



Mary Croughan
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*Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

August 14, 2009

**INTERIM PROVOST LAWRENCE PITTS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA**

Re: DANR Review

Dear Larry:

At its meeting of July 29, 2009, the Academic Council discussed the academic review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR). The Council considered responses from five divisions (Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, San Diego, and Santa Cruz) and four systemwide committees (Academic Personnel, Education Policy, Planning and Budget, and Research Policy). While the written comments did not provide a unanimous evaluation of the review, the ensuing discussion did achieve a measure of agreement regarding the review and DANR's strategic planning. In short, the Council finds that the review, while complimentary, was not rigorous enough, and we ask for your assistance in developing interim metrics so that DANR's next review can be more comprehensive.

Many respondents lauded the review's findings, supporting the recommendations made as a result of this long-awaited external review. Broadening the scope of DANR's applications and reimagining the delivery and research of agricultural systems are clearly needed. At the same time, nearly all respondents suggested that the review's recommendations be recast in light of current budget realities, and most noted the tension between prioritizing issues of national import over those of more local impact.

Specific concerns enumerated in the responses focus on the need for more detailed information. For example, Davis, UCAP, and UCEP request data to support the claim that extension specialists should be given equivalent status (nature and number of appointments, classroom teaching responsibilities, fiscal impact statements, etc.). Davis and UCORP note concerns regarding the role of external stakeholders both in the review itself and in their implicit role in internal DANR decision-making. And given the review's calls for new approaches, San Diego, UCPB, and UCORP each note that no evaluative measures of success were given nor were suggestions provided on how to achieve these goals.

Council also noted recurring concerns regarding academic reviews generally. UCPB, UCORP, Santa Cruz, and many individual Council members observed that this review, like so many previous

MRU and Cal ISI reviews, provided insufficient financial data, success metrics, and specific guidance. Many lamented the timing of the review's release – a factor cited in the low systemwide response rate. The recommendations were simultaneously found to be both too vague and too grand: without clearly defined goals “reconceptualization” is an abstraction, and without a clear identity “claiming a greater public profile” is problematic.

As a result of our discussion identifying both the strengths and weaknesses of the review, and keeping in mind the intrinsic and potential value of DANR to UC and California, Council elected to ask for your assistance in developing interim next steps with the aim of positioning DANR to complete a comprehensive academic review in no more than five years. Specifically, Council asks that:

1. DANR VP Dooley review and respond to the requests contained in respondents' letters;
2. UCPB and UCORP jointly develop and submit to DANR a series of queries designed to elicit specific information and next steps, especially data for financial planning; and
3. The information that is gleaned be used to frame the next DANR review, which again, should be completed in no more than five years.
4. Responses and follow up to the review be handled in an ongoing iterative process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding the Academic Senate's comments.

Sincerely,



Mary Croughan
Chair, Academic Council

Copy: Academic Council

Daniel Dooley, Vice President, Agriculture and Natural Resources
Trish Hare, Associate Director of Administration, Academic Affairs
Martha Winnacker, Academic Senate Executive Director



320 STEPHENS HALL
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July 27, 2009

MARY CROUGHAN
Chair, Academic Council

Subject: Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources Academic Program Review

The leadership of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate focused on the Academic Program Review Final Report of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) as most germane to Senate interests and concerns. Due to the timing of the report however, the Berkeley Division was unable to provide in-depth committee review and comment. The divisional leadership however found the Academic Program Review Final Report to be generally insightful and forward looking.

We endorse the review's overarching recommendation that the DANR address substantially broader issues. This recommendation seems to be in response to the traditional DANR stance of serving as a research and development arm for California agriculture. We note that the two primary examples chosen by the review as success stories for important DANR contributions to California relate primarily to research on wild land issues (sudden oak death and fire).

We would like to highlight the review's response to the question: How can DANR best serve the interests of the State of California in the years ahead?

