Departmental Response to the Report of the External Review Committee

9 July 2010
Department of Applied Mathematics
Naval Postgraduate School

Background
On June 7-8, 2010 the Department of Applied Mathematics underwent an external academic program review for the first time in 25 years. The review was conducted by an external review committee (ERC) who reviewed our written self-study, and engaged in a two day site visit where they had the opportunity to interview a variety of faculty, students, support staff, and campus administrators. The results of their review are summarized in their final report. Following our receipt of the final report, the department met, formulated, and unanimously approved this response.

Discussion
In their final report, the ERC summarized their impressions of the current state of the department. They begin by noting that applied mathematics will play an ever-increasing and vital role in the success of the US military in the 21st century. And they note the various ways in which the department supports that role within the context of the Naval Postgraduate School. They go on to point out the strength of the department at the current time and make specific mention of

- A very high standard of classroom teaching
- A vibrant and relevant research program that they note “would be competitive at top ranked civilian institutions.”
- A very high level of collegiality and cooperation within the department
- A strong mentoring program for junior faculty
- Excellent leadership within the department
- A grouping into three research focus areas that is “appropriate for a department this size and for the mission of the NPS respectively.”

The final report also makes specific mention of two major issues of concern

- The lack of consistent mechanisms for faculty renewal
- The limited number of graduate course offerings

The ERC team concludes that:
“In conclusion, the Department of Applied Mathematics is a strong unit with intellectual vigor, breadth and depth; it had a collegial atmosphere in which faculty are given every opportunity to succeed. The department has leadership that is absolutely outstanding and strong mentoring of junior faculty.

The greatest challenge that the department faces is the intellectual renewal of the faculty, which can be accomplished through a formal sabbatical program, and the development of a sustained set of advanced graduate course offerings. These challenges can be overcome by actions at the departmental, decanal, and provostorial/presidential levels.”

Finally, the report lists five specific action items for the department, as well as additional action items for the dean, provost, and president. The department has carefully reviewed the final report of the ERC team and is strongly supportive of all of their findings and suggestions.

**Recommendations**
We will address the five action items directed to the department in the final report as follows:

- We will continue our policy that one member of a dissertation committee must be from outside the department, and will more strongly encourage the use of committee members from outside of NPS.
- We will use our limited resources to support postdoctoral colleagues instead of attempting to expand our PhD program. This is already part of our strategic plan and we will provide further clarification and detail as we update the plan this year. We strongly support the ERC recommendation to use CDTEMS funding to support teaching post-docs, visiting assistant professors, and sabbatarians. We specifically ask that the Provost approve this as soon as possible so that we can begin to recruit.
- We are committed to offering additional graduate level courses on a regular and sustained basis and request appropriate budgetary support to achieve this critical goal.
- Once we secure appropriate cooperation from the administration, we will begin to align our annual plans with a regular sabbatical program. The department strongly supports the adoption of a sabbatical system modeled on that of the UC system wherein faculty earn one quarter of sabbatical at full pay for every nine quarters of service (and scaled versions of that) as described in the ERC final report.
- We will continue our ongoing efforts to restore the 380 curriculum.

We further note that we are eager to provide any support we can for the course consolidation efforts that the ERC has suggested to the Dean.