

Department of Biology, Faculty Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2008

Present:

Shawn Ahmed, Sabrina Burmeister, Jeff Dangl, Jean DeSaix, Mara Duncan, Robert Duronio, Patricia Gensel, Bob Goldstein, Sarah Grant, Albert Harris, Kelly Hogan, Tyson Hedrick, Corbin Jones, William Kier, Joel Kingsolver, Jason Lieb, Sarah Liljegren, Steve Matson, Ann Matthyse, Charles Mitchell, Patricia Pukkila, Seth Reice, Jeff Sekelsky, Maria Servedio, Kevin Slep, Keith Sockman, Todd Vision, Peter White, Elaine Yeh

Not Present:

Albert Baldwin, Victoria Bautch, Kerry Bloom, John Bruno, Christina Burch, Jennifer Cobble, Frank Conlon, Greg Copenhaver, Stephen Crews, Alan Jones, Joseph Kieber, Cathy Lohmann, Ken Lohmann, William Marzluff, Greg Matera, Robert Peet, Mark Peifer, Charles Peterson, Karin Pfennig, David Pfennig, Jason Reed, Steve Rogers, Ted Salmon, Lillie Searles, Darrel Stafford, Haven Wiley, Christopher Willett

I – Announcements (Steve Matson)

- Congratulations to Steve Rogers, Beckman Award recipient, 1 of 2 UNC received this year, please congratulate Steve him when you see him.
- Ecology Candidate Search Status (Joel Kingsolver) – Buckley was here three weeks ago for a second visit – the visit went well, she has one month to accept offer. Hurlbert left today after his second visit, it also went well. Steve Matson: Buckley has offers elsewhere (South Carolina, UCSD). Buckley's significant other, a physicist, will visit UNC, Duke, etc. to investigate opportunities.
- Graduate Student Recruitment: EEOB (Steve Matson) – 9 offers, 4 acceptances, 1 declined, 4 outstanding.
- Graduate Student Recruitment: BBSP (Bob Duronio) – Very successful results. Acceptance committee shooting for approximately 95 acceptances, received 114, including 24 minorities. The MCDB admissions committee (1 of the 4) received 44 students (42% matriculation, shot for 37%). Overall, a high quality group of students. Concerning TA-ships, the students can TA Biology courses their first year. Steve Matson: Letter will go out to all incoming students shortly, asking if they want to TA a course in Biology or Chemistry. They will all be offered the opportunity.
- Textbooks (Steve Matson) – Administration is concerned about the cost of textbooks. Textbook order deadline is now being enforced more seriously than in the past. This allows the bookstore time to compete for used textbooks. Positive action is required to indicate that no textbook is required for a course (Biol295, 395 and a few other research courses are exempt). If you do not require a textbook then please email Denise Hargis that you will not be using a text in your course.

II – Departmental Website for Course Syllabi (Ann Matthyse and Steve Matson)

Students want to know what they are getting into before they register. Is there objection to the public display of course syllabi from the standpoint of intellectual property? – None expressed. The level of content will be determined by the instructor. When Denise Hargis asks for your syllabus, respond and send it. This pertains to courses up to the 600s (not 700 or above).

III – Assessment Report (Ann Matthyse)

Committee charged with determining what the undergraduate Biology majors have learned - not an assessment of a particular course. Process: examine random sample of papers that have been written by undergraduates in courses above 400. Gauge the following:

- Have the students gotten what was taught in the core courses?
75 % yes
- How well can the students incorporate material from one course into another?
Biphasic – one group did well, another group not very well (>25%)
Recommendation: when teaching beyond the core courses, train/encourage students to bring in material from the core and other courses.
- Can they explain ideas and concepts – reason and logic?
Writing is good. Students in the molecular courses are struggling more than those in organismal courses in terms of demonstrating logic and reason.
Recommendation: people teaching molecular topic may want to address this in your courses.

Next year the core courses will be assessed.

Steve Matson: 2.8 GPA for the Biology undergraduate classes overall. Stable for the past decade. This is slightly lower than the college average.

IV – Development Efforts (Steve Matson)

- Letters are sent to people who donate \$10-200 to the department.
- Arts and Sciences Foundation: Steve Scott is assigned to the Biology Dept. This is new within the last year.
- The electronic reservation system for graduation is mined for alumni, names are downloaded into a database.
- The Biology Dept. website has a link to click for donations to the department.

New Initiatives:

- Newsletter: Will require content from the faculty. Students from the journalism school may be recruited for this.
- Board of Visitors for Biology: Identify ~12 people who would serve as a board of visitors. Objective – Board would spread the word to potential donors and give the dept. input on how to improve. They would be potential donors or know potential donors. Chemistry has implemented this very effectively – successful for a number of years now. Kingsolver: recommend that a few of these people be academics. Dangl: Cancer Center does this also, Shelley Earp is very effective – we should contact Shelley for ideas.

V – Announcements (Corbin Jones)

- Time to submit candidates for the Biology Seminar Series
- High Throughput Genomics Sequencing – now running.

VI – Personnel Issues

No minutes.