

Huxley College of the Environment

Introductory Letter

March 10, 2009

Unit Overview:

Huxley College of the Environment is unique in many ways. Students must first be admitted to Western Washington University and then may apply to Huxley College. The College provides upper-division courses, thus undergraduate students accepted into Huxley begin course work their junior year. Undergraduate students can earn Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees, with diverse specializations offered within the College, as well as combined degrees with economics, journalism and elementary education departments. Huxley College has graduate programs offering MS and MA degrees, including several specializations within the College and a combined MA degree with the political science department.

Huxley College's academic programs are interdisciplinary by design and therefore the unit's organization is unique. The College consists of two departments, four institutes, and a centralized student services office that handles admissions, advising, internship coordination and graduation evaluations for all of the undergraduate and graduate programs within the College. There is no comparable academic unit model on Western's campus.

Organization of the College Unit

- Office of the Dean
- College Office: Centralized Graduate & Undergraduate Student Services
- Department of Environmental Sciences
- Department of Environmental Studies: Policy, Planning, Education & Geography
- Institute of Environmental Toxicology
- Institute for Global and Community Resilience
- Institute of Spatial Information & Analysis
(includes Huxley College Map Library)
- Institute for Watershed Studies

Principles:

Vision

Huxley College of the Environment is a premier institution for the education of future environmental experts and leaders.

Mission

Huxley College of the Environment addresses today's environmental issues and prepares tomorrow's interdisciplinary problem solvers. We accomplish this mission by integrating outstanding educational programs, faculty-student collaboration, applied research, and professional and community service.

Following the University's accreditation in 2008, Huxley College received a commendation for our ongoing, engaged, strategic assessment and revision of Huxley's curriculum, which is integral to providing unique interdisciplinary educational opportunities for our students. Diligent monitoring of our established learning objectives remains an important part of our continued self-study, to assure the quality of education received by our students. The ability to maintain high quality education for Huxley College students is essential, and thus this principle was given utmost consideration in our budget reduction discussions.

Planning Assumptions

1) Reduction goals as established by Division Vice President

As an academic unit, we were required to provide two budget scenarios for the 2009-2011 biennium, based on upon 3.8% and 5% reduction of the College base allocation.

- the 3.8% reduction amount for Huxley College is \$119,393
- the 5% reduction amount for Huxley College is \$157,097

2) Funding Sources

Given that tenured and tenure-track faculty positions are currently the only protected line items in the base budget, we had two remaining sources to fund the budget reductions:

- Operating funds
- Other salary funds (& associated benefits) – exclude TN & TT faculty salaries

a) Huxley College operating funds total \$147,162.

b) Considerations regarding salary funds:

Vacant Positions

Huxley College has two vacant positions: one tenured-track faculty position and one full-time exempt staff position.

Associated Benefits

- factored at 28% of salary for positions that are .5 FTE or greater
- factored at 16% of salary for positions that are less than .5 FTE

Unit Reorganization

To make reductions to staff salary funds, in consideration of existing bargaining unit agreements, staff positions within the College were analyzed and strategic changes were contemplated as part of unit reorganization.

The “bottom up” self-analysis began in January 2007 due to staff changes (chronic illness, retirement, attrition of long-time staff members) affecting efficiency and assignment of duties within the College. All staff members were invited to participate in brainstorming sessions throughout the year. In September of 2007 two staff taskforce work groups were formed:

Work Group 1: College / Department Work Load & Staff Responsibilities. This group reviewed Huxley Staff policies, procedures, and workload delineation as well as those areas in other campus offices. This information was used to make recommendations for change where necessary.

Work Group 2: Job Parity. This group researched job position descriptions to answer “Who does what currently and does it make sense?” This involved gathering information from individuals, Human Resources, other colleges on campus and unions regarding Standard Operating Procedures for job duty and salary parity within Huxley and with other similar positions on campus.

Ongoing unit reorganization analysis:

- Review desk descriptions
- Prioritize functions of positions
- Revise/shift duty assignments for efficiency
- Reduce and/or eliminate “non-essential” duties
- Consult supervisors of affected staff positions re: proposed changes

As an academic unit, staff positions within the College are directly related to providing services to students and faculty. We must consider the consequences of making changes to staff positions as they relate to our academic programs; our ability to protect the unique "Huxley experience"; and our capacity to maintain the highest quality service possible for the people who rely on our staff expertise.

