Oregon State University’s Radiation Health Physics Program

Annual HPS Meeting
Portland OR
July 10th, 2007

K.A. Higley, S.E. Binney, S.R. Reese, J.N. Reyes, J.F. Higginbotham, and with special thanks to D.M. Hamby
Radiation Health Physics at OSU

- Began in 1963.
- Transitioned from x-ray technology program to current program.
  - Originally in College of Science,
  - Moved piecemeal to College of Engineering, and merged with Nuclear Engineering Dept. (est. 1957)
Radiation Health Physics at OSU

• Renamed Nuclear Engineering and Radiation Health Physics (2001)

• Currently
  – One of 8 US institutions with degrees in both NE & RHP
  – Only 4 offer complete suite of B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in both fields.

• Undergrad program accredited in 2003 by ABET under Applied Science Accreditation Commission.
RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Implying we actually have a plan, but it’s more of a philosophy
Strategy #1

Location, location, location

Pick a great place, and they’ll at least consider coming....
Strategy #2: Great People

Hire good faculty who work well together
Strategy #3 - Awesome Facilities

• 1.1 MW\textsubscript{th} TRIGA Reactor
• Advanced Thermal Hydraulic Testing Laboratory
• $^{90}\text{Sr} - ^{90}\text{Y}$ irradiator
• Subcritical assembly
• Radiochemistry labs
• Radioecology Greenhouse
• and more…..

And let the students use them
Strategy #4: Develop Interesting, Topical Research

- Instrumentation Development
- Simultaneous $\beta$-$\gamma$ Spectroscopy
- Radiographic Studies
- Biota Dose
- …& more
Strategy #5: Aggressively Seek Funding

- Federal Government
  - DOE
    - NNSA
    - Nuclear Engineering Education Research
  - CDC
  - NRC
- States
  - Oregon Dept of Energy
- Foundations
  - McClellan Foundation
- **Give** that money to your students
  - Scholarships & fellowships
  - Need-based awards
  - Teaching & research assistantships
Strategy #6 – Look for Recruitment Opportunities

• On-campus
  – “Pursue” undecided majors
  – Offer classes with broad appeal (NE 319)
  – Have faculty teach ENGR or COS core classes (reach other majors)

• Off-campus
  – Word of Mouth
  – Alumni
  – HPS booth (what do you think???)
  – Peterson’s Guide (value for $???)
Retention Strategies

How we try to keep them once they’re enrolled
Retention Strategies

• Head Advisor for Undergraduates
  – Faculty still advise
  – Early intervention for “troubled students”
  – “Checklists” for course progression
• Constant “contact” for undergraduates
  – RC building is their “home”
  – At least 1 course/yr in Department
• On-campus grad. students have desks and 24 hour building access
• E-campus advisor for distance students
• Social opportunities
  – Picnics
  – Annual banquet
Enrollment Data

So has our strategy worked?
Graduation Rates

Academic Year

Number of students

NE BS
NE Graduates
RHP BS
RHP Graduates
Total NE&RHP Graduated
Employment

• Where do they go?
  – Military (Navy, Army)
  – Federal Government (NRC, DOE)
  – National Laboratories (PNNL, Los Alamos)
  – State Government
  – Industry
    • HP consulting firms
    • Nuclear Power Plants
    • Health Care
  – Academia
CONCLUSIONS

- Enrollments are up
- Adequate funding remains a challenge
  - e.g., DOE University Programs?
  - Matching grants?
  - Industry still needs to do a better job of “stepping up to the plate”
- Strong academic program
- **Targeted recruitment** not done
- Diverse, but complementary faculty
- Future’s so bright.....
Acknowledgements

• This presentation is based, in part on work supported by the U. S. Department of Energy, under the following:
  • DE-FG07-025D14422 and
  • Cooperative Agreement Number DE-FC01-06EW07053