors, 4 tenured associate professors, 1 tenure-track assistant professor, 2 non-tenured specialist faculty, and 1 part-time instructor is correct. However, note that most of these are only partially funded by the University and that significant fractions of these FTEs are supported by extramural grants. In fact, the total number of state supported FTEs in our department is 17.5.
2. The various searches to replace faculty lost in the Fall of 2000 has now completed. Following four separate nation-wide searches, we have hired Assistant Professors in Geobiology (August 1, 2001), Geophysics (January 1, 2002), Volcanology (January 1, 2001), and Paleoceanography (August 1, 2002). We are very pleased and proud of the search outcomes as all candi-

dates were either our first or second choice among several truly outstanding candidates. Two of the new faculty are part of separate career couples, and hence the department has made appointments of a second tenure-track Assistant Professor in Paleoceanography (August 1, 2002), to be split 50/50 with the Department of Oceanography (OCE), and a 0.5 FTE non-tenure track Assistant Researcher in Geophysics (January 1, 2001).

3. Some clarification is needed in the section describing faculty productivity. *Individually*, faculty members publish an average of 2–3 papers per year in refereed journals, and *collectively* they bring in \$2.5–3 million in extramural grants per year.
4. While it is true that G&G continues to be a male dominated profession, our recent searches have tried particularly hard to solicit excellent female candidates and I am pleased to report that 1.5 FTE of the new positions will support two female tenure-track Assistant Professors (the 0.5 FTE is matched by OCE for a split 1.0 FTE appointment).

Comments on Section 5 (“Students”).

1. In the third paragraph, it is referred to “the doubtful chances for local students being admitted to the program”. I wish to comment that the chance for undergrads being admitted aren’t “doubtful” *per se*; the chances depend on how well prepared they are and the caliber of the total applicant pool.
2. In the fourth paragraph, attrition rates were discussed. The statement “over the last five years, there are 79 declared majors”, 71% of whom graduated, refers to undergraduates. For the graduate students, the GG report state that “over the last five years, 55 graduate students completed their theses and graduated. Twenty-one students dropped out. Thus our attrition rate is 28%”. The committee comments that “of course, the correct figure here is actually 38%”. Actually, the relevant calculation is $\text{rate} = \frac{21}{55+21}$ which does indeed yield 28%.

Because of the move toward a full assessment of student learning required by the entire University system (e.g., the WASC committee recommendation), GG has begun to implement better procedures for keeping track of alumni, foster better relations with local potential employers of our graduates, and to articulate the objectives of our undergraduate program and how to measure if they are being met.

3. The potentially most troublesome issue raised by the committee derives from a written survey of graduate students. In responding to the statement “There are no problems of harassment or coercion in the department”, 5 of 11 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. At face value, this is a staggering number in a department that prides itself of having very good relations between students and faculty (which the report also finds much evidence for). The GG Chair has spoken the the graduate

student representative who has talked most of the graduate students. From these discussions it has become clear that the incriminating response most likely resulted from confusion. We note that the statement in question is the only one that contains a negative (“no problems” versus “problems”) and in the hurry some students appear to have missed that distinction and responded instead to the statement “There are problems of harassment or coercion in the department”. We recommend that COPR review their student questionnaires for consistency in order to avoid incidences of this nature.

Comments on Section 6 (“Facilities”).

Most of this section is factual, however

1. I suggest replacing the two bulleted items under Light Isotope Facility, with the single entry
 - Two stable isotope mass spectrometers each with state-of-the art GC-combustion interfaces allowing on-line analyses of individual compounds at extremely low concentrations.
2. “Fluid mechanics laboratory” should be replaced by “fluid dynamics laboratory”.
3. There is no soil and rock mechanics testing laboratory in GG.
4. I also wish to state that the air conditioning is not a “continuing challenge” – it is a problem that is not getting fixed.