Introduction and Background

Oregon State University has tremendous capabilities in coastal and marine science and engineering research, education and engagement. Eight of our 11 academic colleges and multiple Centers, Institutes and Programs are engaged in a diverse array of marine programs. Over 37% of OSU research expenditures are directly tied to marine-related issues or programs. Recent reports, including those by Malouf (2006, Coastal and Ocean Sciences at Oregon State University) and Gagosian et al. (2007, Report of the Oregon State University President’s Commission on Ocean, Coastal and Earth Systems Futures) have highlighted this capacity but have also stressed that for OSU to reach its full potential for pre-eminence, interdisciplinary approaches, and leadership in marine sciences and engineering, the institution must find a way to enhance collaboration, cooperation and coordination among the units. There are several major new opportunities for OSU that align with Phase II of the OSU Strategic Plan and create opportunities for a transformational approach to marine science interests at OSU.

Proposal for the creation of an OSU Marine Council

Through the creation of a Marine Council, OSU can achieve its ultimate goal of being recognized as the best institution in the Northwest and among the elite few nationally in advancing coastal and marine sciences for fundamental understanding of ocean processes and their role in earth systems as well as meeting environmental, economic, and social needs. A Marine Council will strengthen OSU’s performance and pre-eminence in all three areas of distinction identified in the Strategic Plan. In particular, a Marine Council can support the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems area through enhanced leadership, collaboration and coordination of OSU’s diverse marine resource capabilities. Increasing the focus of OSU’s marine and coast efforts will, in turn, provide enriched student educational and discovery-based learning opportunities, new partnerships, and enhanced funding and research opportunities. The Marine Council will also clarify the functioning and leadership of the marine enterprise at OSU and address many of the issues raised in the 2007 Report of the Oregon State University President’s Commission on Ocean, Coastal and Earth Systems Futures.

Objectives of the Oregon State University Marine Council

The OSU Marine Council will:

1. Provide integrated and coordinated approaches that span research, education, outreach, partnerships, state and federal legislation, advancement, fund raising, and facilities for OSU to address key Marine issues and opportunities;
2. Provide an initial point of contact within OSU and between OSU and other institutions and agencies on marine issues;
3. Enhance state, national and international recognition of OSU in marine sciences;
4. Provide collaborative leadership to increase external partnerships with other academic institutions, federal, state and local agencies and the private sector;
5. Identify emerging opportunities for funding that promote innovative, multi-disciplinary collaboration across the university, state and NW Pacific to improve research, outreach and educational opportunities;
6. Ensure marine sciences and engineering are aligned with the OSU signature areas of distinction, particularly Advancing the Science for Sustainable Earth Systems;
7. Provide advice and help formulate programs, policies, concepts, and university strategies related to marine sciences as they are sought by the Provost;
8. Ensure that federal, state and other legislative initiatives are communicated and coordinated;
9. Ensure marine sciences and engineering are aligned with the University campaign with their emphasis on interdisciplinary programs and strategic themes;
10. Enhance marine facilities and infrastructure; and
11. Enhance outreach/engagement to serve state, regional and stakeholder needs.

Council Operations

The Marine Council will:

- Report to the Provost and provide a formal report on progress every 6 months on key initiatives and an annual report on overall progress. This reporting would ensure that the Council had both authority and accountability;
- Meet formally twice per year but communicate more regularly; and
- Operate with transparency.

Action Coordination Team responsibilities

The Marine Council will operate largely through the appointment of targeted Action Coordination Teams (ACTs) that will be led by a member of the Council and would reach across the University to integrate OSU’s efforts on priority marine issues. Action coordination teams and team leads will be appointed by the Council on major marine issues of interest to OSU. The teams will:

1. Provide integrated plans that address research, education, outreach and engagement, partnerships, state and federal legislative plans, advancement, fund raising, and facilities for OSU on specific issues identified by the Council;
2. Provide a single point of contact (nominally the Team Leader) to address internal and external inquiries and initiatives on specific issues;
3. Ensure work is consistent with the OSU Strategic Plan; and
4. Report to the Marine Council on a regular basis.

Potential opportunities for Action Coordination Teams:

1. NOAA fleet relocation to Newport;
2. Near-shore Research Task Force created by the Oregon state legislature;
3. Instructional and Research Facilities – HMSC (generic) - NIST Marine Mammal and Genomics Center- OOI shore-side facilities;
4. New federal centers such as the NW national Marine Renewable Energy Center;
5. Ocean Observing Systems; and
6. West Coast Governors Agreement on Ocean Health