

**The Impact of the Reorganization Proposal on  
Graduate Education**

**A Report of the Graduate Council  
to  
The Faculty Senate**

**Submitted by  
Linda Shea, Chair of the Graduate Council  
March 6, 2009**

## **Our Charge**

The Graduate Council received a request from Ernest May, Secretary of the Faculty Senate, on February 8 to prepare and submit a preliminary report no later than March 6. Specifically, the charge was as follows:

*"The Rules Committee is requesting that the Graduate Council, in addition to making whatever comments it deems appropriate, provide a report focused on: "Impact of the Reorganization Proposal on Graduate Education (if any): please evaluate."*

## **The Process**

The request for feedback was made approximately one week before the regular meeting of the Graduate Council in February. A few members solicited comments from Graduate Program Directors (GPDs) and other administrators and faculty in their colleges. Limited feedback was received prior to the meeting; however, the request for feedback was discussed. The GC members concluded that they did not have access to enough details of the plan upon which to comment. This response was reported back to Senate Secretary May. Ernest May then forwarded the link to the Chancellor's statement of the reorganization plan and reiterated the request for a report on its impact on graduate education.

The re-request was sent to GC members. Subsequently, several met with GPDs and some forwarded the request to others in their Colleges and Schools. Comments were sent to Linda Shea, Chair of the GC and David Dudek, Graduate Student Assistant to the Chair. The following section summarizes the feedback received by Sunday, March 1, 2009. All written feedback is contained in the appendix to this report.

## **Summary of Feedback**

Comments centered on two areas: the impact of the reorganization on graduate education and other related concerns about the reorganization and the process of reorganization. The charge to this committee is about graduate education; hence, this report will focus on that.

Feedback was offered by eleven individuals representing the following departments/schools: Chemistry, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, the Isenberg School of Management, Anthropology, Language, Literature, and Culture, English, and Continuing Education.

Support and opposition seem to cluster by school and departments. From this group, supporters of the reorganization reference their link to the merger between NRE and NSM and also the merger of the Resource Economics department into the Isenberg School of Management. Those opposing the reorganization reference the proposed SBS and HFA merger with some opposition from NRE Departments for the NRE/SM merger.

We did not receive feedback with regard to the proposed merger of Public Health and Nursing.

## **Favorable Effects on Graduate Education:**

### **Support for merging NRE and NSM and Resource Economics with Isenberg SOM**

Based on this small sample, faculty from the Departments of Chemistry, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and School of Management believe the reorganization will likely benefit graduate education. Many faculty members in these areas recognize the potential for cross-disciplinary synergies and collaboration among faculty and graduate students. They also mention the benefit of reporting to one Dean and branding opportunities. The favorable responses seem to come from representatives of NSM and the Isenberg School of Management. Some opposition for the NRE/NSM merger came from members of NRE and are referenced in item 7 of the related concerns section below

In referring to the merger between NRE and NSM, one faculty member described the **benefit of reporting to one Dean.**

*“At the moment, the interdisciplinary graduate programs (Molecular & Cellular Biology, Neuroscience & Behavior, Plant Biology, Organismic & Evolutionary Biology) are in a difficult situation, reporting to three deans and having no permanent reporting structure. Thus the deans have to get together and decide on requests from the graduate programs and this, of course, is always complex.*

*Under the new proposal, almost all of the faculty within those graduate programs (I and many of my Chem colleagues are full members of MCB) will now lie within one college (with a notable exception, alas, of Chem Eng members). Presumably the interdisciplinary graduate programs will now report to this one dean, with only minor issues arising from other deans. This should make many things much simpler, the least of which being funding of staff positions and entering student support.”*

Another reference to the **interdisciplinary benefits** of the NRE and NSM merger noted,

*“The interdisciplinary life science graduate programs (Molecular and Cellular Biology, Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Neuroscience and Behavior, Plant Biology) all would likely benefit from a reorganization that brings all of the life sciences under one deanship. These graduate programs now span many departments and colleges across the UMass Amherst campus, leading to difficulties in communication with the administration and the need to negotiate for resources from multiple deans. Consolidating the reporting and funding structure to one deanship would be a significant step forward.”*

Another faculty from MCB offered the following comments.