The Process

Ongoing self-analysis:

The College began listening sessions (with internal and external stakeholders) to facilitate our S.W.O.T. analysis fall quarter 2007. Our new vision and mission statements were voted on and approved by all-college faculty and staff in December 2008. An ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee was formed to draft the strategic plan in winter quarter this year. In February 2009 we held two all-college open forums to update the faculty/staff S.W.O.T. analysis. As a result of this analysis, the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee will identify four or five key objectives for the College. The next stage will be the creation of our strategic plan to prioritize the objectives and identify actions needed to attain these goals.

Development of budget proposal:

- Huxley College has eight standing committees, comprised of faculty, staff and students, as established by the College bylaws. To begin the budget reduction planning process, the dean recruited additional members to join the existing Huxley Policy Committee (standing committee), and thus the Ad Hoc Policy/Budget Advisory Committee was formed in early January 2009.
- The committee agreed to meet once per week throughout winter quarter. The meeting schedule was established as follows: Mondays @ 11:00am, beginning the morning of January 12th.
- At the January 12th all-college faculty/staff meeting, the dean announced the formation of the ad hoc Huxley College Policy/Budget Advisory Committee, and the committee members were introduced. Recap from meeting minutes:

"The committee will be a vehicle for ideas to be brought forward from all areas of the college for discussion, and the committee will provide recommendations to the dean to assist him in decision making related to mandated budget cuts. Every College has been asked to provide the Provost with plans for different levels of cuts. As of today, the challenge for the committee is to come up with a plan for 5% reduction of our base allocation, which includes operating and salary funds, to be spread over the next two years. All budget reduction decisions will represent permanent cuts to the base allocation."

- Faculty and staff were encouraged to provide suggestions directly to committee members and committee members were responsible for bringing all ideas and feedback that they gathered to the committee for discussion.
- Faculty and staff were encouraged to provide suggestions to committee members at either of the two open forums that took place in early February.
- The dean provided budget update reports and fielded questions at regularly scheduled all-college faculty/staff meetings (Mondays @ 3:00pm):
 - January 12
 - January 26

February 9
February 23

- The dean also provided budget updates via email to the all-college listserve.
- As required, draft plans for our budget reduction scenarios were submitted to the Provost's budget office on January 22nd, February 13th and March 9th.
- At the February 23rd committee meeting, the committee agreed to support the 3.8% reduction plan, which had been submitted as "draft #2" to the Provost on February 13th.
- At the February 23rd committee meeting, the committee suggested that the dean meet with identified staff members to discuss reducing their positions to cyclic.
- Per the committee's request, the dean met with the potentially affected staff members individually on February 23rd and February 24th, to alert them that specific cyclic reduction options were "being seriously considered" by the committee.
- The committee met on March 2nd, at which time they were expected to formulate their recommendation for the dean. The committee requested an additional meeting with the dean to resolve lingering concerns prior to finalizing their recommendation for the 5% scenario.
- The committee met with the dean on March 5th and after unanimous vote, the committee submitted their recommendation for reducing the College base by 5% to the dean. (Note: student representative on the committee actively participated in all committee meetings/discussions; however he was not eligible to vote.)
- The dean and department chair immediately informed the supervisors of affected staff on March 5th.
- On March 6th, the dean met individually with each of the affected staff members to notify them that should the required budget reduction percentage remain at 5%, their positions would be reduced to cyclic. The staff were encouraged to collaborate with their supervisors to establish mutually-agreed-upon cyclic schedules.
- On March 9th, the dean emailed a synopsis of the budget reduction plans to the all-college listserve.
- The 3.8% and 5% plans submitted to the Provost's budget office on March 9th and to the University budget office on March 10th, reflect the dean's full support of the recommendation made to him by the ad hoc Huxley College Policy/Budget Advisory Committee.

Community Suggestions

As of March 8, 2009, there were 112 postings on Western Washington University's website community forum: "Brainstorming for Cost Saving Opportunities at WWU".

We reviewed all of the posted comments and will continue assessing and evaluating new postings that are relevant to academic units in general, as well as those that are specific to Huxley College.

Strategic Planning 2007 ~ 2009

Listening Phase

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Between September 2007 and March 2009, the College conducted SWOT analyses with faculty and staff; board members; Seattle area alumni and Whatcom County area alumni.