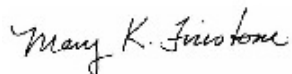
In California, agricultural and natural resource sustainability are deeply interwoven with larger issues of population growth, land use change, water supply, energy supply, climate change, transportation, and urban and rural community health and well being. This broader view of sustainability is clearly recognized in UC ANR's January 2009 Strategic Vision document. The new strategic plan treats sustainability as a "superset" or overarching set of principles that will guide all ANR activities. We strongly endorse this view, but believe that it will require a different mix and balance of skills and interests than are represented by current ANR faculty, specialists and advisors if it is to become manifest. Current expertise in the agricultural and natural resource area is strongly skewed towards plant production and protection. In comparison, efforts in program areas like water management,

energy efficiency, integrated land planning, ecosystem services, rural development, and human health and nutrition, are relatively small.

Unfortunately after making this bold and critically important statement, the review proceeds to “pull its punch” and conclude the discussion with: “In a time of flat or declining budgets it is unreasonable to expect ANR to simply expand in non-traditional areas.”

We suggest that in a time of flat or declining budgets, the future of DANR is in fact contingent on its ability to convert itself into a division that is able to effectively address the future important issues facing the people of the state of California. Historically, DANR seems to have commonly played a reactive role to emerging problems. The future of the Division requires the assumption of leadership in addressing emerging problems far beyond those of agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary K. Firestone".

Mary K. Firestone
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Professor, Environmental Science, Policy and Management



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July 24, 2009

MARY CROUGHAN, CHAIR

University of California
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Re: Systemwide Academic Senate Consultation Request: Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) Review Report

The referenced report was forwarded to all Academic Senate standing committees and Faculty Executive Committees within the schools and colleges for comment. Response was received from the Committee on Academic Personnel, Joint Personnel Committee, Graduate Council, Undergraduate Council and CA&ES Faculty Executive Committee.

Most of the responding committees were supportive of the document complimenting the thorough nature of the report and its recommendations. There were some additional comments and suggestions as follows:

The review suggests that the Cooperative Extension Specialist (CES) series should be modified to allow for more participation in graduate education, but the Graduate Council believes there are currently adequate means of participation by CES's at UC Davis. While Graduate Council policy¹ specifically prohibits CES's from membership in graduate programs/groups, they can apply for membership if they are appointed in a teaching capacity, such as a Lecturer without Salary. This membership requirement is based on the CES series specifications which do not include instruction. Graduate Council discussed the recommendation and determined its policy stands.

Final ANR Review Panel Report Comments:

1. Regarding Recommendation 2 on page 11 concern was expressed that the wording was vague. If the recommendation is for ANR to expand its work into new areas, it may be unworkable to expand ANR's mission during a time of flat or shrinking budget allocation. If the recommendation is to consider ANR activities broadly to include impacting the environment and human welfare there may be more support; however, expansion of the ANR mission in this direction will overlap with the mission of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Davis.
2. Recommendation 3, on page 11, notes that ANR does study some topics that are of interest beyond California, and that UC Davis has strong international programs and some departments make an effort to reach international audiences. However, when resources are limited, priority may need to shift to what is important to California.

CSREES External Review Report:

1. Recommendation 4, page 4, developing metrics to document outcomes is a laudable goal, but a difficult task. Questions arose concerning the proposed LOGIC model appropriateness for program evaluation. Do such models serve their intended purposed such as improving success of an activity?
2. Recommendation 9, page 5, caused significant concern. Stakeholder input may be quite valuable in hiring and even program review. Stakeholder input is not viewed as adding value to budget decisions. Further stakeholder participation during hiring actions is controversial. Some believe it adds value but the

¹ http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/Membership_in_Graduate_Programs2006.pdf

stakeholder should not have a vote and should not participate in the committee meeting in which a final recommendation is developed and vote administered. Some believe stakeholders should not have a role in the selection of Academic Senate faculty. To this end, the Davis Division has been working with campus academic personnel administrators to craft guidelines describing the means by which stakeholders may be effectively incorporated into the Academic Senate faculty recruitment process. In summary, the role is to be strictly advisory foregoing group interview processes or consultation. Under the scenario, stakeholders will be asked to individually submit candidate assessment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R. L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "L".

Robert L. Powell III, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate and
Professor and Chair, Department of
Chemical Engineering and Materials Science



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June 23, 2009

Mary Croughan, Chair, Academic Council
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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RE: Senate Review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension Program

At its meeting of June 16, 2009, the Irvine Division Academic Senate Cabinet considered the Senate Review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension Program.

