Process for creating the action plan in response to the 10-year academic review report for the Tourism and Outdoor Leadership Program (TOL)
For submission by October 30, 2014

Introduction

This document outlines a potential process for creating an action plan in response to the 10-year academic review report for the Tourism and Outdoor Leadership Program (TOL).

There is one central issue for resolution and three more specific issue areas affected by this central issue. All four need to be addressed, with associated implementation accountability, for TOL to move forward and flourish. The central issue is to determine who has oversight authority for financial, curricular, and personnel issues with respect to the TOL program. The three issue areas are 1) curricular integration, 2) facilities and equipment / Cascade Adventures (CA), and 3) faculty employment conditions. These are addressed in more detail following the summary of recommendations.

For reference we provide the recommendations made by the review team. The primary recommendation from the Reviewer Report is:

- The Review Team recommends that the Tourism and Outdoor Leadership (TOL) program currently offered on the Cascades campus be integrated into the Recreation Resource Management (RRM) program currently offered on the Corvallis campus. The four options currently offered in the TOL program should be consolidated into two options, one focused on Sustainable Tourism and one focused on Adventure Leadership. These two options should be incorporated as options in the RRM program and delivered on the Cascades campus. Further, the review team recommends that the Recreation and Tourism option currently offered in the Natural Resources program be incorporated into the Sustainable Tourism option to be offered on the Cascades Campus. Further, the review team recommends that faculty members from the RRM and TOL programs review and revise the core curriculum for the RRM program as part of the process of integrating the TOL program into the RRM program to ensure that the core curriculum provides a suitable academic basis for students pursuing the sustainable tourism and adventure leadership options.

Additional recommendations from the Reviewer Report are:

- Additional specific curricular recommendations on page 6 (not included here to save space).
- Rather than acquiring and maintaining its own inventory of equipment, the review team recommends that the program rely on Cascade Adventures as its source for equipment. The program should consider adopting a model in which it rents needed equipment from Cascades Adventures. The cost of equipment rental can be recovered through the adoption of course fees for field-based courses in which the equipment is used. Cascade Adventures in turn should consider adopting an entrepreneurial model in which it funds its operations through rental fees, equipment sales, and fees for trips and clinics offered to the university community. The university should provide Cascade Adventures with adequate resources (i.e., staffing, operational and equipment storage space, initial funds for program equipment, etc.) to fulfill its
mission as part of the university community. The review team recommends that Cascades Adventures align itself administratively with the Adventure Leadership Institute (ALI) in the Department of Recreational Sports on the Corvallis Campus. In addition, the review team recommends that Cascades Adventures adopt the name Adventure Leadership Institute Cascades to reflect this alignment.

- Consistent with other departments and programs in parks, recreation and tourism, we recommend faculty have salaries, promotion and tenure privileges, university services, sabbatical leaves, leaves of absence, workload assignment, and financial support that are fair and equitable compared to those of other faculty in the institution, especially congruent with those in COF and FES. Promotion and tenure for faculty is a process administrated by FES. Therefore, the recommendation by the review committee is to align all processes concerning faculty with FES. Therefore, the method used to determine academic unit faculty workloads should be consistent with that applied to FES. The review team also recommends a system for professional development and progression for those working full-time in a non-tenure track position, like Dr. Gassner. For example, at Ohio University and University of Utah, faculty can progress within a system of promotion in non-tenure track lines, which is rewarded with lengthier contracts, after the first promotion. Instead of 1-year contracts, 5-year contracts are awarded. This helps to confirm a faculty person’s value to the department as well as strengthens experience and rewards excellent teaching and scholarship.

- The background of the academic unit faculty serving the curriculum should be diverse with respect to gender and ethnic background of its students. The recommendation is to pursue ethnic and gender diversity as the faculty expanded in the future. In addition, the Review Team recommends trying to increase diversity within the student body, even though we all acknowledge the lack of diversity in the field as a whole.

- We recommend that Program Leadership is assigned to tenured faculty, with time allocated for this responsibility.

- We recommend developing a marketing plan that is integrated into the COF and FES, and includes dedicated resources to keeping the website and social media venues current. This includes increased exposure to field programs, and student and faculty accomplishments. We feel with a dedicated and integrated marketing plan, several opportunities currently missed could be addressed.

Other items of note from the Reviewer Report includes:

- “...it seems unsustainable to maintain a degree program with only two faculty. A third faculty member would, in our estimation, not only add whatever expertise that hire might bring to the program, but might well, in fact, energize the current staff.”

- “Discretionary funding oversight – At the moment, the TOL program has very little oversight of its discretionary funds (LCB account) or where its program surplus dollars go. Oversight and tracking of discretionary funds would allow TOL to make small, strategic and needed investments it items such as the purchase, repair, and maintenance of outdoor laboratory equipment that is used for expedition courses.”

The central issue and three issue areas will require decisions by appropriate administrators.
Central question – Who is responsible for the success of / oversight of TOL?

Where does oversight authority reside for the financial, curricular, and personnel components of the TOL program? The answer to this central issue will affect the three specific issue areas, though work on the latter can proceed in parallel; that work also may raise new questions and/or inform the “central issue” group.

Currently, there appears to be a patchwork of positions without clear authority and responsibility for TOL’s oversight and success. These include:

- Dean, College of Forestry
- Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, College of Forestry
- Department Head, Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society
- Vice President, OSU-Cascades
- Dean of Academic Programs, OSU-Cascades
- Associate Dean of the Division of Healthy Communities, OSU-Cascades

We recommend that the following work to resolve this central question, with formal resolution (e.g., via a memorandum of understanding) targeted by September, 2014:

- Thomas Maness, Dean, College of Forestry
- Becky Johnson, Vice President, OSU-Cascades

In consultation with

- Marla Hacker, Dean of Academic Programs and Associate Dean of the Division of Healthy Communities, OSU-Cascades
- Troy Hall, Department Head, Forest Ecosystems and Society
- Randy Rosenberger, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, College of Forestry

TOL faculty would contribute to this process, but they recognize that resolution must occur at the administrative rather than faculty level.

Curricular Integration

The focus of this issue area is implementation of the recommendations to 1) integrate the Recreation Resource Management and TOL degrees and 2) consolidate the four TOL options.

We suggest the following individuals be responsible for this issue area, with suggested twice-monthly meetings in October and November, 2014, in anticipation of the above MOU:

- Randy Rosenberger
- Troy Hall
- Marla Hacker
- Michael Gassner
- Kreg Lindberg
- RRM representative
Facilities and Equipment / Cascade Adventures (CA)

The focus of this issue area is implementation of recommendations relating to 1) equipping TOL with the facilities and equipment necessary to flourish and 2) determining the appropriate administrative structure of Cascades Adventures within OSU.

We suggest the following individuals be responsible for this issue area, with suggested twice-monthly meetings in September and October, 2014:

- Jeffery Myers, Coordinator of Outdoor Recreation Programs, OSU-Cascades
- Josh Norris, Director, Adventure Leadership Institute, Department of Recreational Sports
- Additional relevant individuals from the leadership of the Department of Recreational Sports
- Michael Gassner

Faculty Employment Conditions

The focus of this issue area is implementation of recommendations relating to faculty employment, including 1) lengthening instructor contracts and 2) achieving equity with FES / CoF peers with respect to workload, salary, and other employment characteristics.

We suggest the following individuals be responsible for this issue area, with suggested twice-monthly meetings in October and November, 2014, in anticipation of the above MOU:

- Marla Hacker
- Troy Hall

In consultation with

- Kreg Lindberg
- Michael Gassner