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1 December 2010

Dr. Leon Cammen, Director
National Sea Grant College Program
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 11716
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282

Dear Dr. Cammen,

This is my official response to the “Site Review Team’s Review of the Ohio Sea Grant College Program, May 26, 2010 – May 27, 2010.” This report, dated 8 October 2010, was signed by Jonathan Eigen and Harry Simmons, Co-Chairs of the Site Review Team (SRT), and received in this office on 20 October 2010. In addition to Mr. Eigen, our Program Officer, and Mr. Simmons, Mayor of Caswell Beach, NC, the SRT included: Dale Baker, retired Program Leader and Associate Director of New York Sea Grant; Lori Boughton, Great Lakes Program Director, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; Chryssostomos Chryssostomidis, Director of MIT Sea Grant; and Sami Grimes, an ex-officio member of the SRT from the National Sea Grant College Program.

Let me begin by thanking the National Sea Grant College Program for putting together such a talented, enthusiastic, and dedicated team. They were excellent representatives of the National Sea Grant College Program and a group that I was very proud to introduce to our university administrators and our partners in government, academia, and the private sector. I must also thank the SRT members for their hard work and determination in preparing a very thorough review and evaluation of our program.

I. Organizing and Managing the Program

Leadership

I want to thank the SRT for the many personal compliments. I feel very fortunate to have been able to serve in this position for so many years. I was also very pleased that the Team recognized the overall strength of the Ohio Sea Grant Management Team and the leadership role we play within the region. We do have a very strong, talented, and dedicated leadership team, including Jill Jentes Banicki, Eugene Braig, and Frank Lichtkoppler, and they are each supported by an equally talented staff. Finally, while I hope my retirement date is still well in the future, I do appreciate the Team’s approval and support of the actions we have taken to prepare for that date.

Communications

I was particularly pleased with the comments of the team regarding our Communications Program.

- “The program exceeded all expectations, as set forth in the previous PAT (2005), with regard to quality of materials and quantity of outreach.”
- “The SRT was impressed, collectively, by this effort.”
- “Further, the Communications Department had exceeded expectations in areas of innovation and imagination.”

What makes this even more satisfying is that our Communications Program was also rated very highly during our last review in 2005. It is good to see strong elements recognized for getting even stronger.

Organization

We are pleased that the SRT recognized the breadth of issues that we cover and appreciate the caution expressed by the SRT that we not spread ourselves too thin.

Programmed Team Approach

During the Site Visit, Team members suggested assigning specific Sea Grant agents to each of our Research Projects to expedite and improve our outreach capabilities, especially on the more academic projects. We really liked this recommendation and it is being implemented.

Support

We were pleased that the SRT recognized and appreciated our efforts to enhance donations, develop endowments, diversify support streams, and collaborate with other funding agencies. We agree that this is an area of real strength for our program and an area we will seek to enhance even further in the future.

II. Stakeholder Engagement

We were very pleased that the SRT recognized and appreciated our efforts and accomplishments in involving stakeholders, leading regional programs and efforts (“the program has burgeoned into a regional leader”), and creating partnerships with agencies and the private sector. We were also pleased that the SRT appreciated the support we get from agencies, the private sector, and elected officials. We believe these are critically important audiences, but appreciated the SRT’s urging us to be cautious to maintain our unbiased reputation as we continue to improve and enhance these relationships in the future.

III. Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities

Sea Grant Network—National and Regional Leadership

We were pleased that the SRT appreciated our leadership role in the Great Lakes Regional Research Information Network (GLRRIN), the National Sea Grant Research Coordinators, the Great Lakes Communicators, the Great Lakes COSEE, and more. They

went on to recognize our work to develop individual nodes for GLRRIN on each of the lakes and our efforts to identify and disseminate research and outreach information in the region.

NOAA and Other Federal Agency Cooperative Efforts

We have spent a great deal of time and effort since our last review in 2005 to develop the Lake Erie Partnership between Ohio Sea Grant, Old Woman Creek NERR, the Ohio Coastal Management Program, and the Lake Erie Commission. Our collaborations with these groups have resulted in some very significant impacts and accomplishments, e.g., Lake Erie and Great Lakes Literacy Principles to match the Ocean Literacy Principles. We were pleased the SRT recognized and appreciated the value of these collaborations.

IV. Findings, Recommendations, and Suggestions

The SRT had two recommendations and four suggestions. These will be addressed individually, below.

Recommendations

1. When discussing the economic impact of tourism on the state and region, federal tax revenue should be included along with the state and local tax receipts. **Ohio Sea Grant Response:** Will do! We already have the information but have not been including it because almost all tourism related funding comes from state and local sources.
2. The effective communication of the strategic agenda of the program would be strengthened with the development of an executive summary version of the strategic plan. **Ohio Sea Grant Response:** We agree! A 4-page executive summary of the “Ohio Sea Grant 2010-14 Strategic and Implementation Plan” is being prepared and will be completed in time to be included with our new call for preproposals in March 2011.

Suggestions

1. Stone Lab merchandise should include OHSB branding. **Ohio Sea Grant Response:** This is a good suggestion and one that is easy to implement because almost everything that we produce already recognizes Sea Grant, Stone Lab, OSU, NOAA, etc. In fact, our newest Stone Lab t-shirt and hoodie both recognize the Ohio Sea Grant College Program.
2. In order to further enhance institutional leadership capability, the director should qualitatively involve the leadership team in cultivating existing and future relationships, in support of continued success in the program. **Ohio Sea Grant Response:** Good suggestion. The director already tries to do this, but will enhance his efforts in this area in the future.
3. OHSB program should consider developing a stronger system of involvement between the extension agents and the researchers. **Ohio Sea Grant Response:** A Sea Grant agent is being assigned to each new project beginning with our call for preproposals in March 2011.

4. OHSG should consider expanding their technical review panel to include more panelists who are independent of existing partnerships. **Ohio Sea Grant**
Response: Will do!

V. Best Management Practices

The SRT identified two best management practices: 1) our success in developing a donor base and endowments, and 2) our leadership academy for elected officials and decision makers. We wholeheartedly agree, but would also include our new leadership academy for tourism officials. Our belief is that all Sea Grant programs could develop, and would benefit from the development of, a funding stream from donors and endowments and the above mentioned leadership academies. The tourism leadership development effort is a result of an industry identified need to learn the skills necessary to have more involvement in policy decisions impacting the industry and we believe it could be a model for other Sea Grant programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SRT report. We believe our program benefited from the process, and we are very pleased with our overall evaluation in the report. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions and please extend my thanks to the members of our SRT for all their hard work and a job well done.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Reutter, Ph.D.
Director

C: Jonathan Eigen
Sami Grimes