The Cabinet, in general, supported the recommendations laid out in the review and appreciates the importance of the agriculture division for UC and for the future of California. DANR and Extension Services are considered to be operations of great importance to UC and its research programs and to represent a significant public interface with an influential constituency in the state. However, it was noted that the Center is not as strong as in past reviews, and that in these difficult budget times it may not be easy to aggregate or redirect the resources needed for the changes and improvements recommended by the review panel.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jutta Heckhausen".

Jutta Heckhausen, Senate Chair

C: Martha Kendall Winnacker, Executive Director, Academic Senate



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July 16, 2009

Mary Croughan, Chair
Academic Council

RE: UCSC Response to DANR and CSREES Reviews

Dear Mary,

The request for campus comments on these documents arrived on the Ides of May, and my heavily committed committees had either finished their meetings for the year, or already had full agendas for their final meeting—expedited comment on far more pressing items, such as Presidential Emergency Powers, had already been requested (and, incidentally, ultimately pretty much disregarded). This is most unfortunate, as I am well aware of the extended struggle by the Senate to actually get UCOP to agree to conduct a review of the DANR enterprise. I will offer a few comments on behalf of UCSC, however.

At the outset, I am pleased to see that the overall tone of the reviews is positive, and that they endorse the value of these enterprises (with, of course, tweaks such as improvements to the strategic planning process of ANR). This is a tribute to these enterprises. But, at the same time, I am struck by the marked similarities of these documents to essentially every other review of a multi-campus unit (and especially MRU's)—basically, the review is a group of experts from the general area of focus of the enterprise endorsing the value of a portion of their community. And, assuredly, Agriculture and Natural Resources are a key part of the mission of the University of California.

Yet, what is not addressed in these reviews is perhaps the most critical in the current budgetary climate: how efficient these enterprises are from a fiscal viewpoint; and producing an assessment that might serve to prioritize these efforts relative to other worthy initiatives that the University of California is not funding. In short, I would expect that investing significant resources into an enterprise would engender a program that would produce positive reviews from folks familiar with (or in) the ANR community---but I would expect that the same result would occur for most initiatives, including hypothetical initiatives in areas such as outreach and a variety of other scholarly disciplines of similar importance to the state. So, in an era when funding one area means not funding others, I believe that there is little in these reviews which would lead me (or anybody else) to be able to assess how one might prioritize these projects relative to other worthy initiatives. That is a failure of the review process, and perhaps of the original queries from Rory Hume (which were designed in a happier time), that UC should try to avoid in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Quentin Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "Q".

Quentin Williams, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division



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July 22, 2009

Professor Mary Croughan
Chair, Academic Senate
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
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SUBJECT: Review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) and the Cooperative Extension Program

Dear Chair Croughan:

In response to your request of May 15, the San Diego Division sought and received comment from the appropriate Divisional committees on the review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) and the Cooperative Extension Program.

Divisional reviewers generally endorsed the report, noting that some of the recommendations seemed to envision DANR in a broader sustainability context with more diverse stakeholders. Without specific plans or identified benchmarks and evaluation mechanisms, however, DANR may not be able to achieve the expectations set out in this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel J. Donoghue".

Daniel J. Donoghue, Chair
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

cc: W. Hodgkiss
F. Powell



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL (UCAP)
Steven Plaxe, Chair
splaxe@ucsd.edu

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July 10, 2009

MARY CROUGHAN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: DANR and CE reviews

Dear Mary,

UCAP members held a teleconference on June 11, 2009 to discuss the reports from the external reviews of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension Program. Most of the information regarding the DANR/CE reviews is not relevant to UCAP, however there are a few specific issues related to Academic Personnel Review of concern to the committee.

UCAP would like to have more information about the current review processes on each campus that participates in ANR and CE programs. The information should include the composition of the review committee and indicate who has final authority.

