

**Dean's Response to the Program Review
of the Zoology Program
June, 2018**

First, I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone who contributed to this review. The Evaluation Team provided a thorough review and analysis, and made many valuable recommendations to the Zoology Program. Likewise, Chairperson Hoagstrom compiled an informative self-study and also provided pertinent responses to the Evaluation Team Report.

I have reviewed all documents related to this Program Review, and in general, I agree with the Evaluation Team assessment and found the majority of their recommendations to be thoughtful, well conceived, and of significant potential benefit to Zoology. Likewise, I appreciated the thoughtful consideration of these recommendations and the responses provided by Chairperson Hoagstrom.

Having said this, I wish to add some additional comments and perspectives to the review. To do so, I will respond primarily to the Zoology Faculty Response to the Site Visit Report:

Curriculum, Student Learning Outcomes, and Assessment:

First, I wish to add my agreement to the recommendations to continue to pursue an introductory one-semester majors course such as BIOL 1610/1615, which is common at other USHE institutions. Reassigned time has always been available to support such an effort, and has even been offered to those involved in prior discussions in COS Life Science Departments. I fully expect that incoming Dean Easter-Pilcher also would be willing to provide reassigned time to advance this effort, and strongly support this recommendation.

Second, the suggestion to adopt an outside standardized exam is a good one and could inform all Life Science departments about curricular "holes" as well as provide evidence of student success, which is becoming increasingly important in USHE institutions. I agree with this recommendation and urge adoption.

Third, the Evaluation Team report made several recommendations that from my perspective, have a common theme:

- a) faculty discussions about skills and techniques taught in labs take place to ensure content diversity and prevent overlap
- b) clean up the majors curriculum map to more accurately reflect the development of topics during a typical four years of coursework keeping in mind that not every class needs to map onto every outcome for assessment purposes
- c) create an assessment committee ... tasked with learning from Weber programs with more developed assessment in place and then proposing a department-wide assessment plan....

Having gone through the Self-Study, it seems that the Evaluation Team recommendations may be related to the expected learning outcomes stated for both General Education and non-general education (majors) courses. The only truly measureable items listed are those considered core competencies. How is "understanding" measured? How are the Core Concepts assessed and do all faculty (including adjuncts) adhere to common practices? While the program agrees that relative to (b), "discrepancies on the curriculum grid are undeniable," the (a) and (b) concerns noted by the Evaluation Team also appear to be clearly related to (c). Strong curricular design begins and ends with first agreeing on truly measurable expected student learning outcomes at the program level (here including skills and techniques developed both in classroom and lab), and employing

backwards design that includes additional discussion/determination of course-level expected learning outcomes (again measurable) to define well-conceived pathways through the major. While this may have already been done, I don't observe this in the current assessment plan, Curriculum map, or learning outcomes, and I expect that this perception may also have contributed to the recommendations made by the Evaluation Team. Reimagining the curriculum from this perspective appears to be needed, and as such, I strongly agree with the recommendations made by the Evaluation Team.

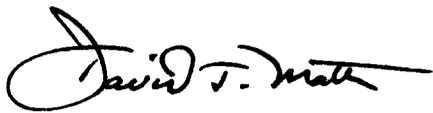
Fourth, the Evaluation Team suggested department discussions regarding assessment data and appropriate changes to curricula if needed. The program response agreed. As a suggestion, perhaps the department might consider appointing faculty coordinators especially to monitor assessment of multi-section courses taught by multiple faculty. This might improve coherence in course content and improve assessment activities.

Fifth, I agree with the general recommendations regarding the importance of maintaining engaged advisory board(s). One option not discussed is to develop several small subdisciplinary advisory boards, which have one or two representatives who also serve on a larger and broader advisory board. To expand input from pre-professional areas, discussions with the Deans Office and the COS Advising Office are encouraged, and it's not out of the question that some members of the pre-professional advisory board could also contribute to Zoology.

Finally, I note that Zoology continues to lose market share of General Education and its overall SCH has dropped 14% in the past five years. As such, I was surprised to read that in almost all cases, the program response was less than enthusiastic, noting that over the next three or four academic years, the department would "hold discussions" on many of the recommendations made by the Evaluation Team. Consequently, I ask the Faculty Senate Executive Board, the Provost, and incoming Dean Easter-Pilcher to strongly recommend more timely action by the program to address the recommendations of the Evaluation Team.

Having said this, I again wish to thank Zoology for their good work, and wish them only the best as they move into the future.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Matty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

David J. Matty, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Science