



Memorial

University of Newfoundland

Office of the Vice-President (Academic)
and Pro Vice-Chancellor

January 13, 2005

Dr. R. Hiscott
Head, Department of Earth Sciences

Dear Dr. Hiscott:

The Planning and Budget Committee of Senate considered the action plan that resulted from the Academic Program Review for Earth Sciences at its November 10, 2004 meeting. The PBC wishes to express its appreciation to the Department for its participation in the APR process and for undertaking all the work that this process requires.

The primary purpose of formal academic program reviews is to give units of the University an opportunity to engage in formative self-assessment and to obtain the advantages of commentary and advice from experts from the discipline in question. The role of PBC is to monitor the process and develop a body of knowledge that is useful in making broad strategic recommendations and providing sound budgetary advice to the University. It is not the role of the Committee to determine allocations to individual units, but we can sometimes offer advice or make potentially useful observations.

An anticipated outcome of the process is a plan that clarifies how best to achieve the Department's objectives with the resources available to it. From the standpoint of the University, the process also provides a measure of accountability to the whole institution and the public that supports us. The following points were raised by the Committee during the course of its discussions about these reviews:

- The Department should take pride in the fact that it has the largest number of graduates to attain professional designations in Canada.
- The number of undergraduate majors seems quite low when compared to the number of graduate students and the Committee wondered if the Department should be promoting service courses to grow the undergraduate enrolment.
- The questions regarding decision-making processes above the level of Department Head and the resulting recommendations are not completely clear. They should be more fully explicated and subsequently taken up with the Dean.

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- There seems to be a need to build awareness and actively encourage students to enroll in Earth Sciences courses in both the K-12 system and at the first year university level. Collaboration with Student Recruitment might be an effective mechanism to accomplish this.
- The re-arrangement of timetables might allow better coordination of offerings between Earth Sciences and Engineering.

One of the expectations of this process is that the Department establish a forward-looking vision and goals for the coming years. We were particularly gratified to learn that your Department has developed a strategic plan that we hope will build on the work that has been done during the APR process.

I offer my support and that of the Committee as you begin the important work of moving forward. We look forward to seeing your one-year update next November.

Sincerely yours,



Eddy Campbell
Vice-President (Academic)

c. Dr. R. Lucas, Dean of Science