School of Natural Resources
Academic Program Review

Review Team
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Overarching Observations

• SNR is a thriving unit that is meeting the mission of a Land Grant institution
• Faculty, staff, and students passionate
  • Generally high morale within SNR
• Good relationships-
  • SNR Director to IANR leadership
  • Faculty and staff with SNR Director
  • Students with faculty and staff
• Mutual respect and engagement between SNR and external stakeholders
• Outstanding breadth of disciplines
• National and international visibility of programs
Undergraduate Education

• Experiential learning is a strength
  • UCARE, Cabelas, FYRE, REUs all working well
• Student Success team integral to student experience
• Total growth in majors in SNR
  • Fisheries and Wildlife is steady
  • Environmental Science on the rise
  • Regional and Community Forestry- excited to see growth
• SNR has become more diverse in gender and ethnicity
• Enthusiasm for new recruiter
Undergraduate Education

• Retention rates are a concern, lower than UNL and CASNR
• Applied Climate Science and Water Sciences have not grown
  • Will need immediate attention
• Limited dialog between curricular programs
  • Advertise courses across UNL
• Long-term strategy for stabilizing teaching and curriculum
  • Avoid reactionary plugging of holes
• Greater transparency on teaching expectations by appointment
• Provide time and space to emphasize experiential and active learning
  • May improve student experience and retention
Graduate Education

- Vibrant and diverse graduate student body
- Majority externally funded
- The students perceived the diversity of disciplines as a strength
- Graduate stipends are moderate with a plan to increase
- Graduate Student Success specialist engaged with student body
- Graduate student evaluation is new and useful
Graduate Education

• Insufficient connection between research faculty and graduate teaching (courses)
• Need for additional Teaching Assistantship (TA) resources
• Consider how TA resources are being allocated and discipline match
• Concern there are limited graduate student only courses
• Build a stronger community of graduate students across SNR
  • Consider- orientation, seminar, Hardin handbook, etc.
• Greater role for the GSA
Teaching General

• Who is responsible for leading SNR curricular changes and review?
  • Need for long-term curricular planning
  • Communication of yearly course offerings (UG?G)

• What is the process for cancelling low enrolled courses?
  • Timing is inadequate
  • Impacts student experience

• Prompts the need for a comprehensive curriculum review

• Faculty accountability for teaching

• Transparent process for course buy-outs
Research

• Incredible research productivity across SNR
  • Levels of external research funding are impressive
  • Publication numbers are strong
  • Decision support tools

• Centers make a substantial contribution to research productivity

• Research activities support critical needs across local, regional, national, and international contexts

• Research is supporting graduate and undergraduate education
  • High impact learning for undergraduates

• Emphasis on applied research but basic research is also occurring
  • Some areas have clear pathway from basic, to applied, to operational
Research

• Concern over IDC returns with new budget model
  • Lack of clarity on current and future IDC returns for PIs

• Challenges with data repository
  • Digital storage (e.g., images)
  • Physical specimens (e.g., core samples)
Extension

• Extension programming is present throughout SNR
  • Reaches beyond Nebraska

• SNR brings natural resource perspectives to Extension that are relevant to society

• External partnerships willing to invest in opportunities with Extension
  • Potential to expand

• SNR Extension leader positively engaged
Extension

• Consider consolidating small Extension appointments
  • Uncertainty in expectations for small appointments

• Need to clearly define Extension *impacts*

• SNR Extension should continue to cultivate relationships with IANR Extension
  • Consider emphasizing a working landscapes approach
Centers

• Success at getting large grants and continuity of funding
• Many graduate students are affiliated with centers
• Add breadth to the discipline
• Service component to the state
• Contributing to diverse SNR workplace
Centers

• Lack of multi-year guaranteed funding for graduate students
• ITS does not provide sufficient support for some of the large data needs
• Broaden interaction of centers within SNR
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

• Established and active committee in SNR
• Progress in Equity and Inclusion
  • Diversity needs investment
• Faculty, staff, and students have elements of cultural and gender diversity
• Continued room for improvement
  • Consider developing specific and strategic goals for DEI committee
  • Be aware of tokenism
Mosaic

• Misconception that SNR faculty and staff are not appreciated by IANR administration
  • IANR willing to invest in strategic visions in SNR

• We are at a “pinch point” with existing staff
  • Staff are overwhelmed
  • Student Success support is critical
  • IT support changes have resulted challenges for faculty and staff

• Continue to explore pathways for endowed professorships in SNR

• SNR has engaged with other natural resource programs
  • Platte Basin Time Lapse and Nebraska One Health
  • Expands teaching, research, and outreach in SNR

• SNR members are passionate and engaged