Dear Dean Abbott,

Thank you for submitting your March 15, 2010 report describing how the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences proposes to address the Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction Implementation Plan for 2009-2011. The Strategic Alignment and Budget Reduction Review Committee has completed its preliminary review of your plans and has prepared the following comments and questions for your consideration:

- The College is considering several substantive changes, including: creation of a College of Earth Sciences, initially established by merging COAS and Geosciences in the College of Science; development of an undergraduate program in Earth Sciences, founded on existing programs in Geology and Geography; and creation of a two-center Earth System Science Institute. The Committee encourages the College to continue its planning process in these directions, which will include working out the logistical details involved in combining extramurally funded research and undergraduate enrollment-based budgetary and academic systems in the same college.

- COAS currently is not organized into departments. Would the proposed College of Earth Sciences need to be organized into departments to facilitate supervision and professional development of the larger number of faculty in the unit?

- The College of Science organization plan describes a School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, which is somewhat inconsistent with the COAS plan to include Geosciences in a new College of Earth Sciences. What is the current status of ongoing discussions with the College of Science concerning this issue?

- How would the creation of a College of Earth Sciences and an Earth System Science Institute impact other institutes and centers, such as the Hatfield Marine Sciences Center and the Institute for Natural Resources, and what opportunities would there be for strategically beneficial reorganization of these units?

- It is not clear from the organization chart that the College meets the administrative system guidelines with respect to levels of management and numbers of direct reports. Please confirm that the College meets these guidelines or, if it does not, indicate how the College plans to bring the College into compliance.

- Budget projections for the next biennium indicate that additional cuts will probably be necessary, possibly in excess of 10%. To what extent will the proposed changes address further decreases in state-appropriated funding?

The Committee is expected to develop recommendations for the Provost’s consideration by the end of May and, therefore, would appreciate receiving your responses by April 30, 2010. In your response please clearly identify substantive changes that would need University approval.

Please let me know if you have any questions for the Committee. Also, please do not hesitate to contact me if you think the committee can play a facilitating role in development of plans, either within the College or involving other colleges, which may advance the strategic initiatives of the university.
Sincerely,

Becky Warner
Committee Chair