*“We agree that the coming reorganization will likely have little impact on our graduate program. Right now, I have no idea what opportunities might arise, but I see no credible reason to be worried about the reorganization and what it might do to our graduate program.”*

A meeting with the PhD coordinators in the Isenberg School showed strong support for the merger of the Department of Resource Economics with SOM. One coordinator described some of the current **collaboration as well as “branding” benefits** as follows.

*“Several of the faculty there have spoken in our INFORMS speaker series and have served on my students dissertation committees (and I have served on theirs, too). Plus, I have quite a few co-authored journal articles with a member of that department. The faculty members of that department are really nice and they are smart. It would also help a lot in terms of “branding.” Plus, that department has some very cool labs and is very good at getting external research funds.”*

While there was no direct feedback from the Resource Economics side, an Isenberg School Ph.D. Coordinator noted,

*“I am very much for having Resource Economics join ISOM. In fact, shortly after such a possibility was announced I started receiving enthusiastic emails from that department.”*

## **Unfavorable Effects on Graduate Education**

Opposition to the proposed reorganization seems to focus on the merger of HFA and SBS (including LARP) and come from both sides of the equation. Representatives from the Departments of Anthropology, English and Language, Literature, and Culture (LLC) believe that reorganization will negatively affect graduate education. The **potential lack of understanding** of the lab sciences and **competition for administrative support** are major drawbacks to the merger.

Representatives from Anthropology describe some of these affects as follows:

*“Reorganization will not, in and of itself, affect our linkages across campus. It will, however, in one fell swoop, place us into a division of the university that is the weakest in its field work, research, and lab activities, and that, in many of its departments, might even be considered antagonistic to the many laboratory and hard science ends of our program. The new deanery, and its associated advice giving and decision making bodies, executive and personnel committees cannot be considered well informed about the position of Anthropology in the 21st century, something that never was a problem in the SBS.”*

Another respondent spoke of sentiments within the LLC Department.

*“The specific effects on our graduate programs have only come up in passing. The obvious major problem for all our programs at this point is, of course, lack of faculty. How can we admit students when in various important fields there’s no one for them to work with, no one with the relevant specializations to direct their theses/dissertations?”*

The focus of many opposing the reorganization is on broader, related issues such as these listed below.

## **Related Concerns**

1. The details of the reorganization plan are not clearly understood. There appears to be general confusion about what the plan is and what the alternatives might be. One representative noted,

*“there has been little attention paid at the administrative level to the impact the economic crisis will have on students and faculty as they struggle to pay bills, juggle jobs and family obligations, provide support for the community, and pay higher fees. What support does the University plan to offer students who will suffer from the economic situation, either organizationally, administratively or academically?”*

2. It is not clear how much money will be saved through the reorganization efforts. Several faculty remarked about the lack of details on resources saved and expressed a need to explore other opportunities to realize savings.

*“the energies thrown into reorganization are better spent improving collaboration and communication among existing deaneries (instead of creating new ones) and among existing departments (rather than shipping them around). Instead of disrupting existing constructive working relationships, departments, deaneries, and administrators should be encouraged to strengthen those relationships. And, instead of burdening creative minds with having to spend their creative time reacting to yet another imposition of structure to deal with a problem that has not*

*been brought on by that structure, that energy is better invested in thinking up the many ways that something that works well can be made to work better. That will save money, time, and energy which is exactly what's needed in these trying times."*

3. The process of reorganization is being questioned for having limited dialogue and lack of transparency. As one respondent remarked,

*"I suspect -- and I believe this feeling is widespread among my colleagues -- that the real goal is for key administrators to be seen as doing something, anything, as if that in itself would then count as a significant achievement in that administrator's public profile. And yet surely it takes more guts to say plainly that the proposed reorganization is not going to resolve the issue of budget deficits, to have meaningful consultation with faculty at the beginning, not the end, of the process, and to aim to aid faculty in every way so that we can fulfill our primary responsibilities even in this crisis."*

Another respondent submitted a similar reaction:

