

Starting June 1 the Geology Department, Environmental Science Department, the Energy Institute and the Institute for Environmental Studies will be fused into a single School of Geology, Energy and the Environment. At this point the faculty of the new school have not had a chance to meet and establish clear tactical or strategic goals.

Below is the 2009 summary submitted by Dean McCracken in the Spring of 2009. It constitutes the only college-level 'evaluation' that I am aware of.

College of Science and Engineering (McCracken - 2009)

- SERC (undergraduate research) is alive and well.
- Karen Purvis and David Cross are doing exceptional work with the Child Development institute.
- The Energy Institute
- Institute of Environmental Studies has receive a Large grant from Florida Power and Light as well as created collaborative programs with BRITT and a research station in Costa Rica
- IBR continues to produce major research underwritten by external grants
- Engineering has a senior capstone course that is underwritten through external grants
- Pre-health continues to place students in graduate health professional programs at a phenomenal rate.

Dean Kouris provided a series of VIA 'evaluation' documents from SERC (Science and Engineering Resource Center), Computer Science, Environmental Science, Physics, Engineering and Math. Reports from Psychology, Biology, Geology and Nutrition & Dietetics were not provided. For the Institute of Child Development I was referred to a web page. The Dean noted that chairs were told to use the talking points of the VIA brochure in their reports, but of the provided documents only reports from SERC, Computer Science, Environmental Science and Physics had portions that were roughly aligned with the report card points.

The next page has a summary of the current reports.

Strategic Decisions

c. Incrementally grow selected graduate programs...

New M.S. and Ph.D. programs were approved for the Math Department in December, 2008. However, no funding for faculty positions or resources for these programs have been forthcoming.

1. Recruit and retain students...

The Environmental Science Department had three VIA projects (TCU-Oxford Sustainable Futures Initiative, Costa Rica Research Station and TCU-BRIT Program) funded and they directly impact combinations of Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5 in a rather broad tapestry. The original report focuses on each project and lists which Goals each project was associated with, without naming which Outcomes are specifically impacted by each project. In a footnote below I have reproduced the project summaries and will merely mention them as I treat each goal in order¹. It was felt that Goal 2 was addressed by all three projects (see comments in the footnote about how they were affected).

2. Design a vibrant...

Goals realized by ENSC projects 1 and 2 (see explanatory footnotes on page 2). In addition, Computer Science felt it had addressed this goal by having a summer research program for students and faculty that allowed binding of departmental constituencies. The Physics Department felt it addressed this goal with High School outreach programs. Math, in getting new graduate programs approved, addressed this goal (outcome f). SERC funded many undergraduate research projects and also helped undergraduate students to participate in the National Conference on Undergraduate Research. SERC also worked to establish two new undergraduate scholarships.

3. Sustain an environment...

This goal was addressed by all three ENSC projects (see footnotes below). Computer Science felt this goal was addressed by the active promotion of interdisciplinary projects within the faculty.

4. Accelerate our connection...

Many of the departments felt they had addressed this goal. Math noted a historical precedent (from its previous Ph.D. program) of attracting those who live in the Metroplex and who are interested in a Math Ph.D. ENSC addressed goal 5 in its Oxford program. Computer Science had visiting student programs that helped increase their visibility. Physics had extensive programs with local high schools where they worked with gifted students. Engineering placed a number of student interns with local engineering firms. The Institute for Child Development has enhanced TCU's reputation in this field on an international level.

¹ The **Oxford** program spoke specifically to goals 2, 3, 4 and 5. We ran two courses in Oxford (2006, 2008) and, in total, sent 25 students through the program (one ended up being accepted into the Oxford MS program). All of them felt it was an extraordinary experience and the Oxford faculty were equally impressed with the quality of student on the course. The students then organized two conferences: The Energy Futures Conference in 2007 (200+ attendees) and the Sustainable Technologies Conference in 2009 (165 attendees). At the former, an FPL executive spoke on wind energy and approached me afterward to "explore collaborative opportunities". Ultimately, this led directly to the \$3.2 million wind energy grant, a rather good return on the initial VIA investment!

The **research station** was focused specifically on goals 2, 3 and 4. This grant was written by a group of students who had been on two study abroad trips to Costa Rica. I felt there was a unique opportunity to establish a teaching/research center in an important ecosystem that could serve as the centerpiece of our conservation efforts in the region. The station was completed in 2008 and we have had four masters students use the station as their base for thesis work with several more working there on a variety of conservation projects. We have also taken our study abroad trip there and, in spring of 2010, three biology faculty will use the station as their base for the tropical ecology course. With the new School, I feel confident that we can develop a really interesting set of multi-disciplinary field courses while continuing to build a long-term research portfolio.

The **TCU-BRIT** program addressed goals 1 and 4 and sought funding to support six graduate students working on the Andes-to-Amazon research program in Peru. Three of these students were from Peru and all six completed first-class theses on a range of botanical issues. This VIA project was also the catalyst to strengthen our relationship with BRIT in a meaningful way.