

Comments from the Director of Research

One of the most significant events for WHOI in 1999 was the review of our scientific departments by Visiting Committees. We invited distinguished scientists from other institutions and members of our own Board of Trustees to give us an objective appraisal of the accomplishments and future directions of the departments. This practice, used by many other academic institutions, provides advice that we find invaluable in our own assessments and planning for future staffing, scientific activities, and infrastructure. We were pleased that the Visiting Committees found that WHOI continues to be healthy, that the quality of the scientific research and engineering is of world class caliber, and that our staff of scientists, engineers, and support personnel is well equipped to meet the future challenges of oceanographic research.

Many of the interesting and important problems in the ocean sciences lie close to the boundaries between the traditional disciplines. For example, understanding the structure of the ecosystem on Georges Bank, and ecosystems in general, involves the relationships between the seasonally varying and wind-induced currents and water masses and the distributions of larvae, prey, and other components of the ecosystem. Similarly, understanding and predicting sediment and sand transport along the coast requires an understanding of the interaction of waves and wind-induced currents, along with the turbulence along the interface between

the sediment and the water.

The five scientific departments now overlap scientific interests and disciplines in many ways. Consequently, the 1999 evaluation was done by three separate committees, one to review the Geology & Geochemistry and Marine Chemistry & Geochemistry Departments, one to review the Physical Oceanography and Applied Ocean Physics & Engineering Departments, and the third to review the Biology Department. We asked the Visiting Committees to evaluate more than



Dave Gray

Senior Associate Director Jim Luyten, right, describes a temperature and salinity measuring device called a SEACAT to Dave Burnell of the US Office of Management and Budget, who visited WHOI in August 1999.

one department specifically to review the ways that the department staffs interact and to provide suggestions for ways to improve their collaborations for interdisciplinary research. Future funding from many of our traditional as well as new sources will place an increasingly important emphasis on interdisciplinary investigations. It is important that we insure that our structure does not impede the formation of teams that cross department boundaries. The Visiting Committees provided excellent feedback and suggestions in this area, as well as others. We are in the process of reviewing the reports in detail, finalizing the departmental responses to the Visiting Committee reports and have already implemented some of the recommended actions. We are grateful for the time and thoughtful effort Visiting Committee members (listed in the box) invested in their reviews of our departments.

—James R. Luyten, Senior Associate Director and Director of Research

1999 Visiting Committees

Applied Ocean Physics & Engineering and Physical Oceanography Departments

Arnold Gordon (Chair)

Physical Oceanography Program Leader,
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University

John S. Allen

College of Oceanic & Atmospheric Sciences,
Oregon State University

Philip W. Cheney

WHOI Corporation Member,
Raytheon Company, Lexington, MA

Stanley E. Dunn

Chair, Department of Ocean Engineering,
Florida Atlantic University

Alexander E. Hay

Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University

William A. Kuperman

Director, Marine Physical Laboratory,
Scripps Institution of Oceanography

William Large

Deputy Head of Oceanography Section for the Climate
and Global Dynamics Division, National Center for
Atmospheric Research

John M. Stewart

WHOI Trustee, McKinsey & Co., Inc., New York, NY

Biology Department

Bess B. Ward (Chair)

Department of Geosciences, Princeton University

Joseph S. Barr, Jr.

WHOI Corporation Member, Orthopedic Associates,
Boston, MA

Sallie W. Chisholm

Civil and Environmental Engineering Department,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Michael Gallo

Director, Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences
Center, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey—
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Michael M. Mullin

Director, Marine Life Research Group,
Scripps Institution of Oceanography

Marine Chemistry & Geochemistry and Geology & Geophysics Departments

Christopher S. Martens (Chair)

Department of Marine Sciences,
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Kenneth W. Bruland

Ocean Sciences Department,
University of California-Santa Cruz

Donald W. Forsyth

Department of Geological Sciences, Brown University

Alex N. Halliday

Department of Earth Sciences, Institute of Isotope
Geology & Mineral Resources, Eidgenössische Technische
Hochschule, Zurich, Switzerland

Charles Langmuir

Geochemistry Department, Lamont-Doherty Earth
Observatory, Columbia University

Theodore C. Moore, Jr.

Director, Center for Great Lakes and Aquatic Sciences,
University of Michigan

John J. Wise

WHOI Trustee, Mobil Technical Center, Paulsboro, NJ

Monthly listings of Institution-authored
scientific publications can be found
on the World Wide Web at:
www.whoi.edu/science/publications.html.