Mathematics Department Response to Program Review

Because mathematics directly relates to several of the seven classical Liberal Arts, we in the mathematics department are excited for the opportunity to reinforce our key role in the College, the heart of this comprehensive student-centered university. In addition, we eagerly support the University’s aspirations to attain the next level of excellence, and it is in this vein that we proffer the following response.

1) We, the Mathematics Department, would like to thank the Program Review Committee for the care with which our program review was conducted.

2) We affirm the Committee’s recommendation that two additional tenure track faculty positions be added to the department over the next two or three years. We note that this recommendation was also made during our previous program review in the year 2000 yet no action has been taken by the University in this regard. Discounting downward fluctuation due to retirements, there have been nine tenure track faculty in our department since we split with Computer Science in the mid-80’s. This academic year we will have 18 courses covered by non-tenure track staff; this has become typical.

3) We further affirm the Committee’s recommendation that the departmental operating budget must be increased. We bring to your attention that in our previous program review, it was recommended that our budget be expanded to support supplemental instruction and upkeep on our computer lab. Neither of these accommodations has been made by the University, yet our department currently offers significant supplemental instruction and we are asked to contribute money to replace computers in the South Campus Lab. These expenses are not included in our operating budget.

4) The Committee points out that we are the most efficient department at Pacific in terms of instructional cost. Given this, we find it curious that much attention is given to ways in which we might become more efficient. For example, we agree with the Committee that most graduate programs will allow a student to remedy deficiencies in their undergraduate education. However, we do not want to require Pacific mathematics majors to remedy a deficiency should they choose to attend graduate school. While it may not be necessary to ensure that Pacific mathematics students take a two-semester sequence in Real Analysis or Abstract Algebra, we believe it is not desirable for a University that aspires to reach the next tier to produce graduates that are deficient. At a time when the College hopes to earn the privilege of hosting a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, we believe we should be looking for ways to make our mathematics alumni as strong as possible. A mathematics department cannot be among the best without a solid foundation in pure mathematics.

5) The Committee rightly points out that providing applicable courses to serve the students of our partner departments and schools is important to us. The Committee also notes that we prefer to view ourselves as having faculty skilled in research with an
outstanding major program that provides excellent service. It should be further mentioned that the University, up to the highest level of administration, also prefers that we excel in our scholarly achievement. This requires a continued commitment to classical mathematics.