*"There has been little consultation with faculty concerning this reorganization. Although ideas and suggestions for cost saving have been solicited, there has been little feedback provided to the originators of those suggestions or the university community concerning the deliberation of those ideas and their acceptance or rejection."*

A third faculty representative provided the following comments:

*"I think that there is a pretty widely held view that this process has been less transparent, consultative and deliberative than people would be comfortable with, and that the graduate student and faculty unions and governance have not been treated as equal working partners in the process. The implication for graduate education is the view it gives of graduate students and faculty at UMass as being less part of the decision making process as most would like."*

4. Departments are already suffering from the impact of diminutive resources, as noted above.
5. Of greater concern to many graduate faculty is the increased curriculum fee. It has a direct negative impact on graduate education and research. It is the impetus for reductions in Teaching Assistantships and the reported reduction in Research Assistantships (using more post-docs instead) as part of grants and contracts.
6. Lack of morale is already evident in departments suffering from reduction in faculty in recent years. The following passage reflects this sentiment.

*"I'm glad you bring up graduate programs in this picture, since I spent part of January writing letters and making calls to help one of our most gifted graduate students transfer out. She wants to work in Arabic and Russian, and can't find any courses or appoint a committee. Putting a lot of energy into losing a student doesn't do much for morale."*

7. Several members expressed concern over the dismantling of the College of NRE. It is the foundation of the Land Grant Mission upon which the University was built. It ignores a recent proposal for a College of Life Sciences in the Environment supported by all departments in NRE in the past. Faculty members are opposed to the elimination of the word "environment" from the College name. They expressed concern about the cultural adaptation required when moving from one college to another, and the importance of valuing and respecting scholarship in different formats such as theory and application. As one faculty member from Plant, Soil and Insect Sciences noted,

*"NRE departments have components of their mission that are in addition to those commonalities with Life Sciences counterparts in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM). While both of the current colleges are dedicated to excellence in basic research and training in their graduate programs, NRE has an additional component of emphasizing applied research and outreach."*

*In short, the benefits that our graduate programs might enjoy by reducing redundancy and competition for resources, would be outweighed by the loss of the applied research and training mission that would occur when disparately aligned units are brought together in a whole that is less than the sum of its parts".*

In addition to comments on the support or opposition of specific parts of the reorganization plan and the related issues, some opportunities to generate or preserve resources were offered.

## **Opportunities to Explore and Develop**

The call for feedback on the effect of the reorganization on graduate education yielded some fruitful suggestions for new opportunities. The major ones are listed here.

1. Leverage Better utilization of technology in the classroom

The campus could benefit from more formal or structured efforts to increase use of technology on the classroom. If more classes used technology to teach in a modified

blended fashion and/or fully online, there would be no space issues on campus. The delicate scheduling and structure of blended classes will free up space tremendously. Space is an issue and building larger lecture halls assumes larger classes, but may not be the best solution for effective education. The University can still grow and have more efficient utilization of space if at least 30% - 50% of the class sessions are conducted online.

## 2. Leverage Potential for Online and Professional and Continuing Education Programs

There is a lot of potential for online degree and Professional and Continuing Education programs. The small interdisciplinary programs could be showcases. We could develop a plan to make this easier to do, more clearly communicate to alumni, donors and potential students, and reap greater rewards for departments and faculty - financially and programmatically.

## 3. Leverage Advantages of Five College Network

More use should be made of the Five Colleges; at the moment these engagements are strictly extra-curricular for both grad students and faculty. Together, the faculty and graduate presence at the Five Colleges constitute the quality, size and breadth of any major R1 university. We need to take advantage of that more, reward the connections grad students and faculty engender and maintain among the colleges, and further foster relationship, cross-registration and cross-campus collaboration.

## APPENDIX: Raw Data

### Graduate Council UMASS Reorganization Impact Report Initial Feedback Received from Faculty – 3/1/2009

#### Faculty Member #1

I think that the proposed merger of NRE and NSM to form CNS will ENHANCE graduate education in the sciences, particularly the life sciences, by having the interdisciplinary graduate programs all report to one Dean and by fostering interdisciplinary interactions. Synergistic ties with the separate College of Engineering must continue to be encouraged by both relevant Deans, but I'm not too worried about this.

