

The College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences
DEAN'S RESPONSE - 2017 Academic Program Review
Department of Biological Sciences
UMBC

SUMMARY

The external reviewers (i.e., Elizabeth Connor, Laura Galloway, and Jeffrey Lawrence) are highly esteemed members within their respective scientific disciplines. Their qualifications include years of experience, expertise, and leadership appropriate to conduct a formal Academic Program Review of the Department of Biological Sciences.

In general, the department is well run, under strong leadership, and positioned for significant growth in research and reputation. The academic program is of high quality with acknowledgement of the strong dedication of its faculty to student success and inclusive excellence. The department's educational assessment plan that is used to maintain program effectiveness sufficiently "closes the loop". The research program is performing as expected within its resource constraints, *vide infra*. Challenges include the need of additional space, research infrastructure support, and faculty hires.

The external reviewers' report reflects the general opinion of the Dean.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Since Fall 2011, the department has been well supported with priority hiring (for replacement and potential growth) by the college, which has resulted in the hiring of five assistant professors and a pre-professoriate faculty member (with the potential to convert to TT in FY20). The number of lecturers has remained constant. It is important to note that no TT lines have been converted to lecturers. The most recent hires reflect growth in the number of TT faculty in the department with an additional line planned for FY19. The Biological Sciences department is a model for inclusive excellence and an avid participant in the pre-professoriate diversity program. The Dean supports the strategic hiring of faculty members in accord with the recommendation of the department chair and its faculty.

The college has established a Science and Math Advising Resource Team (SMART), under the directorship of Michelle Bulger. This team of five staff (plus one additional hire that is in process) is dedicated to the professional advising of students with declared majors in biology, chemistry, and biochemistry only. The creation/expansion of SMART and increasing the number of TT faculty is intended to further reduce the service/advising workload on the faculty in Biological Sciences.

The new Interdisciplinary Life Science Building will immediately benefit the department with a state-of-the-art vivarium, tissue culture facilities, and dedicated laboratories for animal researchers. Evacuated space in Biological Sciences buildings will be available for further expansion and renovation. Modern research equipment (funded as part of the building) will provide increased support of the research infrastructure. In addition, the college has worked to

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bolster the research infrastructure of the department through renovation and support of the Keith Porter Imaging facility, purchase of a new dishwasher, and paying off the department debt.

The academic curriculum is under the purview of the department and its faculty. The department embraces assessment as a means to improving student learning outcomes and the quality of its undergraduate and graduate programs.

The needs of Biological Sciences is given full and equitable consideration by the college. Additional funding is requested following the strategic budget planning process. Space needs are addressed through space allocation change requests.