

NOTE: Implementation 2008

February 10, 2012

Dr. Belle Wheelan, President
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

Thank you for your letter of January 3, 2012 (enclosed) responding to our prospectus (August 2011) requesting approval for a joint Ph.D. degree in Oceanography with Ocean University of China (OUC).

After discussions that have included the provost's office, the office of the Dean of Geosciences, and the faculty and students directly involved in the program, we respectfully ask that we be allowed to withdraw our request and preserve the option to present a full prospectus for approval at a future date, should both institutions wish to do so.

In our conversations, it has become clear that the relationship of both institutional partners, while robust and enthusiastic on both sides, has not developed into the two-way joint degree program initially envisioned by the two universities. To date, 15 students have successfully transferred from OUC to Texas A&M and are currently mentored by and enrolled in courses taught by Texas A&M faculty members. As with all transfers at the graduate level, students are evaluated and accepted at the department and college level, and have to comply with standard TAMU entry requirements.

If students have not completed their M.S. degrees when they transfer from Ocean University of China, they are permitted to transfer up to 20 hours of classes, after approval by the department's Curriculum Committee, towards the 96-hour requirement for a Ph.D. Students who complete their M.S. in China before transferring are required to complete 64 hours at TAMU. This transfer of classes has been approved by the Office of Graduate Studies at TAMU and is stated in the original documentation relating to the joint program. The anticipated graduation date for the earliest of these students is December 2012. Thus far, no Texas A&M University students have applied to transfer to OUC.

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COLLEGE OF
GEOSCIENCES

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DEAN'S OFFICE


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The Department of Oceanography, supported by the Dean of the College of Geosciences, has discussed this request for withdrawal with its OUC partners and, perhaps most importantly, with the students currently studying at Texas A&M University. All parties agree that a withdrawal is the best course of action, and students report that they are pleased with the prospect of receiving a Ph.D. degree from Texas A&M University.

As requested, we will send, by May 1, 2012, a newly developed Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) to ensure timely reporting of the university's substantive changes.

Please let me know if you have additional questions, or if you would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bowen Loftin", written over a horizontal line.

R. Bowen Loftin
President

cc: Dr. Cheryl D. Cardell
Dr. Karan L. Watson
Dr. Pamela R. Matthews
✓ Dr. Kate Miller



**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES**

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January 3, 2012

Dr. R. Bowen Loftin
President and Chief Executive Officer
Texas A&M University
1246 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1246

Dear Dr. Loftin:

Thank you for your letter of August 11, 2011, in which you transmitted the prospectus for a new off-campus instructional site in Saudi Arabia and the documentation describing a joint Ph.D. in Oceanography degree program with Ocean University of China. This letter will review the documentation of the joint Ph.D. degree program; a separate letter will address the prospectus for the off-campus instructional site.

Over the last five years, the University has collaborated with Ocean University of China (OUC) to exchange research faculty and students under a memorandum of understanding. In 2008, a joint Ph.D. in Oceanography degree program was initiated.

Students from OUC begin their coursework in China (one year) and are then admitted to Texas A&M to complete the remaining degree course and research requirements (up to five years). Students will have doctoral committee members from both TAMU and OCU, although TAMU members will be in the majority. The institutions offer the same process for admission to OUC for students with Mandarin language skills. All processes for admission, transfer of credits, confirmation of faculty expertise, and review of OUC faculty for TAMU graduate faculty are governed by established Texas A&M policies and processes. Students typically transfer a maximum of 20 credit hours from OUC. The TAMU Ph.D. in Oceanography is 96 credit hours. The joint degree proposal requests that the seals of both universities be embossed on the Ph.D. diplomas. The joint TAMUOUC Ph.D. anticipates its first graduates no earlier than fall 2012.

The approved Ph.D. in Oceanography was implemented at TAMU in 1950. The following are contact persons for the program:

Texas A&M University

Dr. K. C. Miller, Dean of Geosciences
Oceanography and Meteorology Building
3146 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-3146
U.S.A.
Email: kcmiller@tamu.edu
979-845-3651
979-845-0056



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Dr. Loftin
January 3, 2012

Ocean University of China

Dr. Gang Fu, Dean of the Graduate School
Ocean University of China
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Please provide the following information:

1. A signed copy of the 2011 renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement; the copy submitted was signed by President Loftin of Texas A&M; President Wu of OUC did not sign it.
2. A description of (1) any external government or accrediting agency approval of OUC and/or its Oceanography program, (2) the process of quality assurance used by the agency granting this approval, and (3) any required legal or licensing approvals
3. Documentation that the courses of OUC are consistent with the educational purpose and goals of Texas A&M University.
4. Documentation that TAMU meets the provisions of Comprehensive Standard 3.4.7 (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements), including the analysis of credits accepted in transfer.
5. Documentation that OUC faculty involved in the collaboration are qualified to teach assigned components or courses and a description of the means by which TAMU will monitor these qualifications.
6. Documentation describing the physical and learning resources available to students at OUC.
7. A plan to monitor and ensure that the quality of contributions made by OUC meets applicable Commission on Colleges requirements.
8. A plan produced by TAMU ensuring that the collaborative arrangement does not result in the appearance of extending SACSCOC accreditation to OUC through promotional materials, academic publications, student transcripts, credentials verifying program completion, and releases to the news media.
9. Prototypes of a student transcript; your submission included a prototype of a diploma.

Action on the proposal will be deferred pending review of the requested information which should reach my office no later than February 17, 2012. Please mark your submission "Implementation 2008," so that we may expedite the review of the information.



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Dr. Loftin
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Your letter of April 15, 2008, notified the Commission of the collaborative Ph.D. program; my letter of June 17, 2008, responded to your letter and affirmed that any such arrangement would require prior approval. Because the collaborative Ph.D. program in Oceanography has been operable since 2009, without approval, and the first students may graduate as early as fall term 2012, the University is in apparent non-compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 **Please submit to my office by May 1, 2012, four copies of the policy and procedure document the institution has developed to ensure timely reporting of substantive change in the future. Please submit the four copies under a separate cover letter. Do not include them with other substantive change transmissions.** The document will be forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review at its June 2012 meeting. In developing the documents, please consult *Best Practices for Developing Policy and Procedures Documents*, published on our website under the Policies and Publications button.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/RER:efk

cc: Dr. Pamela Matthews, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Dr. Cheryl D. Cardell
Dr. Sarah L. Armstrong
Ms. Carol A. Luthman