The committee also would like the following information regarding DANR and CE faculty:

- The number of faculty without a joint appointment
- The number of faculty with a joint appointment
- The academic series for those with a joint appointment
- In what ways, and to what degree, do DANR and CE faculty, with joint appointments, participate in service
- The role of DANR and CE faculty, with joint appointments, in the supervision of graduate students
- The amount, and types, of instruction provided by DANR and CE faculty with joint appointments

Finally, UCAP believes it is important to have a projection of the financial implications for UC if the Cooperative Extension specialists were to have equivalent status to other faculty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steven Plaxe".

Steven Plaxe, Chair
UCAP



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)
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June 17, 2009

MARY CROUGHAN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Review of Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Dear Mary,

On June 1, 2009, UCEP discussed the review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. There was very little mention of undergraduate education in the review documents, nevertheless UCEP had a few comments that we would like to share.

Apparently ANR has expanded its mission to include a more holistic look at the health of California including programs such as nutrition and community sustainability. In the present budget climate, we urge that resources not be committed to expansion into these areas at the expense of other programs that contribute significantly to the economy of the state and especially to the education of its citizens.

The committee also expressed concern for the push to include Extension Specialists in the UC academic senate. While we as a committee do not have extensive knowledge of the activities of these specialists, we suspect that of the three pillars by which faculty are judged: teaching, research and service, they likely 1) excel in the service arena, 2) tend to be highly applied in their research and 3) do relatively little teaching of UC students, either undergraduates or graduates, rather focusing their teaching on their non-student constituents. For most UC faculty, research and teaching (of registered students) are the focus of their reviews, therefore, we are skeptical that extension specialists meet the requirements of senate membership. At the very least their inclusion would require a very different review rubric. Consequently, we would recommend that their inclusion into the senate be done only after very thorough investigation of their actual activities. We expect that the new task force on senate membership will have this on their agenda.

Finally, it is apparent that ANR has had a very positive effect on the economy of the State of California especially in agriculture and natural resources. There doesn't seem to be much evidence that ANR has had much impact on the rest of the world. We realize that federal funds for aid of the sort that ANR could provide have shrunk over the years, but there are likely other resources such as non-profits and trust funds that might fund overseas activities. It seems to us that activities such as faculty and student exchanges and research on foreign fields could bring the considerable talent and expertise of UC to bear on problems such as hunger and starvation and provide stimulus for many developing nations of the world.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Stephen R. McLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "S" and a stylized "M".

Stephen R. McLean, Chair
UCEP



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY (UCORP)
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July 22, 2009

**MARY CROUGHAN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

RE: Review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension Program

Dear Mary,

The University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) has evaluated the review of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension Program (hereafter, collectively referred to as DANR). While the committee was encouraged by many aspects of the review and remains supportive of the division, its goals, and its personnel, we find that many aspects of the review have fallen short of the intellectual rigor we expected. Furthermore, given that the Senate has been calling for this review for more than a decade, we find both the review's tone and substance to be more akin to fine-tuning than forward-thinking.

We have identified six areas of concern which are outlined below. These concerns are not directed as criticisms of DANR per se, but are offered in the hopes that the context and meaning of the proffered review can be better understood and future reviews might be better designed. Finally we close with specific suggestions for the timing and content of the next review. It is our sincere hope that a regular cycle of review and constructive renewal becomes an integral and positive force in the management of DANR as it moves forward in its mission to offer service to the people of California.

SIX AREAS OF CONCERN.

1. The review lacked bold vision. The sets of recommendations on "Telling the story" (4-6) and "Working with others" (7-10) assume the continuation of the status quo. While the accomplishments of DANR are laudable and deserve to be more widely advertised, giving the past more emphasis will not position the University or DANR to better address the issues of today and tomorrow. That is, the "brand identity" for which DANR strives should not be rooted in past accomplishments, but in tomorrow's goals and the means of their attainment – and how those functions will improve California. This is especially important in the current economic environment.
 - Issues of pipeline and diversity, for example, would be more easily addressed if agriculture were framed in new ways.

