



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT—
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, California 94607-5200

February 19, 2003

PROFESSOR POWELL
Director, White Mountain Research Station
San Diego campus

Dear Frank,

I write to inform you of the completion of the Fifteen-Year comparative Review of the White Mountain Research Station (WMRS), the University of California Observatories (UCO/Lick) and the Institute of Nuclear and Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology (INPAC). Thank you for providing your comments in response to the report of the Fifteen-Year Review Committee. I have read the Review and found it to be positive and constructive. We have received feed-back from the campuses and the relevant systemwide Senate committees and I have considered also their comments on the WMRS as we plan for the ensuing five years.

Under your leadership, the emphasis has been on developing programs in teaching and research, and diversifying the user base. User days have nearly doubled, extramural funding shows a dramatic increase, there has been an increase in demand for research and computer labs, and educational and community outreach programs at the station are very successful. WMRS has developed important linkages to state and federal management agencies and regional environmental initiatives like the Great Basin CESU.

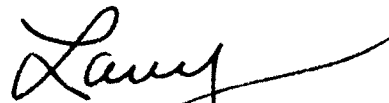
While the reviewers acknowledged your efforts as warranted, timely, and given the budget constraints, successful, they were concerned about the state of some facilities, in particular the Owens Valley Laboratory. Also, the expansion of research activities at the higher elevation facilities to include a year-round astrophysics and cosmology program raised safety concerns among the reviewers, who believed the infrastructure and staffing of WMRS were not adequate to insure safe use of the facilities in winter. I am pleased that through the efforts of your staff, WMRS has secured a reliable snow-cat to replace the snowmobiles that were previously used for winter transport, thus making safe access in the winter possible. I understand that astrophysics and cosmology work has started at the Barcroft Laboratory this winter and that plans are underway for an expanded operation next winter.

The reviewers encouraged more dialogue between WMRS and the UC Office of Research to consider and guide the long-term goals for this MRU. You and Professor Phil Bickler, Chair of the WMRS Executive Committee, have met once already with me and my colleagues to discuss future directions for the station, and I intend to continue these conversations as you and the Executive Committee evaluate budget priorities. In comments I received on this review from the campuses, there is a suggestion that additional resources could come from increasing facilities charges to users and/or administering grants through the station with off-campus overhead rates. Other comments suggest increased interactions between WMRS and the Natural Reserve System, in particular the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory, and the Sierra Nevada Research Institute at UC Merced.

The review committee also recommends budget augmentations but these cannot be considered at this time given the recent 10% budget cut in UC research funding and further expected cuts imposed by the Governor. These recommendations include a substantial one-time budget augmentation for upgrading the Owens Valley and Barcroft Laboratories and the anticipated \$160,000 needed to complete the Crooked Creek facilities. The reviewers felt that the facilities and their continued safe operation should be the highest priorities if budget constraints forced you, as director, to make hard choices between supporting new programs or maintaining and repairing the facilities.

Given the budget crisis that the state of California and thus the University of California face for the next few years, I am not able to consider requests or recommendations for augmentation of MRUs' budgets, but the Office of the President will continue to provide whatever assistance we can to WMRS.

Sincerely,



Lawrence B. Coleman
Vice Provost for Research

Cc: Provost King
Vice Chancellor Attiyeh
Director McClain
Coordinator Magowan