The College also conducted interviews with stakeholders and influential decision makers throughout the region and nation. Twenty people were interviewed between January and August 2008. Among them were state and local elected officials; including former Governor, Gary Locke; business leaders, environmental scientists and policy makers; academics from other institutions; former and current WWU Trustees; parents and donors. During the interview participants were asked to share their opinion regarding the mission of the College; the region it serves or should serve; and their perception of the role the College currently plays and should play in the future, related to environmental education, research and leadership. They were also asked how they would, if possible, influence the future of the College. The summary of these interviews is available as a separate document.

The following summarizes the SWOT analyses and distinguishes between the comments of the groups that participated.

Strengths (Faculty / Staff)

- Curricular Approach
- Academic Programs
- Graduate Program
- College Structure

Particular emphasis is placed on the value of the history of the College as the oldest environmental College in the country and its reputation as a leader and innovator. This reputation is highly valued by faculty and staff who are committed to maintaining the College as a leader and innovator. Strengths are also associated with the interdisciplinary curricular approach, College-based advising for students, and the emphasis on applied learning. Other strengths include the caliber of the academic program; the number of opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research; and the involvement of faculty with students. The graduate program is viewed a huge strength, both in its own right and for the enhancements it provides to undergraduate education. The caliber of people (faculty, staff and students) and the structure and size of the College itself, including the institutes, are also viewed as strengths.

Weaknesses (Faculty / Staff)

- Resources
- Curriculum
- Facilities
- Administration

Weaknesses focus primarily on the lack of resources; the challenges of coordinating an interdisciplinary curriculum and the associated advising of undergraduates; and some administrative issues. Weakness related to resources include a shortage of money to support students, especially graduate students, the inadequacy of existing facilities, and the insufficient allocation of TA's by the University. A particular weakness associated with facilities is the current physical fragmentation of what is intended to be an

interdisciplinary program. Also of concern is the commonly perceived erosion of an interdisciplinary approach in the face of increasing specialization. There is a perceived lack of opportunity to explore the current meaning and purpose of an interdisciplinary curriculum. There is a widely held belief that the curriculum, especially its core requirements, should be revised and prioritized to meet the changing needs of students and to preserve a meaningful and relevant interdisciplinary academic experience. The physical distance between departments is perceived to have contributed to the erosion of interdisciplinary collaboration and the lack of common space for faculty to mingle and share ideas is perceived by many to have contributed to an increased sense of compartmentalization and isolation. Another area of weakness is related to College administration. Of particular concern is the inadequacy of systems for the management of internships, student advising, College planning and marketing.

Opportunities (Faculty / Staff)

- Public Interest in Environmental Issues
- Location
- International Relationships
- Reputation

Growing environmental awareness and shifting norms could provide new venues for internships, senior projects, faculty research, and funding. This is viewed as an opportune time to capitalize on public interest. It is also viewed as a critical time for the College to assert and promote its position as a leader in the education of environmental experts. The location of the College is also viewed as an asset. Its close proximity to a diverse array of ecosystems, another country, and the potential development on the waterfront, all provide numerous opportunities for cross-border research and teaching, partnership and innovation. The increasing ability to collaborate with global partners is also viewed as an opportunity to enhance international connections, research, partnerships and learning opportunities. The national recognition of Huxley College a leader in its field presents opportunities for students, faculty and WWU as a whole. This reputation could be leveraged, especially in this changing political climate, to bring new resources and partnerships to WWU and Huxley College.

Threats (Faculty / Staff)

- Public Interest in Environmental Issues
- Global Warming
- Sustainability Movement
- Location
- Students

The potential expansion of environmental programs at other universities and institutions could lead to a weakening of the College's position in the academic marketplace; confusion on the part of funders and the public; duplication of services; and a potential further reduction of resources, especially at the state level. Threats also include concerns related to possible isolation of programs located on the waterfront; the lack of preparation on the part of incoming students; and inadequate state funding.

Strengths (Associates Board)

- Curricular Approach
- Caliber of People
- College Structure
- College Reputation

Strengths are associated with the interdisciplinary curricular approach and the emphasis on applied learning, especially when it prepares students for real-world job challenges. Identified strengths also include the expertise and reputation of faculty and the caliber and quality of both undergraduate and graduate students. The structure and size of the College is also viewed as a strength along with history of the College as the oldest environmental college in the country. The reputation of the College as a leader and innovator is viewed as a strength to be preserved.