- New research funds would flow more easily if DANR strove for cutting edge research and advanced emerging technologies, e.g., cloning, pharming.
 - The division's entire relationship with the state needs re-envisioning; merely enhancing the visibility of past successes is unlikely to foster a better working relationship (see 6 below).
2. The multiple, simultaneous reviews yield contradictory/confusing outcomes. By conducting simultaneous internal and external reviews, respondents are put in an untenable position: Questions regarding the academic review are answered by citing the strategic vision; questions on the strategic vision are answered by referencing the CSREES review. Sometimes the recommendations of the two reviews dovetail, sometimes they diverge; other times the interaction is unclear because different vocabularies are used. Further, issuing the strategic vision six months *prior* to the issuance of the review and its findings implies that the latter was a mere formality and that comments on it are only so much window dressing.
- The academic review includes: "Recommendation 13: Continue to consider ways of defining and recognizing the scholarship and outreach contributions made by CE specialists" (p. 12), while "The [CSREES] review team strongly supports the proposal to provide equivalent status to Cooperative Extension specialists" (USDA review p. 5). (When queried, Vice President Dooley was unaware of any such proposal, though he was aware that comparable extension faculty are Senate members at over 90% of peer institutions.)
 - Both reviews call for broadening diversity within DANR and among its constituency, but in developing the strategic vision, we are told that DANR has already expanded its scope. But the strategic vision was promulgated in December 2008, while the reviews were conducted in spring 2009. We are uncertain as to where and in what capacity diversity remains to be addressed, or whether it is something of which DANR need now only be mindful.
3. Quantitative data are lacking throughout, and specific qualitative measures of success are absent.
- "Recommendation 5: Develop high-level metrics to evaluate the impact of ANR research and extension programs and use them to report on accomplishments to the University, State government and the public." "Recommendation 12: Require that priority programs develop and report on a set of metrics to demonstrate the impact of the program." We assert that such metrics should have been developed and used to conduct this review.
 - As this is the first academic review of DANR, longitudinal data were not available; we expect to see such next time.
 - Specific data on investment returns are not presented, nor are peer comparisons offered. For example, how does DANR's budget compare to that of other land-grant institutions' parallel units, like those at Cornell and Michigan State? How does scientific output compare? How effective is DANR outreach, and by what standard is that determined? Similarly, comparisons to other UC divisions could have positively illustrated success: investment-to-output ratios in comparison to the California Institutes of Technology or Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, for example, would have served the review well.
4. Many recommendations are not actionable/too soft.
- "Recommendation 2: *Reconsider the concept* of agriculture and natural resources to issues of broader relevance to the people of California, for example, to include sustainable communities." (Emphasis added.)

- “Recommendation 3: *Clarify* ANR’s role in addressing issues beyond the state of California.” (Emphasis added.)
 - “Recommendation 13: *Continue to consider* ways of defining and recognizing the scholarship and outreach contributions made by CE specialists.” (Emphasis added.)
 - Several recommendations call on DANR to lead and frame discussions, to become more synergistically inclusive, to engage in broader public education, and the like. A concrete recommendation could have been to formally partner with the Academic Senate by naming the DANR VP as a standing consultant to UCORP. And again, this type of recommendation would be advanced significantly by the articulation of bold, forward-looking thinking.
5. Key terms and evaluative measures were not defined.
- “Stakeholder” is a politically charged word. For purposes of the review, “stakeholders” seem to have been food industries only, to the omission of consumers, small growers, and activist groups, to name but a few. We do not believe an accurate assessment of the efficacy of DANR can be made from such a narrowly construed constituency. Calls for a more diverse stakeholder base (“Recommendation 9: Engage with a more diverse stakeholder base”) beg the question: diverse how?
6. DANR’s relationship with the state was never directly addressed.
- UC is constitutionally charged to be the research arm of the state. Yet DANR does not conduct research on behalf of the state; DANR is not asked by the state for scientific evaluation of proposed solutions (unless endorsement is assured); DANR does not independently offer its scientific assessments to the state. Many DANR faculty are reluctant to speak out in defense of good science and against bad policy for fear that the “stakeholders” will retaliate by withholding funds. As a result of the lack of formal—and insulating—relations with the state, science suffers and money is wasted.

