Division of Earth Systems Science

Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction Process

Nov. 20, 2009

The Division of Earth Systems Science (ESS) houses the majority of academic units at OSU pertaining to understanding, sustaining and managing Earth’s life support systems and the natural resources derived from those systems that contribute daily to human well being and quality of life. These units deliver comprehensive programs through teaching/learning, research/discovery, scholarship and outreach/Extension/engagement. Faculties in the Division address fundamental challenges facing humanity and its efforts to establish sustainable relationships with the natural world through its work on food, fiber, renewable materials for shelter, land and water use, natural resource and environmental stewardship, climate change, renewable energy, and the economic well being of our communities. The ESS Division houses programs with preeminent distinction and top-10 rankings at national and international levels in these areas. The Division also houses much of OSU’s externally funded research and scholarship capacity. OSU is a distinguished Land, Sea, and Sun Grant University with international impacts because of the programs and people in the ESS Division.

The goal for strategic alignment of academic communities in the ESS Division – Colleges, Centers, and Institutes (AES and FRL treated as Centers) – is to strengthen OSU’s capacity to develop highly skilled graduates and new knowledge and understanding, and to deliver information, services and tools that will help society make informed decisions and policies leading to a sustainable partnership between people and the natural world. This goal requires a new level of integration and extension of our education and research enterprise in the three colleges. It will require a solid foundation of basic understanding of how Earth systems function (including the human dimension of these systems) balanced with efforts in translational teaching, research and outreach/Extension to make this fundamental knowledge useful to society.

Our desired impacts for the Division include:

1. Improving our collective understanding and sustainable management of Earth’s life support systems and the renewable natural resources derived from them,
2. Increasing society’s resilience to changes in the Earth system, while promoting human well-being,
3. Advancing sustainable food, agricultural, and forestry systems to help Oregon, the nation and beyond safely and sustainably feed, clothe and house a larger population than now exists,
4. Helping decrease society’s reliance on fossil-carbon-intensive energy sources,
5. Helping Oregon and the nation compete effectively in global markets for knowledge, innovations, products and services derived from the Earth’s life support systems, and
6. Attracting significant new investments in the Division’s capacity to deliver the above through the highest caliber faculty, staff, and students available.

In the near-term, we must also recognize the realities of decreasing state support, and therefore we will need to prioritize the activities of the Division in regards to creation, continuation, modification or elimination of degree, research and outreach programs and configure administrative units to operate more effectively at lower cost. The goal for budget reduction in the Division is to reduce planned expenditures of state appropriations by targeted amounts during the current biennium with minimal disruptions or impediments to the impact goals stated above for strategic alignment. Balancing the short-term imperative for budget reduction with the longer term need to expand our capabilities in the area of sustainable Earth ecosystems will be challenging, but preserving the quality of our programs, even if they are fewer in number, must be our highest priority.
What decisions need to be made?

a. What is the timeline for those decisions?
b. Who needs to be engaged?
c. What process will be used to engage and make the decisions?
d. Who needs to be informed of the decisions?

1. **Proposed vision/mission for the Division (ESS Vision Committee)**
   a. Dec. 15, 2009
   b. Faculty, advisors, administrators, staff, stakeholders, students in all 3 Colleges
   c. Consultative among those engaged (b.) with recommendation(s) to Deans for final decision on proposal to Provost and Implementation Team
   d. All engaged in b.

2. **Proposal(s) for academic and administrative service units to be created, modified, consolidated, or eliminated beginning Fall 2010 (committees formed by Deans)**
   a. Initiate discussions Nov. 10, 2009; final recommendations to Provost by Mar. 15, 2010
   b. Service and support unit leaders and staff in affected Colleges
   c. Consultative among those engaged (b.) plus faculty and those affected in Colleges in other Divisions to Deans for final decision on proposal to Provost and Implementation Team
   d. All engaged in b.

3. **Proposal(s) for degree programs to be created, modified, consolidated, or eliminated beginning Fall 2010 (committees formed by Department Heads and faculty to address specific degree areas)**
   a. Initiate discussions Nov. 10, 2009; final recommendations to Provost by Mar. 15, 2010
   b. Department Heads and relevant faculty, external advisory committees of all 3 Colleges
   c. Consultative among those engaged (b.) plus students and those affected in Colleges in other Divisions and possibly their external stakeholders with recommendation(s) to Deans for final decision on proposal to Provost and Implementation Team
   d. Students, advisors, Deans of other Colleges, external stakeholders

4. **Proposal(s) for realignment, consolidation, or elimination of Departments within or across Colleges to meet OSU Strategic Plan goals for signature areas to begin implementation July 1, 2010 (committees formed by Deans to address specific Departmental areas)**
   b. Faculty, advisors, students, stakeholders/advisory committees of Departments and Colleges
   c. Consultative among those engaged (b.) with recommendation(s) to Deans for final decision on proposal to Provost and Implementation Team
   d. Faculty, advisors, students, Deans of other Colleges, stakeholders/advisory committees of Departments and Colleges

5. **Proposal(s) for creation, realignment, consolidation or elimination of research Programs (includes Research Cooperatives) to begin implementation July 1, 2010 (Program Directors, Coop Directors, ESS Executive Dean, VP Research)**
   b. Faculty, Department Heads, Program Directors, VP Research, external stakeholders in all 3 Colleges
c. Consultative among those engaged (b.) with recommendation(s) to Deans for final decision on proposal to Provost and Implementation Team
d. Faculty, Department Heads, Program Directors, VP Research, external stakeholders