#### Faculty Member #2

It's hard to comment on the effects absent a specific plan. Assuming the primary proposal to join most of NRE with NSM, this will be beneficial to graduate education in one specific way. At the moment, the interdisciplinary graduate programs (Molecular & Cellular Biology, Neuroscience & Behavior, Plant Biology, Organismic & Evolutionary Biology) are in a difficult situation, reporting to three deans and having no permanent reporting structure. Thus the deans have to get together and decide on requests from the graduate programs and this, of course, is always complex.

Under the new proposal, almost all of the faculty within those graduate programs (I and many of my Chem colleagues are full members of MCB) will now lie within one college (with a notable exception, alas, of Chem Eng members). Presumably the interdisciplinary graduate programs will now report to this one dean, with only minor issues arising from other deans. This should make many things much simpler, the least of which being funding of staff positions and entering student support.

MCB has had a difficult time identifying a director willing to take on the position under the current reporting structure. This change will likely make that search easier.

#### Faculty Member #3

I am very much for having Resource Economics join ISOM. In fact, shortly after such a possibility was announced I started receiving enthusiastic emails from that department.

Several of the faculty there have spoken in our INFORMS speaker series and have served on my students dissertation committees (and I have served on theirs, too). Plus, I have quite a few co-authored journal articles with a member of that department. The faculty members of that department are really nice and they are smart.

It would also help a lot in terms of "branding." Plus, that department has some very cool labs and is very good at getting external research funds.

Faculty Member #4

My own input (relative to the Isenberg School) at this time is that the reorganization might have a positive impact on graduate education in the SOM since Resource Economics has many faculty and few students. In particular, they have 4 or 5 PhD students and have faculty with expertise in econometrics and other quantitative areas that may be of interest to our own students. The reorganization may also create more opportunities for collaboration among departments with Resource Economics. It looks like they would have room for some of our students in their courses given the small numbers, perhaps making more efficient use of faculty resources. Please let me know if there are any alternative perceptions.

Faculty Member #5

Here are some thoughts on the impact of the proposal from the viewpoint of a director of one of the four life science interdisciplinary graduate programs:

The interdisciplinary life science graduate programs (Molecular and Cellular Biology, Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, Neuroscience and Behavior, Plant Biology) all would likely benefit from a reorganization that brings all of the life sciences under one deanship. These graduate programs now span many departments and colleges across the UMass Amherst campus, leading to difficulties in communication with the administration and the need to negotiate for resources from multiple deans. Consolidating the reporting and funding structure to one deanship would be a significant step forward.

A potential negative aspect to the clustering of all the sciences under one dean would be the relative loss of visibility of the individual units under the dean. Although the four interdisciplinary life science graduate programs often speak in unanimity, it may be that these key graduate programs receive fewer resources in a unified deanery due to reduced overall visibility, thus undermining life science graduate training at the university.

Faculty Member #6

I have discussed this with Bret and we agree that the coming reorganization will likely have little impact on our graduate program. This is in line with Chancellor Holub's almost 2 hour presentation at a recent Heads & Chairs meeting, attended by Craig and myself. Basically, what we should be doing now is watching carefully for any opportunities that might arise. For example, and I am just tossing this up in the air, the MCB program will likely benefit from having most (or all?) of its faculty under a "College of Natural Sciences". This facilitates their interactions and MCB may grow or prosper further. So maybe there will be opportunities for us to strengthen ties with the MCB program. Who knows what might evolve? Right now, I have no idea what opportunities might arise, but I see no credible reason to be worried about the reorganization and what it might do to our graduate program.

Faculty Member #7

In LLC, as you may have heard from other faculty, there's a general lack of enthusiasm for the proposed reorganization primarily because it has simply not been justified in any significant way. Nothing suggests it will result in improvements at ground level, or that it is worth all the trouble and time being spent on it.

The specific effects on our graduate programs have only come up in passing. The obvious major problem for all our programs at this point is, of course, lack of faculty. How can we admit students when in various important fields there's no one for them to work with, no one with the relevant specializations to direct their theses/dissertations? It also seems likely that word of this has already gotten around and is causing a decline in the numbers of applications we receive. In addition, we seem to be going to more meetings than ever; this does not help us meet our primary responsibilities, which are to teaching and research, with the time and energy they rightfully demand.