Finally, UCORP requests that two specific areas be addressed immediately:

1. We ask for a concrete time frame for the next academic review. We suggest five years at the latest for the next comprehensive divisional review. This timing will bring DANR into compliance with other divisional reviews within UC and ensure the development of a management structure that is responsive to meaningful cycles of improvement and renewal.
2. We anticipate that DANR will immediately initiate development of action plans to implement the current reviews’ recommendations, accompanied by finite metrics of success, and revised goals and plans, if needed. These responses, the logic behind them, and metrics on their effectiveness, should be available for the next review cycle.

As you know, the Senate has asked for this review for several years. We are glad to see it come to fruition, and we hope that a nimbler, more collaborative unit will emerge. We are eager to help facilitate this transformation.

Sincerely,

James Carey, Chair
UCORP

cc: UCORP
Martha Winnacker, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND BUDGET (UCPB)

Patricia A. Conrad, Chair

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July 22, 2009

MARY CROUGHAN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Re: External Reviews of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Cooperative Extension Program

Dear Mary,

The University Committee on Planning and Budget (UCPB) has reviewed the external reviews of the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) and the Cooperative Extension Program. Although we endorse these current reviews, we note that they leave many of the Senate's previous questions unanswered, and so we urge that they be followed up by a more comprehensive review that provides appropriate information regarding planning and budgeting.

The Academic Council has repeatedly requested a thorough review of ANR. Previous requests were made by Academic Council Chair Larry Coleman in the 1999 *Report of the Academic Council Workgroup on DANR*, by Academic Council Chair Gayle Binion in August 2003, by Academic Council Chair Larry Pitts in June 2004, by Academic Council Chair George Blumenthal in August 2005, and by Academic Council Chair John Oakley in 2007. Neither DANR nor the Office of the President responded to any of these requests until Provost Rory Hume established the current Review Panel to respond to four specific questions. The Review Panel has responded thoughtfully and thoroughly to these four questions, but it does not address a number of critical issues raised by Chair Larry Pitts in 2004:

- Are ANR's size and function optimum?
- What is the most effective and efficient administration of ANR—centralized or decentralized to local AES campuses?
- Are the current coordinating apparatuses such as workgroups and program committees effective and appropriate to facilitate interactions among Specialists, Faculty and Advisors?
- What are the appropriate undergraduate and graduate teaching programs of the Agricultural Colleges, for both agricultural, natural resources, as well as sustainability disciplines?
- What is the best way to manage ANR funds and award research money?
- Is ANR adequately funded? Is it a candidate for proportionally greater cuts, or should it be protected relative to, say, the undergraduate mission or MRUs?

Based on the information before us, UCPB cannot construct informed answers to any of these questions, though they are even more germane than when they motivated each previous request for review.

The Review Panel states the key change that it seeks to bring to ANR on page 5 and 6 of the review:

“In California, agricultural and natural resource sustainability are deeply interwoven with larger issues of population growth, land use change, water supply, energy supply, climate change, transportation, and urban and rural community health and well being. This broader view of sustainability is clearly recognized in UC ANR’s January 2009 Strategic Vision document ... The new strategic plan treats sustainability as a ‘superset’ or overarching set of principles that will guide all ANR activities.”

The review goes on to state the heart of the problem (current limitations of ANR?): “We strongly endorse this view, but believe that it will require a different mix and balance of skills and interests than are represented by current ANR faculty, specialists and advisors if it is to become manifest.” It is very hard for UCPB to evaluate this statement with so little in the way of budgetary information that would allow us to assess the impact of the proposed transformation on existing UC programs and priorities.

The review offers some guidance in this effort on page 6: “ANR can move in this direction by taking seriously its vision in the strategic plan to ‘organize and fund research and outreach activities around integrated, multidisciplinary teams focused on the challenges facing California in agriculture and the environment [utilizing] teams of faculty from across California’s counties and campuses.’” The reviewers also note their wish for ANR to broaden its audience to include increasingly diverse stakeholders. Despite a few words of advice, such as on page 7 where the reviewers suggest “ANR might consider instances where membership on these advisory boards might be broadened to include groups dealing with issues central to child, family, and community development, such as rural poverty, farm worker, or tribal issues,” and despite the 13 recommendations listed on pages 11 and 12, the Review Panel offers little in the way of specific planning, benchmarks, or suggested reorganizations. We are not surprised, however, since the Review Panel apparently also did not receive the information we expect would help serve as the basis for an informed review.

