

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

DESIGNATION CODE: 99-00 CAPR 11

DATE SUBMITTED: May 11, 2000

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Resources

SUBJECT: Five Year Program Review for the Department of Biological Sciences
(and Marine Sciences)

ACTION

REQUESTED: Approval of the Program Review of the Department of Biological Sciences

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On April 20, 2000, CAPR met with Susan Opp and Michael Hedrick of the Department of Biological Sciences to discuss the department's five year program review. Stephen Benson, Department Chair, was unable to attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. The following documents were submitted for CAPR to review: the 5-year Review and Strategic Plan (2000-2005), the report from the outside reviewer Professor Stan Hillman, and the department's response to Professor Hillman's comments.

The Department of Biological Sciences offers a B.S. degree, a B.A. degree, an undergraduate minor, a Life Science Option within the Liberal Studies Department, and a M.S. degree. The curriculum is diverse and designed to meet the needs of students with many different career and graduate degree objectives.

PROGRAM REVIEW:

The department's Program Review document provides the department's mission statement and five-year (1995-1999) review covering the following areas: changes in degree programs since 1995, programmatic changes, activity in research and external funding, undergraduate services and opportunities, student demography and enrollment trends, and faculty allocations.

The department actively updates and revises course and programmatic offerings to respond to the dynamic nature of the discipline. Their list of accomplishments in this area is long and impressive. Since the last program review, they have developed and implemented 29 new courses and initiated a new interdisciplinary environmental sciences program. They are revising their Biotechnology Certificate Program to include qualified undergraduate students. They have developed a Forensic Science Degree Program with the Criminal Justice Department. They have several outreach programs for under-represented minority students. Additionally, students in biology may take Marine Sciences courses for credit through the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, which presents a great opportunity for both undergraduate and graduate students at CSUH.

The Department of Biological Sciences also has an impressive record of published research and securing external funding. Many of their programs involve CSUH undergraduate and graduate

students. Because of the number of grants and the high level of professional activity of tenure-track faculty, 33% of the department's WTUs are taught by part-time faculty. The use of part-time faculty was discussed at the CAPR meeting. On the whole, part-time faculty members are highly qualified, have been with the Department of Biological Sciences for a long time, receive excellent teaching evaluations, and are well-integrated into the department. CAPR committee members recognize that utilizing part-time faculty is necessary to enable full-time faculty to work on external grants, and that the department is doing what is necessary to balance the need for quality teaching and faculty professional activity.

Of concern to the department is the fact that the number of biology majors has declined (although FTES has remained fairly constant) from 512 to 410 since 1997. They conclude that the reasons are "varied and complex" and provide a detailed action plan to address this issue. Their plans include increased recruitment of both freshmen and transfer students, outreach efforts to middle and high school teachers, and using a new website for recruitment.

STRATEGIC PLAN (2000-2005):

The department lists and describes 9 strategic goals that they "deem important to (their) continued success and evolution." The department as a whole adopted the goals and formed three committees to develop action plans for each. The goals address issues of curriculum, enrollment, assessment, professional achievement, external partnerships, equipment, and departmental space.

COMMENTS BY OUTSIDE REVIEWER and DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE:

Stan Hillman, Professor and Chair of Biology at Portland State University, reported on many strengths of the CSUH Department of Biological Sciences. These strengths include the quality of the faculty, the level of extramural funding, the ambitious strategic plan, the changes to the B.S. and B.A. degrees, revisions to the graduate programs and Biotechnology Certificate Program, the development of the Environmental Science Program and Forensic Science Program, the MAGIC Center, the work with minority students, making the field ecology station accessible to the handicapped, and the establishment of an aquatic biology program.

Professor Hillman expressed concern about the number of part-time lecturers employed by the department. The department response, as outlined above, indicates that the situation is unavoidable because the part-time positions result from the released time of full-time faculty who receive externally-funded research grants. The department recognizes the feelings of uncertainty held by part-time faculty and makes concerted efforts to make their service more rewarding.

Other concerns mentioned by Professor Hillman pertain to aging equipment and limited research space. The department response indicates that it is aware of these problems, and is doing what it can to address them. Their efforts involve working with the School of Science to procure new equipment and lab space, seeking (and receiving) external funding, and investigating the possibility of establishing more technology-enhanced classrooms.

CAPR recommends approval of the Program Review of the Department of Biological Sciences without modification.