

## F. Report on Previous Department Review

The 2008 Natural Resource Ecology and Management (NREM) Review was a comprehensive assessment of departmental teaching/learning, research, and extension/outreach activities in accordance with the requirements of the College, Iowa State University, and the Iowa State Board of Regents. The Review Team was comprised of Dr. Robert Swihart, Chair (Purdue University); Dr. Jo Ellen Force (University Idaho); Dr. Winifred Kessler (USDA Forest Service); and Dr. Michael Masser, (Texas A&M University). The NREM Chair, Dr. David Engle, was scheduled to leave ISU in mid-2008; Dr. Joe Morris, the interim associate chair provided leadership for the 2008 review.

NREM faced a short-term challenge of replacing the chair, Dr. Engle. In addition, the review team noted a divide within the department along historic disciplinary lines, Animal Ecology and Forestry. The following recommendations were developed.

**Table F.1 Review Team Recommendations from 2008 Departmental Review:** To facilitate greater unification and sense of community based on a shared vision, we offer the following observations and recommendations:

1. Complete a national search for a Chair in a timely fashion. Faculty unity is essential in recruiting a Chair who is committed to the broad vision of integration in NREM, a champion and practitioner of open communication among all faculty, students and stakeholders, and a promoter of equitable treatment of the NREM disciplinary groups in a manner that promotes respect, trust, and a sense of common purpose across groups.
2. Consider devoting a faculty retreat to facilitated discussion that addresses the broader vision with which the department was created and identifies the underlying interests shared by NREM faculty.
3. Form an external advisory council composed of representatives of the various constituencies served by the department's programs.
4. Consider fostering NREM's development and unity at the college level by allocating 2-3 new faculty lines over the next 5 years to enable attainment of a critical mass in "cross-disciplinary" areas required for integration of Animal Ecology and Forestry.
5. Consider transforming the undergraduate curriculum from two multi-option disciplinary majors to an integrated NREM core (e.g., a common ecology course, a "society and natural resources" course, 3-6 credits in each of the 3 disciplinary offerings and a common capstone experience) with majors and no options in Natural Resource Ecology and Management, Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife.
6. Do not offer undergraduate courses with low enrollments.
7. Ensure that undergraduate curricula continue to meet certification and accreditation standards of professional societies.
8. Seek immediate clarification from the Education Director of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) regarding the following excerpt from the SAF Accreditation Handbook: "The educational program for which accreditation is sought must show that a minimum of eight full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who participate in the program have their primary academic responsibilities in the forestry program and report to the responsible academic head."

9. Target grant opportunities that take advantage of the disciplinary diversity within NREM and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences/College of Liberal Arts and Science (CLAS) by forming and participating in teams to address grand environmental challenges.
10. Secure additional investment by the CALS to maintain essential extension programming, including specialist positions, operating budgets, and support staff.

1. Two individuals served as Interim Department Chairs:
  - a. Dr. Rick Hall (July 2008-June 2009)
  - b. Dr. Steve Jungst (July 2009-June 2011)

An unsuccessful department chair search in 2009 and budget constraints were responsible for a new approach, administratively combining NREM with the Entomology Department in a new search in 2010. The search was successfully concluded in 2011 with the hire of Dr. Sue Blodgett (September 2011-present).

2. Faculty retreats have been held each year 2012-present; a variety of topics have been addressed including NREM Academic Programs, Strategic Planning, and Departmental Vision.
3. An external advisory council has been discussed. The appointment of an Associate Department Chair will enable that to be implemented as it continues to be an important issue.
4. While new faculty lines have been very difficult to obtain during recent budget limitations, the department was successful in obtaining a new lecturer position to address needs of increased undergraduate enrollment (Rentz); a new wildlife biology position was approved though it has been suspended temporarily. The department has been able to retain faculty lines and by reviewing responsibilities and departmental needs has been able to maintain a strong mission-based focus that addresses current and future critical needs.
5. At a retreat held in 2015 the faculty voted for the creation of a natural resource major that would 1) better integrate across animal ecology and forestry curricula, 2) pursue accreditation through SAF, and 3) offer an academic program brand consistent with the department name. Discussions are underway to identify a common core that considers Animal Ecology, Forestry and University basic requirements.
6. Low enrollment courses are reviewed by the Department Chair. Decisions to continue offering such courses consider academic mission critical status and future for increased enrollment.
7. The forestry academic program was re-accredited in 2012 following review by the accrediting agency, Society for American Foresters (SAF). Certification requirements of other profession societies, e.g., American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society, continue to be by faculty.
8. Clarification was obtained from SAF about the required full-time equivalent faculty lines for the program. Faculty members who contribute to the Forestry instructional program are considered by SAF as contributing to the FTE requirement regardless of discipline.
9. Faculty members continue to collaborate throughout the University including LAS (Liberal Arts and Science) in developing productive collaborative research, teaching and extension programs. NREM has been successful in obtaining CALS support for additional graduate teaching assistant (GTA) lines and staff support to enable faculty to offer additional

sections of high enrollment courses. The College has also provided funding for new lecturer, new wildlife biologist, and environmental toxicology position. The College has supported a variety of requests for faculty training in grant writing, leadership and other professional development opportunities. Several adjunct faculty lines have been added that support teaching and research activities by the department. Collaborations with Sociology faculty members have resulted in the joint advising of several graduate students

10. Extension programming in NREM continues to be highly visible at a time when extension resources are becoming limited regional and nationally. The fisheries, forestry and wildlife extension programs continue to evolve to meet societies need for natural resource information. A recent collaboration with the ISU (AES) Research Farms includes forestry; woodlot and windbreak management in their program funding has resulted in increased support for the forestry extension program.