

PROGRAM RESPONSE REPORT – Department of Zoology
April 29, 2008

Introduction: In this report, responses are given to the major recommendations made throughout the Program Review, rather than just addressing those in the Summary of Recommendations section.

1. **Commendation about the Department of Zoology's strengths:** We are appreciative of the laudatory comments about our collegiality and "working climate." It was encouraging to read that the students benefit from the positive tone set by our staff and faculty.

2. **Recommendation:** We would recommend a somewhat more formalized approach to ensure that each new faculty receives consistent information and targeted attention toward their professional development and progress toward tenure. We also recommend that peer evaluation of teaching for newer faculty be utilized earlier in the tenure process.

The faculty had a mixed response to the suggestion that a more formal mentoring approach would be helpful. Indeed, some individuals prefer the present informal approach rather than a structured one. We shall continue to consider ways in which our new faculty receive all of the training and support needed to be successful here.

There was considerable interest in exploring ways to assist new faculty in their teaching. We discussed the importance of teaching observations and feedback early in an individual's experience. During the next year, we shall investigate ways to implement such a program. Presently, new faculty are often paired with established ones in multi-sectioned courses. This seems to provide a useful situation for sharing teaching methodologies.

3. **Recommendation:** We recommend that the College of Science review their Tenure Document and consider whether the use of "categories" in research and "channels" truly reflect the goals and mission of the College.

While several faculty agree that the College's tenure document could benefit from some revising, such an effort would need to be initiated outside of the Department.

4. **Recommendations/Commendations:** The Department of Zoology has a fine reputation for encouraging student research, and for the outstanding research record of its faculty. The Program Review Team made the following suggestions: (1) formal recognition of teaching research students as part of the teaching workload; (2) adequate start-up funds provided to new faculty; (3) distribution of some portion of indirect costs generated by grants back to the department or faculty member to serve as incentive and institutional support; and (4) heroic efforts to locate adequate teaching and functional research space for faculty.

Given our understanding of the critical nature of research in our students' education, we will continue to seek opportunities to enhance our program in this regard. It is appropriate for discussions to continue within the Department and at the College's Chairs Council about the issues listed here. We are especially concerned about start-up funds and adequate research spaces for faculty.

5. **Recommendation:** We recommend that the department encourage and assist all faculty members in incorporating these valued pedagogies in their courses.

This suggestion seemed "curious" as the faculty use a considerable diversity of pedagogies in the wide variety of offered courses. As we continue to develop, appropriate pedagogies will always be contemplated.

6. **Recommendation:** We recommend that the Mission statement of the Zoology Department be revised to reflect active goals.

This appeared to be a rather minor issue. The faculty does not believe that the mission statement requires revision.

7. **Recommendation:** We recommend that the Zoology Department review and revise Program Learning Outcomes for students and promote the integration of these outcomes in individual courses.

We shall continue to explore ways to make our Learning Outcomes more useful to the faculty and students. It was suggested that each syllabus should contain a reference to the website where the Outcomes are listed. This should at least inform the students about the Outcomes, and could help in their understanding the course's goals in that context. Faculty are thus being encouraged to begin to do this for their courses.

8. **Recommendation:** We strongly recommend that the Dean of College of Science locate support for use of a standardized Senior Exit Examination (e.g., ETS®) in the area of major, to be given at least once every 3—5 years, minimally scheduled to coincide with year before External Program Review for each department.

The Department has not revised its assessment program for a while. We discussed the Review Team's suggestion about employing a standardized examination. There is reluctance to adopt one which would result in a considerable cost to the students or the institution. Yet, there is some interest in developing a departmental examination which could be administered during a student's sophomore and senior years. This concept will continue to be explored during the 2008-09 academic year.

9. **Recommendation:** We recommend that advising materials, program descriptions, and marketing materials be revised to reflect the department's role in training zoologists and sending students on to graduate schools, rather than only pre-professional schools.

We have a well established advising program in various areas: e.g., graduate school preparation, wildlife conservation. Perhaps this did not come across clearly to the Review Team. One suggestion is that we should regularly list career opportunities on our website, rather than only bring them to our students' attention via email or in our classes.

10. **Recommendation re: Human Anatomy course:** We recommend that the College and University promote the excellence of this course sequence by maintaining its current home in Zoology and by locating appropriate teaching space.

We agree that the university should not permit this course to be duplicated elsewhere within the institution. As well, we are in agreement that we need a more adequate laboratory space for this crucial class.

11. Recommendation:strongly recommends that such a Standing Committee be established to provide for broader input to the student evaluation process and to serve as an advisory group for this endowed program.

The Pre-medical Advisor, Dr. Trask, has carefully considered this suggestion. Presently, she does not believe that establishing a Premedical Review Standing Committee is warranted, and expressed this view to the Program Review Team.

We are grateful for the thoughtful and helpful evaluation provided by the Program Review Team. It provides an excellent framework for continued discussion and change.