

SNRE Faculty Retreat Report

May 13, 2014

Marriott University Park

Retreat Goal: To Come Together to Set a Future We Can All Support

Report Date: June 27, 2014

I. SWOT Exercise – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths:

- Engaging and transparent leadership
- Multidisciplinarity – Experience
- Good at bringing in resources from diverse sources
- Commitment to undergraduate instruction
- Strong connection to the land grant mission
- International programs focused on arid lands
- Only wildlife, range, and eco-physical programs in Arizona
- Expertise in land management – we are an incubator for SW land managers
- Extension/Outreach
- Federal and State Collaborators = Coops/Research Station/NPN
- Strong infrastructure for research and teaching
- Strong practical applications coupled with theoretical science
- Strong focus on climate science and applications
- Well integrated remote sensing and GIS capabilities and expertise
- 80% engagement rate with undergraduates
- High quality pool of graduate students that are supported and place well
- High visibility in the local, regional, national and international press
- Curriculum – SNRE’s courses and professional training
- High level of comradery
- We are where the “rubber meets the road” as far as the natural world is concerned. SNRE research stems from a need to address socially relevant problems.
- Funding from NSF now requires broader impacts – we can demonstrate them.

Weaknesses:

- Loss of water faculty and focus at a strategic time
- Loss of international contacts
- Lack of advisory board
- Limited number of faculty focused on social science/public policy/human dimensions research

- Red tape and administrative burden
- Lack of direction in recruiting
- Communication with and tracking of our graduates
- Lack of intra-UA identity
- Lack of visibility of programs
- Lack of fall-back fund to help maintain research continuity (e.g. Ag Experiment Station dollars in the past)
- Escalating tuition for students and ERE
- Lack of graduate teaching assistantships
- Inflexibility of facilities
- Perceived to be ranked low on CALS priorities list
- Lack of growth/decline of undergraduate enrollment
- Programs with low undergraduate enrollment
- Mechanisms to share funds for out-of-state/non-resident students
- Slow pace of faculty recruitment
- Lack of an intro biology class presence by SNRE faculty
- Lack of research quality advancement
- Faculty diversity
- SNRE sometimes seems divided between research and teaching
- Lack of long term TA dollars means that savvy grad students might choose another department of university

Opportunities:

- Social relevance of our work:
 - Identify grand challenges (population, jobs, economy, core political issues)
 - Highlight employment rate, trends, contributions
 - Key thematic areas – climate change, environmental and human health, desertification
- University relevance – SNRE’s niche in UA strategic plan
- Curriculum:
 - Make our major more visible
 - New courses that attract non-majors
 - New courses that attract freshman (100 level)
 - Summer courses

- Professional courses
- On-line courses
- Stronger links to extension in curriculum
- Make RCM an opportunity
- Brand OALS
- Revenue generating products
- Fund raising efforts
 - Endowed Chair position
 - Summer teaching
 - Agency training workshops
 - Outreach courses (e.g. MDP)
 - Advisory Board
 - Outreach to Alums
- Research/Services
 - Enhance size and diversity of SNRE faculty
 - Hires to focus on socially and university relevant research topics
 - Hires to support undergraduate curriculum
- School is focused on ecological science with impact – this should be highly marketable to students who want to “save the world”
- Diversity of research from boots on the ground ecology to high tech techniques and modeling allow us to tackle a wide range of problems at local to global scales.
- Water-Energy Nexus and Water and Arid Environments

Threats:

- Not being able to replace retiring faculty
- Missing opportunities to respond to changes in the “field”
- Decreasing availability of research dollars
- Indirect and ERE rate increases
- Uncertain of university level priorities
- A future forced re-organization/merger
- Uncertainty with RCM
- Potential “balkanization” from RCM across the university
- Decaying physical infrastructure
- Changes in the role of universities across the country
- Professors of Practice (undermining responsibilities, roles, equity)

- Ideological resistance to education from the legislature
- Increasing research productivity expectations
- Increasing administrative burden on faculty
- Need for enhanced cyber-infrastructure, data archiving, etc.
- Can we change and adapt in response to a changing university and funding landscape?
- How resilient are we?

II. SNRE 2013 Annual Review Presentation

III. General Discussion Roles of Professors of Practice in our Future

This discussion reviewed the pros and cons of beginning down the road of enlisting professors of practice. After significant discussion consensus was reached such faculty would not be an appropriate part of SNRE at this time.

IV. How to Approach a Curriculum Review – General Discussion

There was a brief discussion in which the Director requested permission to implement a SWAT approach to reviewing the core and general curriculum by naming a four member team to review current conditions and make recommendations to the Director, SPC, and Faculty. Response to this approach was generally positive.

V. What would we like the School to look like 5 years from now if there were no constraints:

- Implementation of School wide projects around pertinent themes (e.g. Deserts of the world)
- We have become the go-to resource for all science/ecosystem/climate management questions
- We have become the go-to School for adaptive natural resource management – develop strength in the science of decision making

- We have become the go-to School for developing an understanding of the intersection of climate change and social science and understanding how we change people's behaviors through understanding public perceptions (e.g. Environment Psychology)
- We have made sure that students are getting into the right environmental program
- We have done a better job of matching students to their interests
- We have doubled the number of undergraduate majors
- We have focused on student recruitment and have demonstrated the value proposition of coming to the UA and SNRE
- We have created a database and network of grads through better tracking, exit surveys, and social structures (e.g. LinkedIn)
- We are actively using social media and student engagement for sharing undergraduate and graduate student experiences (increased google presence as well)
- Have funding to hire an assistant for K. Hughes
- We have made good use of our new geography in ENRBII for collaboration
- We have increased our branding profile and synergy with NEON, CSC, Santa Rita, V Bar V, B2
- We have enhanced our reputation for doing things that are cutting edge research and teaching
- We have accomplished a series of cluster hires on new views of Coupled Natural-Human Systems, Environmental Psychology, Adaptive Management, Incentive Based Conservation
- The Global Change Ecology and Management undergraduate option has grown significantly
- We have been able to grow utilize the core message that global climate change impacts are happening here and are happening now and this core message is directly related to what SNRE does
- We have embraced and have expertise in the social side of environmental management
- We have significantly improved our diversity both in our faculty and our students