Weaknesses (Associates Board)

- Publicity and Perceptions
- Resources
- Curriculum
- Administration

Weaknesses focus primarily on the lack of visibility of the College and the lack support for marketing. Inadequate resources (public and private) for facilities and programs are also considered a weakness. There are perceived gaps in curriculum (management training, strategic planning and “negotiation” skills) which, to the degree they are accurate, are seen as a weakness. Challenges related to working with the university bureaucracy and “the academy” are viewed as a weakness. Specifically these challenges relate to perceived and real experiences of cumbersome decision making structures within the University; the inability of the institution to respond quickly to opportunities and requests; and the resistance to change.

Opportunities (Associates Board)

- Public Interest in Environmental Issues
- Need for Environmental Leadership
- Waterfront
- Partnerships
- Changes in Leadership

Growing environmental awareness and shifting norms could provide new venues for internships, senior projects, faculty research, and funding. This is viewed as an opportune time to capitalize on public interest. It is also viewed as a critical time for the College to assert and promote its position as a leader in the education of environmental experts. This group identifies the need for environmental leadership in every sector of the economy and society as a huge opportunity for the College. The potential development on the waterfront provides numerous opportunities for research, partnership and innovation. Changing leadership within the University is seen as an opportunity for the College to experience increased visibility, improved flexibility in responding to opportunities, and stronger support for leveraging outside relationships.

Threats (Associates Board)

- UW
- Change
- Public Perceptions

The potential expansion of environmental programs at other universities and institutions could lead to a weakening of the College’s position in the academic marketplace. The rate of social change, especially re the environment, could threaten the College’s ability to effectively evolve and maintain leadership in the educational market place. Past (and present) public perceptions of WWU as a “teaching College” threaten the ability of WWU and Huxley College to attract key philanthropists and influential decision makers. It is time for WWU to update its brand to incorporate and emphasize current strengths / expertise.

Strengths (Alumni Seattle & Bellingham)

- Curricular Approach
- Caliber of People
- College Structure
- College Reputation

Strengths are associated with the interdisciplinary curricular approach, multidisciplinary programs, the emphasis on applied learning, community involvement and opportunity to work on real-world problems; the caliber of people (faculty, staff and students) and the history, structure, size and reputation of the College itself.

Weaknesses (Alumni Seattle & Bellingham)

- Curriculum
- Internships
- Career Preparation
- Resources

Weaknesses focus primarily on the challenges associated with the delivery of a truly interdisciplinary curriculum, the management of required internships and the lack of preparation for students to enter the harsh realities of the real world. Other weaknesses include lack of resources for facilities, networking, marketing and web presence. Although existing partnerships are identified as a strength, the lack of partnerships with new and emerging entities is viewed as a weakness and a failure to stay on the cutting-edge within the emerging green economy.

Opportunities (Alumni Seattle & Bellingham)

- Public Interest in Environmental Issues
- Waterfront
- Alumni Connections
- Academic Programs

Growing environmental awareness and shifting norms provides new venues for internships, senior projects, faculty research, and funding. It is an opportune time to capitalize on public interest while promoting the position of the College as a leader. Alumni connections and expertise are under utilized, presenting opportunities for increased support, networking, internships. Growing career opportunities indicate the need to strengthen preparation of students entering a changing environmental workforce. The development on the waterfront provides numerous opportunities for research, partnership and demonstration of leadership in sustainable development.

Threats (Alumni Seattle & Bellingham)

- Public Perceptions
- Resources
- Academic Programs
- Location

Public perceptions regarding “environmentalism”, the idealism of students / faculty, and perceptions about the need to offer a Ph.D. could all contribute to a weakening of the College’s position in the academic marketplace. Also included are concerns about the economy as it relates to private and public funding. The failure to maintain a competitive edge in academic programs increases threats from the expansion of other institutions (UW). The move to the waterfront is perceived as a potential threat if it leads to isolation, impacts the ability of the College to deliver an interdisciplinary curriculum or reduces the connection or access to other departments on campus. Transportation to and from the waterfront was also identified as a concern.

PROPOSED 2009-2011 REDUCTIONS

Planning Unit:

Huxley College of the Environment 3.8%

LINE 5 State Operating Budget -- Reduction Goal: \$ 119,393 \$ 119,393 Reduction Goal 3.8% as established by Division Vice President

