

Biology Program Review

Faculty of Science

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Lucy Lee, Dean of the Faculty of Science

Accepted by:

Senate in March 2013

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in February 2013

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation ST1: that the department critically review its concentrations and consider decreasing the numbers offered

Response: The concentrations are extremely popular with students. Our view is that the existence of the concentrations contributes to retention. We feel the existing concentrations reflect the breadth of course offerings and are an important aspect of our growing reputation in the Fraser Valley as a destination for students. We would prefer to keep these as they exist.

Recommendation ST2: that the department review the credits given for courses with laboratories and consider making them consistent with other BC universities.

Response: The issue of credit inflation has been brought up in the past. The department would consider reducing the first year course to 4 credits. One of the strengths of the department is the lab components of second year and some upper level courses. The department would not want reduced first year tuition to impact the number of lab courses offered in the future.

Timeline: Discuss credit value of first year courses and bring recommendations forward to curriculum in 2013

Recommendation ST3: that the department implement proposed changes to BIOL 202 and the four co upper level courses to alleviate waitlists and increase student flexibility in course selection

Response: The department curriculum committee is working on this issue at present and hopes to

this component) and therefore are not compensated with teaching credit. By giving teaching credit for these schools, this would eliminate the inevitable 'burnout' that occur through volunteering (a form of free overloading).

Although interested in a graduate program, the department recognizes that this will likely be realized in the form of a multidisciplinary and/or applied approach.

Timeline: Ongoing course development. Ecuador field school August 2012, Hawaiian field school July 2013.

Recommendation ST5 that the Biology department provide a faculty mentor to new sessional instructors

Response: We have hired several new sessional instructors recently and each of these individuals has been paired with a faculty member in a mentoring role.

Timeline: Ongoing

Recommendation ST6 that the departmental assistant be given access to student email addresses

Response: Access to student email addresses would greatly improve communication surrounding events and future offerings. This seems to be up to either the Registrar's office or the Marketing and Communications department and is not something we can resolve. It will be pursued.

Timeline: Request access for department assistant

Recommendation ST7 that the department establish a lab manager position to more efficiently coordinate technician activity at the Abbotsford and Chilliwack campuses

Response: Recently, it was determined that the lab coordinator model was not working well as had been hoped. In agreement with the Dean, the department has reverted back to a model of team decisions through consensus in terms of covering the duties of course assignments, ordering, inspections and time off allocations. If Administration deems additional supervision to be in the best interests of everyone involved, funding for such a new position would be required and could possibly oversee all of Science rather than simply Biology.

Recommendation ST8 that course content be reviewed periodically to maintain program currency

Response: The department will be having a retreat in May to assess our course content at the second year level and align our course learning outcomes with those of the institution. In addition, with several changes and additions to upper level courses with a molecular aspect, we plan to discuss content to manage levels of overlap. This will allow us to build concepts to a greater level of understanding and complexity rather than simply repeating materials.

Timeline: Spring 2013 and continuing on an annual basis

Recommendation ST9:

teaching loads. Otherwise we are at our limit in the number of students that can be accommodated. New lab space is a critical requirement for Biology. Enrolment is there but we simply cannot take in additional students without increased lab space. Even CEP is running at full capacity due to sharing the lab with Nursing.

Timeline: That the University find the funding to open an additional Biology lab ~~year~~5

Recommendation ST14

Response: Department members have been working closely with Agriculture faculty to develop a Bachelor's degree in agriculture.

Timeline: Initiate discussions with Agriculture and the Deans around possibly merging these two departments. With only two permanent faculty members, both of whom are nearing retirement, there should also be a serious effort to hiring additional faculty to run these programs. Major facilities in the form of a greenhouse and a barn are also desperately needed to support teaching and research in these areas and should be a major initiative for the CEP campus.