The review calls for some benchmarking, such as the recommendation for the three primary ANR campuses to work more collaboratively with each other and with the other seven UC Campuses (p. 8), but it does not detail what mark to set or how the benchmark is to be evaluated. It is not terribly original to call for more interdisciplinary or multi-campus work; however, we neither know the extent to which this is lacking currently, nor what metrics could be used to measure future success. Simply creating more structures, such as interdisciplinary and multi-campus workgroups, will not necessarily stimulate more or better research. In short, platitudes are either easy or impossible to achieve.

UCPB recommends that the Academic Senate ask ANR to respond to this review first with suggested, measurable, benchmarks that can be evaluated at the next review, and second, with a suggested plan that can be evaluated for achieving those targets and a budget commensurate with that plan. This is essentially what the reviewers called for on page 13 and in Recommendation 12. Ideally, this comprehensive plan including benchmarks and budget, should be submitted in time for the Senate to review and approve them by the end of the next academic year. However, it is essential that we receive more than simple lists showing how many more resources are being put into such structures, or how many more of them exist. ANR needs to be judged against mission-oriented goals for research and outreach, and those goals are not just to create more teams. There needs to be documentation of value added, so that it is clear whether or not the resources are better spent enhancing ANR or instead should be used to supplement the various colleges’ budgets.

The Review Panel also calls for benchmarking programs that are not within the purview of ANR to achieve on its own without coordination from a higher level, such as when the reviewers call on ANR to, in effect, lobby for “Programs such as the CSU Agricultural Research Initiative (CSU-ARI)” since it felt that these “are models for collaborative research between higher education institutions.” Again, our committee would like to see evidence that the investment in new programs is worthwhile, not just that one is made. The Review Panel also seeks political support from ANR so that “the CSU-ARI program might grow from its current funding level of \$4 million annually to enhance applied research capacity between UC and CSU campuses” (p. 10). Given the current State budget crisis, the CSU-ARI may be cut regardless of any efforts supplied by UC-ANR on its behalf. Another goal set in the review is to create internships for CSU undergraduates within the ANR’s Cooperative Extension structure to facilitate future recruitment of qualified farm advisor/specialist personnel (p. 10). Again, to achieve this goal coordination between ANR and the CSUs would be needed. Courses would need to be established and supervised, clearance would need to be coordinated between the systems, including how to choose among CSU applicants, and faculty would need to be recruited on both sides to achieve this result. Moreover, it is not clear why we would limit internships to just CSU.

Nonetheless, the Review Panel seems to want ANR to be all things to all people. As it states in Appendix A, “ANR has an opportunity to help instill a new paradigm of forest and natural resource management in California that builds on the ecosystem-based approach through active stewardship. Climate change, water production and bioenergy are widely discussed topics where forests can play a significant role.” Although it is clear that this is a new paradigm, it is also unclear whether or not this is a useful research or teaching strategy (to assume an answer before we investigate the question). We cannot expect ANR to achieve everything set out for it in this review, so we need to set reasonable benchmarks for ANR so that we can hold ANR and its disparate parts accountable at its next review.

In Appendix A, the Review Panel states that “Yes, the university exists within the community, also, because how else can it serve society unless it is an active and fully engaged participant in the live, work and play environment?” Perhaps this statement is so subtle that we do not fully understand its consequence, but if we do not, it is likely that the disparate members of ANR will not. We fear that, to some extent, the review appears to endorse a top-down view of academic planning, that we need administrators to identify important problem areas and then create workgroups and other institutions to make sure we organize research properly. This model of research rarely works, but if that is the strategy, we need to see details on how it is to be implemented.

Again, UCPB received no budgetary information and little in the way of budget analysis, so we are unable to fulfill most of our committee’s mandate. We respectfully request that a substantive review of ANR be conducted, using such information, and that in the future these reviews address specific matters of planning and budgeting by routinely providing this information.

Sincerely,



Patricia Conrad
UCPB Chair

cc: UCPB
Martha Winnacker, Senate Executive Director