When Lee Edwards was forcing five departments in HFA to merge into one megadepartment, the pattern seems to have been set that serious justifications or rationales or positive goals need not even be presented. Going through all this once again -- this time with only one material benefit: to save a tiny amount on administrative costs (which might or might not in fact be realized) -- seems both foolish and futile. Something is definitely wrong when significant positive reasons of major reorganization need not even be articulated.

I suspect -- and I believe this feeling is widespread among my colleagues -- that the real goal is for key administrators to be seen as doing something, anything, as if that in itself would then count as a significant achievement in that administrator's public profile. And yet surely it takes more guts to say plainly that the proposed reorganization is not going to resolve the issue of budget deficits, to have meaningful consultation with faculty at the beginning, not the end, of the process, and to aim to aid faculty in every way so that we can fulfill our primary responsibilities even in this crisis.

It's hard to escape the cynicism that this time-consuming reorganization is generating on campus. On that subject, I want to share with the entire council (if you wish to pass it on, with or without this message), an email sent to me this week by a friend at the University of Arizona (UA), which is going through the same sort of financial crisis as UMass and seems to be grasping at the same straws. This news item and story from UA may amuse you: <http://uanews.org/node/24285>

“When I came to UA [in the mid-1970s], all those units were in one college, the College of Liberal Arts, with one dean. Then the administration decided to divide it into four faculties - of Science, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts - each with its dean. The College of Liberal Arts became an umbrella structure and its dean became a superdean. Then a new president (Koffler) decided that the superdean was too powerful, felt threatened, and eliminated his position. Then after a while the now-leaderless College of Liberal Arts umbrella was eliminated altogether, while the faculties became colleges. So now we're reversing that process. Because of added responsibilities, the new Executive Dean just got a \$50,000 raise. Titanic deck chair, anyone?”

Faculty Member #8

I'm glad you bring up graduate programs in this picture, since I spent part of January writing letters and making calls to help one of our most gifted graduate students transfer out. She wants to work in Arabic and Russian, and can't find any courses or appoint a committee. Putting a lot of energy into losing a student doesn't do much for morale.

Let's face it: CHFA has been in deep deficit for a couple of years now. Indeed the financial disaster came to light just as Joel Martin took over as Dean. Joel has done a wonderful job of dreaming up positive initiatives for the College, but there's only so much you can do without funding. I know this only by rumor, but CSBS is also said to be fairly broke.

My experience of the forced merger of five departments has not been very positive. Comparative Literature has so far received 1/3 of one position out of the nineteen hired in the new department, despite the fact that we are (and were before the merger) the only one of the former departments that was functioning well. We then lost our only assistant professor to an outside offer that the College couldn't or wouldn't match -- or even half-match. This was only our second tenure-track hire since 1986 (we lost that one to a counteroffer as well). Comp Lit has always needed excellent national literature departments for us to serve our students well, especially graduate students. Since the loss of faculty in the College (as in much of the University) came through random attrition rather than plan, the faculties of most Departments in HFA are currently shot full of holes. Linguistics is an exception; English might be as well.

The only reason Comp Lit is able to feed its graduate students is because we get our stipends from Gen Ed -- our program of about eleven faculty teaches 1000 seats of Gen Ed every semester. But the handwriting is on the wall. Two of our faculty are on medical leave, and three others are nearly seventy years of age. I always wanted to leave a strong university when I left, but sooner or later I'll give up. As we learned from the LLC experience, when you mix the sick and healthy together, everybody ends up sick. It is the same with Colleges.

Faculty Member #9

I see three issues that certainly impact Grad education:

1. Any reduction in faculty would significantly impact the capability to teach grad classes.
2. Loss of support for grad students would hurt twice: basic day-to-day support and ability to teach UG classes.
3. If more classes used technology to teach in a modified blended fashion and/or fully online, there would be NO space issues on campus. The delicate scheduling and structure of blended classes will free up space tremendously. Space is an issue and building larger lecture halls assumes larger classes -- not always the best solution for effective education. The University can still grow and have more efficient utilization of space if at least 30% - 50% of the class sessions are conducted on line.

