To the Faculty Legislature, Santa Barbara Division:

According to Academic Senate Divisional Bylaws and Regulations, Appendix II, D1.93, the Executive Committee of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management is a committee of the Academic Senate authorized as an organization through which the Faculty of the School can coordinate the academic affairs of the School. The Committee reports to, and is responsible to, the Academic Senate and its officers. The Executive Committee is distinguished from Administrative committees that are created by the Administration and are responsible to, and report to, Administrative Officers.

The Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) for the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management met eight times during the academic year. The following is a list of the major issues addressed by the FEC:

1. POLICY ISSUES – COMMENTS TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE. The FEC reviewed and offered comments on the following issues: (a) UCSB Global Engagement, (b) Doctoral Student Support Proposals and Recommendations, and (c) Senate Regulation SR 682 Residence and Length of Study. The FEC also examined eight other issues from the Academic Senate and deemed additional comments unnecessary.

2. FTE PLANNING. FEC led and documented this year’s FTE planning process. The FTE Planning report is available on FEC website. This year’s report presents a new vision for moving forward now that the current FTE allotment has been fulfilled. The Bren School faculty FTE will be filled with the hire of Jim Salzman in July 2015 and the anticipated hire of a Mellichamp Chair for Economics of Sustainable Technologies in 2015-16. The FEC led a Bren Faculty retreat and met with units across campus (Earth Research Institute, Marine Science, Computer Science) to develop a strategic plan. Key elements of the plan include establishing FTE for lecturers who provide important professional training for Bren students, addressing gaps in specific areas due to expected retirements in the next few years and involvement in emerging cross-campus initiatives in environmental areas. The FEC also discussed ways to improve faculty diversity.

3. CONTINUING LECTURERS. Several Unit 18 lecturers are approaching their 18th quarter of employment with the Bren School. The lecturers are actively involved in program development and the courses are also taught by these lecturers who are considered to be vital to Bren’s professional curriculum. The FEC discussed strategies for developing more permanent positions related to this type of professional training and presented these to the faculty. The continuing lecturer positions were described in the 2015-16 FTE plan.

4. DEVELOPMENT/BUDGET. The FEC met with the Dean, Business Officer (Kim Fugate) and Assistant Dean for Development (Andrew Krupa) on several occasions in 2014-15 to discuss the budget and development goals. Given the full allocation of state funding to Bren faculty and staff FTE, the development team must raise funds to support the instruction provided by Unit 18 and continuing lecturers. The FEC also identified a strong need for increased PhD student funding in order for Bren to remain competitive in attracting top students. For 2014-15, the Assistant Dean for Development set goals to raise funds for eco-entrepreneurship, environmental communication, student support, the Alumni Reunion, and research, particularly related to climate, food and sustainability, among other priorities. Progress towards these goals was identified as needing improvement in the near term. The FEC emphasized to the Dean the
need to strengthen the efforts in fundraising, particularly to cultivate large gifts for research, teaching and student recruitment, in 2015-16 and beyond.

5. PHD RECRUITMENT AND FUNDING. The Recruitment, Admissions and Support (RAS) Committee and staff presented the process for PhD admission and allocation of recruitment awards and TA positions. The FEC provided further guidance on these processes. Several changes to admissions procedures and recruitment strategies were proposed. To remain competitive, the FEC identified strategies for increasing support for admitted PhD students, both in terms of quarterly stipend levels and number of years of support. An increase in the Block Grant will help with these additional expenses and the FEC again emphasized student support as a high-priority development goal.

6. COMPUTING POLICIES. The FEC in conjunction with Chair of the Computing Committee (James Frew) worked with the Director of Information Technology (Jason Simpson) to update the policies for computing hardware and computing labs. The FEC also worked closely with senior staff to identify steps needed to improve the computing environment at Bren, and made recommendations regarding changes to customer service, operating procedures and policies. The new policies reflect the principles of user support, quality of service, and faculty priorities.

7. COMMUNICATIONS. The FEC reviewed current marketing and outreach strategies for the Bren School. The FEC chair and faculty recommended several steps for clarifying and improving faculty involvement in the development of strategies and materials. One of these steps included establishing a new committee on Strategic Communications. The FEC chair also met with the newly hired Director of Admissions and Outreach to discuss ways in which faculty can better participate in outreach and marketing.

8. FEC MEMBERS + ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS FOR 2015-16. The FEC conducted a secret ballot of the faculty to elect new members for next year.

Members of the Faculty Executive Committee: Naomi Tague, Chair, Patricia Holden, John Melack, Andrew Plantinga, and Steven Gaines, Dean and ex officio.

Christina (Naomi) Tague, Chair

Patricia Holden

John Melack

Andrew Plantinga