To: Dr. Nancy “Rusty” Barcelo  
Vice President and Vice Provost for Diversity

From: Stephen D. West  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Forest Resources

Date: January 30, 2004

Re: Diversity Appraisal

The College of Forest Resources is happy to provide you with this brief appraisal of our current diversity efforts. All in all, we feel that although some progress has been made recently on the diversity front, we have a long way to go.

The College’s historical base has been forestry, an enterprise that has not been diversity rich. In the past few years we have worked very hard to broaden and restructure the College and our curriculum to be more responsive to changes in forestry and related environmental fields. The changes will help position us for progress in the diversity arena. Diversity is a visible and active part of the College of Forest Resources. Information on our efforts are posted on our diversity page which has been part of the College website since 2001:
http://www.cfr.washington.edu/People/Diversity/Diversity.htm. We also encourage our students to participate in diversity-related events, both through email and by posting posters in our buildings. We also consider diversity when hiring faculty and staff and when making awards in our College scholarship program.

We expect that progress toward a more diverse College will be enhanced by the redesign of our undergraduate curriculum. In terms of content, the new curriculum makes societal drivers in resource use explicit. This opens the dialogue on the nature of societal choices in resource use, and encourages examination of alternative points of view. The new curriculum has a much wider scope than earlier curricula because students can design a course of
study much more along individual interests than was possible previously. Unique combinations of curricular specializations are now possible which may be more attractive to a wider array of students. In terms of recruitment, the increased flexibility of our new undergraduate program will make it much easier for transfer students to attend our College. We find that transfer students tend to be more diverse than our freshman entry population. We have also consolidated our graduate programs, which will allow more flexibility for students, and hopefully attract a more diverse graduate student population.

**Diversity Target Areas**

*Student access and opportunities*

We have made good progress in the composition of our student population in recent years, with our female population increasing from 34% in 1990 to 47% currently, and our members of underrepresented groups going from 8% to 13%. While increasing the numbers of female students has been an area of considerable success, we need more attention to underrepresented groups. Working with the graduate school, we generally receive a Graduate Opportunity Program fellowship, which targets diverse applicants. We couple this award with College scholarship money to create an award that will attract top diverse graduate students. We also use the College scholarship money to recruit undergraduate students by providing tuition scholarships that consider need as well as merit. We have found these efforts to be quite successful in recent years.

One of our more difficult problems is attracting students from rural areas (where interest in our programs is high) to the College. Some of these people, particularly native Americans, are essentially place-bound. We are now investigating ways of minimizing the amount of time these students must spend at the Seattle campus. We suspect that our programs would be much more attractive if we could reduce time in residence by making our courses available via distance learning. Several faculty and staff at the College, UWEO, and UWEDGE have just submitted a proposal (Institutional Partnerships in Distance Learning for Higher Education in Sustainable Forest Management) to the USDA, Higher Education Grants Program to pursue these possibilities. We also have enlisted five Community Colleges to cooperate with the project.

The College also is actively working with Community Colleges to enhance effectiveness of the transfer process. Transfer students currently make up about half of the College’s student body. The College will host a two-day workshop (Partnerships for Resource Science Education Workshop) this March at Pack Forest for Community Colleges. This forum will allow us to
present and discuss our new curriculum and cooperatively discover ways to increase the success of student transfers.

**Student development and retention**

Our undergraduate curricular revisions were partially targeted at creating a more cohesive group of students in our undergraduate programs. In the undergraduate program, we developed four required core courses. These core courses all address social issues in the environment as well as natural science and economics, which we believe will be more attractive to diverse students. These core courses are team taught by a group of faculty that are well versed in diversity issues and have worked with the CIDR office to make sure that diversity is a part of the curriculum where appropriate.

In our graduate program, we have implemented a more comprehensive orientation over the past few years that encourages student cohesiveness and promotes student interaction. We also try to offer mentoring opportunities to students with more experienced graduate students by having select experienced students attend the orientation as well. We have found this to work quite well for students and helps making contact with their peers easier when needs arise.

The College is fortunate to have a substantial scholarship program. We make some of these resources available to students as a ‘safety net’ for graduate students when other funding does not come through or ends suddenly.

**Engagement with the external community**

Our faculty and staff have been involved in many external activities relating to diversity, from attending diversity related conferences and events to participating in UW GEAR-UP. One example is coming up in March 2004, when Professor Rob Harrison will represent the College and give a paper at the “Natural Resource Education For a Culturally Diverse Audience Fifth Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources.” The College is paying for his trip. He is seeking answers to why diverse students often take his Environmental Science course (ESC 110) but then do not continue on to study environmental science in the College.

**Staff and administrative diversity**

Diversity is integrated into our academic mission with respect to faculty and staff mainly by our hiring practices. Unfortunately, given the economic climate, we have not been able to make much progress recently. Our staff population is slightly more diverse than our faculty, and we do consider diversity when hiring new staff.

**Faculty diversity**
Our current faculty population is not very diverse, but since 1990, we have hired 47% women into ladder faculty positions and 13% persons of color into ladder faculty positions, far above our current faculty profile.

Curriculum and research
We addressed several curricular issues above, but did not mention course requirements. In our old programs, we had a few social science courses that students could take, but now social science is integrated into the core part of the curriculum, which will allow for more attention to issues of diversity.

Climate
It is hard to say if our climate is good for diversity without a good assessment. As detailed above we have a number of initiatives underway to improve our diversity profile. We are interested in opportunities that distance learning linked with Community College programs might mean for the recruitment of presently place-bound students. It is quite possible that we might realize large student gains from underrepresented groups if this approach is successful.