Faculty Member #10

As you know, Anthropology is the social science that is linked to other departments in the most multiplex relationships of ANY department on campus. Anthropology extends into, and has many constructive research and cooperative teaching arrangements with, the humanities, but at least as strong ones with the Natural Sciences, and even the School of Nursing, and Public Health and Education. Anthropology is a lab science, with lab scientists in each of its four sub-disciplines. The department has benefited from its research and teaching alliances across the campus, in a division that includes at least one other laboratory science (Psychology) that is as multiply linked across campus.

Reorganization will not, in and of itself, affect our linkages across campus. It will, however, in one fell swoop, place us into a division of the university that is the weakest in its field work, research, and lab activities, and that, in many of its departments, might even be considered antagonistic to the many laboratory and hard science ends of our program. The new deanery, and its associated advice giving and decision making bodies, executive and personnel committees cannot be considered well informed about the position of Anthropology in the 21st century, something that never was a problem in the SBS.

In addition, our department generates nice overhead, and requires significant scientific infrastructure and curation (some mandated by law). The competition for administrative support in the much enlarged deanery, grouped with departments that don't have similar needs, will be fierce, with a very steep learning curve for the administrators (again, something that never has been a problem in the SBS, and that would not be a problem if we were to be grouped with Psychology and the harder sciences).

In short, the proposed reorganization promises little of benefit to Anthropology (and the other social sciences for that matter), while it puts plenty at risk. Particularly under conditions of extreme fiscal constraints, it will eat up resources, time, and energy that nobody has, and it will disrupt something that nobody has been complaining about. Thus, from the standpoint of the Anthropology Department, my colleagues and I are united in advising against it. If artifacts of active administration need to be generated, the energies thrown into reorganization are better spent improving collaboration and communication among existing deaneries (instead of creating new ones) and among existing departments (rather than shipping them around). Instead of disrupting existing constructive working relationships, departments, deaneries, and administrators should be encouraged to strengthen those relationships. And, instead of burdening creative minds with having to spend their creative time reacting to yet another imposition of structure to deal with a problem that has not been brought on by that structure, that energy is better invested in thinking up the many ways that something that works well can be made to work better. That will save money, time, and energy which is exactly what's needed in these trying times.

Faculty Member #11

These comments are my individual interpretation of feedback from grad students, faculty and others on the reorganization's impact on grad education. Legal Studies has graduate fellows and plans for continued expansion of graduate programming, so it is from the perspective of small, interdisciplinary departments and the graduate students they serve that I write this feedback.

1. It is not clear that the major impact on graduate education will come from reorganization, rather than from the loss of resources that might come from a failure to maximize/use federal and state funding, from the budget or the stimulus package. There's a fairly common sense among grad students, faculty, administrators and staff, as far as I have heard, that the reorganization seems to be a small plan that attracts a lot of attention - most people want to know where the rest of the funding will come from, and expect that decision to make the most impact. Further, there has been little attention paid at the administrative level to the impact the economic crisis will have on students and faculty as they struggle to pay bills, juggle jobs and family obligations, provide support for the community, and pay higher fees. What support does the University plan to offer students who will suffer from the economic situation, either organizationally, administratively or academically?
2. Another clear message beyond the plan itself is concern over the manner in which it is being discussed and promulgated: I think that there is a pretty widely held view that this process has been less transparent, consultative and deliberative than people would be comfortable with, and that the graduate student and faculty unions and governance have not been treated as equal working partners in the process. The implication for graduate education is the view it gives of graduate students and faculty at UMass as being less part of the decision making process as most would like.
3. The reorganization plan itself is not well understood, nor do the people I have spoken with have confidence that its savings will be either realizable in the immediate future, or significant. In other words, the reorganization means a lot of struggle, loss of goodwill and confusion for very little gain. Because of this, many propose a clear and transparent plan in stages - constructed with the input of professional firms as well as UMass community members - that will occur deliberately and over a number of years, rather than a quick reorganization.
4. The process by which grants are applied for and then disbursed is overly bureaucratic, rigid and slow. If the reorganization can address these issues specifically, that would garner it support from both faculty and graduate students. On the other hand, it may in the short term cause further slowness and confusion.

