

April 30, 2013

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Dr. Gary Ellis  
Professor and Department Head, Department of Recreation, Park and  
Tourism Science

**FROM:** Dr. Karan L. Watson  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Recreation Park and Tourism Sciences Academic Program Review:  
Institutional Response

The post-review meeting, as outlined in the Academic Program Review Guidelines, was convened on April 16, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and reach consensus on a plan of action to be taken following the program's February 2013 external program review and to document the institutional response. The post-review meeting was attended by Provost Administrative Team members Drs. Karan Watson, Pam Matthews, Karen Butler-Purry and Ms. Patti Urbina; Dean Alan Sams; and Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Science (RPTS) representatives Drs. Gary Ellis, Scott Shafer, Jim Petrick and Ms. Susan Scott.

Dr. Ellis started by expressing his appreciation for the benefits and value of the review process. He commended the Provost's office for the support throughout the review cycle and acknowledged the role of the Program Coordinator in serving as the conduit for this support.

Dr. Ellis provided an agenda and a department response document (circulated in advance) that included the department's action plan addressing the eleven recommendations of the external report. Before reviewing the action plan, Dr. Ellis read the following quote to highlight the reviewers' overall evaluation of the quality and international prominence of the Department:

“...we [the external review team] can safely say that RPTS at Texas A&M University has integrated its scholarship missions of teaching, research, service and outreach as well as any program in the country. Likewise it has integrated its academic and extension in an outstanding manner. Thus, we conclude that it is among the top programs in the country. This Department has achieved a national and international reputation for quality that has been maintained over the years and its faculty and students have been highly productive in practice and research.”  
(p. 14).

Dr. Ellis further emphasized the report's listing of five accomplishments that affirm their assertions of the Texas A&M RPTS program:

1. Among the leaders in publishing high quality research in top tier journals.
2. Among the leaders in conducting interdisciplinary research.
3. Among the leaders in securing external grants and contracts. We believe RPTS is one of the very top departments in this regard.
4. Among the leaders in excellence in teaching.
5. Among the leaders in collaborating with industry to maintain course relevance as well as offering networking and experiential education (including internships) to undergraduate and graduate students. (p. 14).

In response to the eleven recommendations from the review, Dr. Ellis and his leadership team designed an action plan, complete with the stated recommendations, the intended actions, the assigned project leader(s), and dates for the launch and completion of each action. Dr. Ellis led a discussion with the Provost's and Dean's administrative teams, reviewing the action plan, answering questions and seeking feedback.

Overall, the conclusion of the meeting was summarized as "the department is headed in the right direction." RPTS was commended for its seriousness in its response throughout the review process and recognized for its top programs and its written assessment plan, "one of the best that we [the reviewers] have seen."

In accordance with Texas Administrative Code Rule 5.52, "no later than 90 days after the conclusion of each review, institutions shall submit electronically a report of the outcomes of each review to the Academic Affairs and Research Division. This report must include a summary of the programmatic self-study and the full text of the external reviewers' evaluation as well as the institutional response to the external evaluation."

Additionally, and as described in Texas A&M's Academic Program Review Guidelines, approximately one year after the review, the department is responsible for providing a summary of efforts made to address review team recommendations as reiterated in the items discussed during the post-review meeting. The deadline for the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Science to submit a one-year status report will be June 2014.

cc: Dr. Alan Sams, Executive Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
Dr. Gary Ellis, Department Head, Recreation, Park and Tourism Science  
Ms. Patti Urbina, Program Coordinator, Academic Program Reviews