

March 16, 2015

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Vice Chancellor--Research
Office of Research

**RE: Organized Research Unit (ORU) 5-year Review
Bodega Marine Laboratory**

The Bodega Marine Laboratory (BML) ORU review was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate, including school and college Faculty Executive Committees. Responses were received from the Committees on Research (COR) and Planning and Budget (CPB) and from Graduate Council (GC). COR and CPB provided the most detailed portions of the input provided below.

The ad hoc ORU review included the appropriate mix of experts and did its work thoroughly and well. In general, the Senate supports the ad hoc committee's conclusions and recommendations. At the heart of the Senate's position is concurrence with the ad hoc committee's finding that BML does excellent and important place-based research, supports unique graduate and undergraduate educational opportunities made possible by its location, and is a significant asset to the Davis campus. Indeed, as some graduate students told the ad hoc committee, they applied to Davis *only because of* the research conducted at BML, which enables them to begin their careers with work in ocean and marine science that touches directly on cutting edge scientific issues of the 21st century.

Unfortunately, in a situation that is all too familiar in California, neither excellence in research and teaching nor the unique capabilities created by an environmentally strategic location ensure that resources are adequate for BML's mission. The remainder of these comments will highlight resource concerns and the Senate's belief that BML should receive an enhanced commitment by the Davis campus.

I note in passing that COR suggests that more work needs to be done to determine whether long term data curation, as recommended by the ad hoc committee, should take place at BML or on the main campus. COR also asks whether the ad hoc committee's reference to "some" researchers' high profile fundamental research implies that other researchers might be less successful.

Strategic plan

The Senate strongly supports the ad hoc committee's recommendation that BML develop a long-term strategic plan that realistically projects capital and operating costs, including anticipated cost increases for such expenses as benefits, considers the costs and benefits of possible revenue streams over time, and prioritizes capital expenditures accordingly. A strategic plan should make the business case for allocating to BML a higher portion of indirect costs to reflect more accurately the portion of participating faculty members' research costs that are incurred there rather than on the main campus. It would also identify how BML's educational program might expand in

collaboration with the new Coastal and Marine Science Institute (CMSI) and prioritize infrastructure expansion and maintenance needs to support such expansion. A strategic plan would also identify potential development opportunities and whether these could best be maximized by increased attention from campus development officers or by dedicated staff affiliated with BML. COR asks that the strategic plan include careful cost analyses of such potential revenue generating opportunities as facilities rental, expanded outreach, and a gift shop. COR notes aptly that “BML needs more attention for its future than it has had and that can be expected from marine biologists and ecology faculty not trained to encourage a remarkable but possibly . . . niche unit to achieve its greatest potential.”

Graduate education

Graduate Council comments that the ad hoc committee should have given more attention to the extraordinary research and educational opportunities that the surrounding Bodega Marine Reserve could offer graduate students.

The Senate supports the ad hoc committee’s recommendations to improve infrastructure support for graduate students working at BML for both long and short- periods. The Senate’s reviewing bodies agree with the ad hoc committee’s finding that graduate – and undergraduate – students who participate in BML research have outstanding experiences, some of which are characterized as “life changing.” However, the campus-imposed requirement that BML housing operate on a self-supporting basis has made housing costs, particularly short-term housing costs, prohibitive for some students. The Senate agrees that the financial model should be modified to reduce this burden on students. In addition, the lack of access to such campus-based resources as child care and the cost of transportation to and from BML may prevent a significant number of students from taking full advantage of what BML offers. The Senate supports the recommendations to develop affordable student housing at BML, to consider subsidized transportation, such as regular shuttle service, and to explore building a robust video conferencing network that would support more interaction between faculty and students located at BML and those on the main campus.

Graduate students based at BML lost an important academic resource when budget cuts caused the elimination of a post-doctoral researcher who previously coordinated seminar and guest speaker series at BML. The Senate urges that this function be restored, whether by restoring the position or some other means. Graduate Council recommends an enhanced orientation for graduate students beginning residence at BML.

Undergraduate education

As an ORU, BML is not responsible for undergraduate education per se. However, BML-affiliated faculty – all of whom also hold campus departmental appointments – offer a limited set of undergraduate courses that allow students to obtain research experience in the BML setting. When these courses are offered in summer session, they enable students to design and carry out their own research projects under one-to-one faculty supervision; they also generate a revenue stream. CPB observes that these courses are undersubscribed, perhaps due to the lack of affordable housing and transportation noted in conjunction with graduate education.

CPB’s comments suggest that there is some confusion about how teaching loads are allocated for faculty who teach both on the main campus and at BML, exacerbated by the New Budget model focus on student credit hours. The ad hoc committee commented on both the time required to

provide one-on-one supervision for undergraduate research in courses at BML and on the time faculty must spend traveling from Davis to BML and suggested that teaching loads and merit evaluations should recognize these atypical demands associated with teaching at BML. The Senate agrees that these issues should be examined carefully to ensure that they do not become disincentives or disadvantages for faculty who teach at BML.

Institutional status

BML is a long-standing ORU that reports directly to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. Creation of the CMSI as a unit within the College of Biological Sciences caused the ad hoc committee to explore whether BML should become a research unit within a school or college. The Senate supports the ad hoc committee's recommendation that BML continue to be organized as an ORU with its own funding line in order to maximize the interdisciplinary research and collaboration among faculty across schools and colleges that is its hallmark. Moreover, ORU status ensures that funds are budgeted directly for the unit. The ad hoc committee reports that the Office of Research plans to invest in needed deferred maintenance at BML. The Senate agrees that BML should continue to exist as an ORU and urges that deferred maintenance and infrastructure funding become firm commitments.

Conclusion

The Academic Senate requests stronger emphasis on graduate education during ORU reviews, in general; including documentation of graduate student accomplishments made possible by the ORU.

The Senate is pleased that the ad hoc committee's thorough review confirms our previous belief that BML is a major research asset to the Davis campus and points to potential synergies with the new Climate and Marine Science Institute. The Senate appreciates the ad hoc committee's work in bringing specific attention to bear on resource limitations that need to be addressed and the importance of developing a long range strategic plan that takes into consideration increased costs, new research and teaching opportunities, and potential new revenue streams as global interest in ocean and marine science grows, particularly in the context of climate change.

Sincerely,



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