Report of the Graduate Council Review of the Entomology Program

The graduate Entomology Program offers MS and Ph.D. degrees in Entomology. It is housed in the College of Agricultural Sciences but is an interdisciplinary program involving faculty, staff and students from the Colleges of Agricultural Sciences, Science and Forestry. (The program also offers an undergraduate minor in Entomology although that effort was not part of this review). The program is said to involve 13 graduate students working with 22 faculty who call themselves “entomologists” who are spread throughout the University. (The Entomology web site lists seven students as entomology majors and five students with Crop and Soils Science or Horticulture majors or no major).

The graduate Entomology Program was last reviewed in 1996-97. A Graduate Council program review was scheduled for 2006-07, postponed until 2008-09 and postponed again to Spring 2010. The Spring 2010 review was to take place on 4 June, 2010. External reviewers were engaged for the review. Approximately two weeks before the scheduled review, the Graduate Council was informed that the Entomology Program would not prepare a self-study for the review. On 19 May, Dean Fisk, W. Loveland (Chair of the Graduate Council) and Professor P. McEvoy, representing the Entomology Program, met to discuss the situation.

Prof. McEvoy presented some data on the graduation rates for the program. In the last five years, the program has granted 4 MS degrees and 7 PhD degrees in Entomology. An additional 14 MS degrees and 11 PhD degrees were granted in cooperating departments like Horticulture, Forestry, etc. by faculty who call themselves entomologists but who prefer to have the degrees be in Horticulture, Forestry, etc. Dean Fisk suggested, based on the two postponements of the review, the absence of the self study, and the entomology graduation rates that the Graduate Council could recommend that no new students be admitted to the program and the program be terminated. Other possible options and directions for the program were discussed. For example, we know that at least two Colleges are planning new re-organized units/schools/departments with the words "insect science" in their titles. Would the Entomology Program fit in those units? The Entomology program indicated they have no interest in joining any of these re-organized units and would prefer to remain an interdisciplinary program in Ag.

The Graduate Council discussed the situation by email with a lively discussion taking place. The Council agreed unanimously that: (a) it made no sense to continue with the scheduled graduate program review without a self-study, (b) it recommends that the graduate program in Entomology be terminated, and (c) until the fate of the graduate program in Entomology is determined, that no new students be admitted to the program. In making recommendations (b) and (c) above, the Council supports the opinion of Dean Fisk that the program does not meet current standards for viable, sustainable graduate programs in view of the low graduation rates. The apparent lack of interest of the Entomology program faculty in exploring alternate paths for their program and their lack of cooperation with the review process does not bode well for the future of the program.

As part of the graduate program review process, the program being reviewed is asked to provide an “action plan” to deal with the recommendations of the review. The Graduate Council hopes that, in the development of this action plan, a more thorough examination of this program can occur.