

ACTION PLAN
In Response to 10-Year Review Assessment Report
Graduate Program in Soil Science

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Maria Ines Dragila

Chair, Graduate Program in Soil Science
In collaboration with Soil Science Graduate Faculty

INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Program in Soil Science (GPSS) participated in a 10-yr review on May 24-27, 2015. Review team members and details of their visit schedule may be found in the Self Study Document submitted to the OSU Graduate School. Subsequent to their visit, the below Action Plan was developed in discussion with Soil Science (SS) graduate faculty and the Crop and Soil Science (CSS) Department Chair. (Note: Recommendations submitted by the review team are numbered and in bold, followed by the program's action plan)

Soil Science (SS) graduate faculty values the assessment made by the review team and generally agrees with their recommendations. Below is the Action Plan developed to address each of these recommendations. (Note: Recommendations are presented in a different order than originally submitted in the Review Team's report and in some cases grouped because the Action Plan overlaps them)

- 1. Revise vision and goals of Soil Science program, to better position Soil Science within the department, college and campus as a unique program with aspirations for improved quality, recognition, national ranking and campus collaborations.**

During the 2015-2016 academic year the soil science faculty will meet monthly to reassess the vision and goals of the SS program and develop a plan with the goal to continue to strengthen the program and increase its national ranking.

- 2. Develop a departmental strategic plan jointly with the CS and SS faculty/programs, laying out common vision, goals, and consensus of academic planning for faculty lines, including those jointly between CS and SS programs and with other academic units on the OSU campus.**

The Crop and Soil Science department will hold a Conclave in the spring of 2016 with the purpose to develop a strategic plan that focuses on the CS and SS academic programs.

- 3. Develop new department-specific learning outcomes for SS program as a whole, and indicate to which extent each SS course would meet these learning outcomes.**

In 2007 the Soil Science program developed a SS program with a specific set of learning outcomes (LOs) and tied each outcome to the courses in which these were met. SS faculty will update these LOs during the 2016-17 academic year, include any additional skills noted by our alumni in their survey, and link the LOs with specific courses in which these outcomes can be met.

- 4. Review core course curriculum and consider to develop additional graduate core and/or elective courses, special topic courses, and cross-list with other allied graduate programs on campus.**

This action plan will be performed in concurrence with Item #3. The Curriculum Committee will be charged with assessment of the current curriculum to determine potential areas of improvement. Under consideration will be courses recommended by the present graduate students, alumni surveys and faculty. In developing the new curriculum, the committee will consider present faculty expertise, opportunities to draw expertise from faculty located at other department campus and experiment stations.

- 5. Ensure that SS program has available student progress data in a timely manner, and that the Department/College provides the right and complete information for program ranking among other national soil science programs.**

The SS department will work with the Graduate School to improve the timeliness of student progress data. In an effort to improve national ranking data, the GPSS chair will work directly with the CSS Department Administrative Assistant (Rifai) to improve faculty data in the data bases used by the Graduate School so that national ranking analysis are more accurate.

- 6. Anticipated reduced GTA funding and tuition remission allocation will need the development of a graduate student funding plan that increasingly will have to depend to (a) increased competitiveness in attracting federal research funding and (2) donors/gifts and merit fellowships.**

Soils science faculty will participate in CSS level discussions to identify opportunities for increased and sustainable funding support.

- 7. Develop graduate student funding plan that is sustainable, and balances income from E-course instruction, external research funding, and endowments/fellowships.**

Soils science faculty will participate in CSS level discussions to identify opportunities for increased and sustainable funding support.

- 8. Review CAL (Centralized Analytical Laboratory) financial plan, and if not viable for the department to consider using the facility as a shared departmental teaching laboratory. Also SS graduate students were asking for an instrumentation course.**

SS and CS faculty will participate in discussions to develop a vision for the future of CAL.

9. Overall Recommendation: The Soil Science Program at OSU is of sufficiently high quality to sustain itself as a stand-alone graduate program, with faculty highly motivated to increasingly engage with Crop Science and affiliated campus programs towards improving its quality and national ranking. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences initiate a process of STRATEGIC PLANNING that delivers a consensus Strategic Plan (SP) with both the Crop and Soil Science faculty, laying the foundation for competitive and highly-ranked teaching and research programs at Oregon State University.

The CSS department will develop a strategic plan during the whole-department Spring Conclave in 2016. (ref. to Item #2)

THREE-YEAR PERFORMANCE METRICS

In a sincere effort to meet our goals as listed above, a set of 3-year performance metrics enumerated below will allow us to assess our progress:

1. The CSS Department Head will develop a document describing the CSS Strategic Plan with a focus on the CS and SS curricula.
2. Soil Science faculty will develop a document detailing the vision and goals of the Graduate Program in Soil Science.
3. The Curriculum Committee will provide recommendations for additional coursework and identify faculty that would be available to develop and teach each course.
4. The Curriculum Committed will publish the Learning Outcomes for the Graduate Program in Soil Science.
5. A vision for CAL with a 5-year and 10-year work plan for achieving it will be developed
6. CSS Department Administrative Assistant, with input from the GPSS Chair, will enter into conversations with the College and Graduate School to improve the accuracy of data that is used to assess national ranking.
7. CSS Department Head will engage faculty in its selected funding models.