



Date: June 7, 2013

From: James Houpis, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs  
Susan Opp, AVP, Academic Programs and Graduate Studies

To: Michael Leung, Dean, College of Science  
Donald Gailey, Chair, Department of Biological Sciences  
Chris Chamberlain, Chair, CAPR

Subject: MOU Meeting – Department of Biological Sciences

On June 7, 2013, Michael Leung (Dean, College of Science), Donald Gailey (Chair, Department of Biological Sciences), Chris Chamberlain (Chair, CAPR), Susan Opp (AVP, Academic Programs), and James Houpis (Provost and VP, Academic Affairs) met to discuss the 5-Year Program Review for the Department of Biological Sciences and to develop an MOU as required by CAPR.

The Department of Biological Sciences indicated office administrative staff support has stabilized over the last year with a new office manager, a welcome change from ongoing staffing changes in the past. However, the department also indicated a need for additional office staff. The College will review the situation with the Department.

Although in general Biology has increased course offerings in 2012-13 over the previous year, this increase in enrollment has occurred only in terms of undergraduates. The numbers of Master's and Biotechnology Certificate students have decreased somewhat recently, for reasons that are not entirely clear to the department. Biology faculty are reported to be mostly interested in graduate students who will be in the M.S. program rather than in the non-research M.A. program, but only about half of the tenure-track/tenured faculty are active scholars. The department is encouraged to consider further the future of the M.A. program relative to the M.S. and ways to increase overall graduate enrollment to better serve the students and to avoid further declines in numbers.

The Biology Department is commended for its plans to evaluate the success of the many options in the B.S. to determine future directions. In addition, the department is considering revising the student advising structure within the department so that it will be organized around the options. The department would also do well to more fully examine its relationship to the M.S. in Marine Sciences, a program that has not had any active students in a number of years. We look forward to the results of these curricular and structural considerations.

The Department of Biological Sciences is moving forward with plans for assessment of student learning with the active involvement of certain faculty, but more work needs to be done to “close-the-loop”. We look forward to hearing about additional Biology faculty becoming actively involved with assessment in the department and about how the results of assessment are being used.

The results of the MOU meeting are as follows:

1. The Department will review with the College its staff needs.
2. The Department will examine the graduate programs, including the M.S. in Biological Sciences, M.A. in Biological Sciences, M.S. in Marine Sciences, and Biotechnology Certificate program, to address enrollment declines and sustainable plans for the future of the programs.
3. The options in the B.S. program will be examined in terms of enrollment, curriculum, and student advising, and plans will be developed for the future.
4. The Department will develop ongoing plans to involve all faculty in the assessment of student learning outcomes for the degree programs, as well as for GE and service courses, and will report on those efforts in their Annual Report to CAPR.

The Department of Biological Sciences is commended for the work of its faculty in support of engaged student learning and success, and for its new tenure-track hires. CAPR is also thanked for the informative report.

cc: Mitch Watnik  
Sophie Rollins