Unit Response to Program Review Committee Report  
Department of Geology

We wish to thank the Program Review Committee for the time and effort that went into their analysis. Their report is accurate and insightful and their recommendations will be useful in making positive changes to our programs. Overall, we agree with the action plan and would like to make the following comments about the specific recommendations.

1. Creation of a School
Through regular meetings in the Spring 2005 semester, we have reached a consensus that it is advantageous to all three units to proceed with the formation of a school. We are currently developing a governance document.

2. Research Productivity and Faculty Workloads
Increasing external funding and refereed publications by the faculty is a high priority. Developing an equitable differential workload policy will be an important part of attaining this goal.

3. Graduate Recruitment
We will be working with the Graduate College and other administrative bodies to maintain competitive stipends in our graduate program.

4. Undergraduate Recruitment
The Chair is working with the science and math Chairs on several initiatives to increase the number of students entering the university who will major in science and math.

5. Equipment Needs
We welcome this recommendation, but are concerned that no action will be taken. The lack of network support and funding for equipment was noted in the two previous department program reviews (1989 and 1998). To date, there has been some progress on the network support issue, but not on the funding of equipment. As a result of program review in 1998, then Provost Middleton requested and received an analysis of our operating budget and equipment needs. Unfortunately, he left the university shortly thereafter and no action was taken. In the years since the last review, the department has been forced to bear an increasing cost of funding and maintaining equipment. Not only are we falling further behind our peer institutions, but the internal shift of grant and departmental operating funds to equipment has forced the reduction or elimination of other important activities. We look forward to working with the administration to develop a plan for increased funding of equipment purchases and maintenance.

7. General Education Course Revisions
Discussions are underway with individual faculty about proposals for new general education courses. Next fall, we will be assessing the impact (on personnel, facilities, and supplies) of implementing a new lab format for the general education introductory geology courses.

8. Assessment
The department has been and continues to be committed to assessment. In addition to ongoing activities at the undergraduate level, we will focus more on assessing the graduate program in the coming year.