Item #	DESCRIPTION	Reduction Amount		FTE Reduction		Position Type	Fund-Org-Program Code	CONSEQUENCES
		2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11			
1	Eliminate 1.00 FTE tenure-track faculty position (salary only) -- requires 28% benefit cut, item 5	61,017	61,017	1.000	1.000	TT Faculty	10200-4390-011PEM	Eliminating tenure-track faculty position will result in reduced capacity for some course offerings in Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning track.
2	Eliminate .50 FTE exempt staff position (salary only) -- requires 28% benefit cut, item 6. (Note: remaining .50 FTE of this position transfer to Wilson Library.)	30,739	30,739	0.500	0.500	Exempt Staff	10200-4310-011EVS	Reducing the exempt staff Map Librarian position (and transfer of remaining .50 of this position to Wilson Library) will result in no further staffing of the Huxley Map Library by Huxley College.
3	Reduce Institute of Environmental Toxicology Operating Reserve	973	973				14137-4320-022ZAB	Reducing Institute operating funds will result in decreased capacity to provide research experience/practical opportunities for students.
4	Reduce Institute for Watershed Studies Operating Reserve	973	973				14136-4330-022ZAB	Reducing Institute operating funds will result in decreased capacity to provide research experience/practical opportunities for students.
Corresponding Benefits from Pooled Benefits								
5	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) eliminated in item 1, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	17,085	17,085					
6	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) eliminated in item 2, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	8,607	8,607					
TOTAL		119,394	119,394	1.500	1.500			
Balance (Over)/Under Reduction Goal (Line 5)		(1)	(1)					

PROPOSED 2009-2011 REDUCTIONS **Planning Unit:**

Huxley College of the Environment 5%

LINE 5 **State Operating Budget -- Reduction Goal:** 2009-10 2010-11
\$ 157,097 **\$ 157,097** **Reduction Goal 5% as established by Division Vice President**

Item #	DESCRIPTION	Reduction Amount		FTE Reduction		Position Type	Fund-Org-Program Code	CONSEQUENCES
		2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11			
1	Eliminate 1.00 FTE tenure-track faculty position (salary only) -- requires 28% benefit cut, item 9	61,017	61,017	1.000	1.000	TT Faculty	10200-4390-011PEM	Eliminating tenure-track faculty position will result in reduced capacity for some course offerings in Disaster Reduction and Emergency Planning track.
2	Eliminate .50 FTE exempt staff position (salary only) -- requires 28% benefit cut, item 10 (Note: remaining .50 FTE of this position transfer to Wilson Library.)	30,739	30,739	0.500	0.500	Exempt Staff	10200-4310-011EVS	Positive impact on long term vision. Enhance cooperation through collaboration and partnering with Wilson Library to shift staffing and operational elements of the Huxley Map Library.
3	Reduce Institute of Environmental Toxicology Operating Reserve Fund	2,582	2,582				14137-4320-022ZAB	Reducing Institute operating funds will result in decreased capacity to provide research experience/practical opportunities for students.
4	Reduce Institute for Watershed Studies Operating Reserve Fund	1,260	1,260				14136-4330-022ZAB	Reducing Institute operating funds will result in decreased capacity to provide research experience/practical opportunities for students.
5	Reduce full-time classified staff position to 9 month cyclic position (salary only) - requires 28% benefit cut, item 11	9,639	9,639	0.250	0.250	Classified Staff	10200-4350-011CES	Loss of administrative support resulting in reduced productivity and efficiency. (Program Coordinator)
6	Reduce full-time classified staff position to 11 month cyclic position (salary only) -- requires 28% benefit cut, item 12	4,542	4,542	0.083	0.083	Classified Staff	10200-4310-011EVS	Loss of administrative support resulting in reduced productivity and efficiency. (Instructional/Classroom Support Technician 4)
7	Reduce full-time classified staff position to 9 month cyclic position (salary only) - requires 28% benefit cut, item 13	8,206	8,206	0.167	0.167	Classified Staff	10200-4390-011PEM	Loss of administrative support resulting in reduced productivity and efficiency. (Secretary Senior)
8	Reduce Institute for Global and Community Resilience Operating Fund	7,152	7,152				14383-4390-011PEM	Reducing Institute operating funds will result in decreased capacity to provide research experience/practical opportunities for students.
Corresponding Benefits from Pooled Benefits								
9	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) eliminated in item 1, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	17,084	17,084					
10	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) eliminated in item 2, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	8,607	8,607					
11	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) reduced in item 5, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	2,699	2,699					
12	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) reduced in item 6, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	1,272	1,272					
13	Benefits corresponding to permanently budgeted full-time position (50% or greater) reduced in item 7, to be deducted from the pooled benefits budget at 28%**	2,298	2,298					
TOTAL		157,097	157,097	2.000	2.000			
Balance (Over)/Under Reduction Goal (Line 5)		0	0					