Faculty Member #11 (continued)

5. Interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation may be helped by the bringing together of social science and humanities departments under one college, allowing joint committees and research, grant application etc. This would require explicit attention to these functions when Deanships and other cross-departmental links are configured.

6. More use should be made of the Five Colleges; at the moment these engagements are strictly extra-curricular for both grad students and faculty. Together, the faculty and graduate presence at the Five Colleges constitute the quality, size and breadth of any major R1 university - we need to be taking more advantage of that, reward the connections grad students and faculty engender and maintain among the colleges, and further foster relationship, cross-registration and cross-campus collaboration.

7. There is a lot of potential for online degree and continuing-ed programs. Here again, the small interdisciplinary programs could be showcases: the plan could make this easier to do, more clearly communicated to alumni, donors and potential students, and more rewarding for departments and faculty - financially and programmatically.

8. The savings from reorganization need to be more clearly detailed: besides the elimination of administrative salaries, what does the plan offer? How will it ensure that the loss of administrative positions does not devolve to grad student TAs and faculty? And how will those savings be passed to students in aid and opportunities?

9. Fundamentally, the reorganization looks like a stopgap, and does not seem to offer the kind of relief we will need. I think any feedback the Grad Council provides needs to make this clear, in addition to answering the question we are asked. If our major mandate is maintaining the health and quality of graduate programming, this will be achieved by re-visioning what graduate education must do in the coming difficult years; providing support in multiple spheres for graduate students as teachers, researchers, employees and scholars; taking advantage of programmatic, intellectual and administrative overlaps to maximize use of our resources. The Plan only addresses the last of these objectives, but without discussion of the first two, we cannot employ resources to our best advantage even once/if we have them.

Faculty Member # 12

As a member of the College of Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE), I was initially enthusiastic about the prospect of University reorganization insofar as it might provide an opportunity to eliminate inherent redundancies in graduate (and undergraduate) teaching curricula. Another advantage of reorganization would be the possibility of putting greater structure behind the interdisciplinary graduate training programs (MCB, NSB, OEB, and PB) which bridge several departments and, at least in some cases, compete for resources with existing graduate programs within those departments. A common perspective from NRE is that Life Sciences research and graduate training occurs at several foci at our University, and that bringing these units together in a single College of Life Sciences and the Environment might better facilitate their missions.

However, NRE departments have components of their mission that are in addition to those commonalities with Life Sciences counterparts in the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM). While both of the current colleges are dedicated to excellence in basic research and training in their graduate programs, NRE has an additional component of emphasizing applied research and outreach. And that is not to say that NRE faculty are homogeneous in this regard. In fact, the activities of NRE faculty are dispersed along a continuum, with some doing predominately basic research at one extreme, and others doing purely applied and outreach activities on the other. But as a college, NRE has embraced this spectrum and possesses leadership and a Dean that is fully capable of grasping this multifaceted identity.

A primary concern for uniting NRE and NSM is that the unique applied research and outreach activities inherent to NRE will lose relevance in the new college structure, or perhaps be abandoned altogether. These differences between applied and basic research will be even further contrasted when considering the merger of NSM and NRE to include departments that are not traditionally viewed as Life Sciences. My fear is that departments such as Plant, Soil, and Insect Sciences which has a significant obligatory outreach mission might find itself in the same college as departments which do not recognize or appreciate this aspect of their mission. Hence, the “Environment” addendum to the Life Sciences College is fundamentally important insofar as it encompasses the uniquely characteristic research and outreach chimeras that define of NRE units. Moreover, retaining the applied research and training identity that has been fundamental to this University since its inception is critically dependent on keeping Life Scientists together as a cohort with their own identity and leadership.

In short, the benefits that our graduate programs might enjoy by reducing redundancy and competition for resources, would be outweighed by the loss of the applied research and training mission that would occur when disparately aligned units are brought together in a whole that is less than the sum of its parts.