

Post-APR Action Plan – Department of Biological Sciences

First Draft Reviewed by Chair _msg_ Date: 1/7/2025 Dean __ Date:

Next YTR: 2028-2028

Senior Administration Review Meeting Date: 02/18/2025

Edits/Changes to Action Plan Due Date: 03/06/2025

Attendees: Michelle Starz-Gaiano, Bill LaCourse, Jeffery Halverson, Stephen Freeland, Peggy Re, Kyle Pokorny & Colleen Rebeiro

Recommendation	Department Action	College Action	Provost's Office Action	Action Plan Update
UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM				
Grow the number of students in major programs	X	X	X	Dept: Partner with administration (Admissions Office, Communications) to improve website/marketing and visibility of programs; continue to partner with outreach programs to attract students (working with community colleges and participating in Science Olympiad); through local partnerships such as the SOM, facilitate opportunities for student research experiences; ensure accessibility and partner with SDS office to support student services/accommodations.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, UPD and undergraduate program committee, website committee, ad hoc outreach committees (e.g., Science Olympiad), with contributions from teaching faculty
Develop “tracks” for students e.g., Neurobiology, Ecology/Evolution track, Marine biology, to attract/keep students	X		X	Dept: Outline curriculum for tracks; determine what additional classes are needed to be offered; streamline course requirements; improve the website to highlight courses within popular areas of interest.
				By deadline: Fall 2026
				Responsible Agent: UPD and undergraduate program committee, website committee, working groups for tracks

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Assess current programs and needs of professionals in Biology-related fields	X	X	X	Dept: Acquire more data on what graduates do after graduation to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum changes (2010); ensure assessment of core and GEP classes; support Computational Biology courses/program; evaluate how to structure WI classes in light of AI; re-evaluate BIOL 300L; evaluate demand, workload, and teaching needs to provide more CURES.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, UPD and undergraduate program committee, BINF faculty; website committee, assessment committee, with contributions from teaching faculty
GRADUATE CURRICULUM				
Increase the number of graduate students, with attention to inclusive excellence	X	X	X	Dept: Prioritize funding for students through training grants, including GAs on Biology faculty's research grants, and encouraging fellowship applications by students; discuss with Research Council additional/supplemental support mechanisms for GAs; improve website and partner with administration/graduate school to improve advertising/marketing of programs; explore developing "feeder" programs through post-bac or REU programs.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, GPD and graduate program committee, website committee, G-RISE PI and faculty, with contributions from graduate faculty

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Evaluate needs and establish additional graduate student-specific courses	X			Dept: Assess student needs, evaluate curriculum mapping; provide R/biostats/writing/other classes; revise teaching workload policies to include graduate course teaching.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, GPD and graduate program committee, workload committee
Enhance mentoring to promote student success and satisfaction	X			Dept: Establish and require graduate student-mentor agreements
				By deadline: Fall 2025
				Responsible Agent: Chair, GPD and graduate program committee, with contributions from graduate faculty
RESEARCH				
Improve grant support	X	X	X	Dept: Expand efforts to review each other's grants (e.g., specific aims club) and to garner input from external experts; improve communication with Research Council and VP for Research office about grant needs.
				By deadline: Fall 2026
				Responsible Agent: Chair, Research committee, biology faculty on Research Council

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Improve animal care	X	X	X	Dept: Continue efforts to ensure proper function of the vivaria, with ongoing monitoring; seek AALAC animal care accreditation (partnering with the new veterinarian); ensure adequate space for animal vivaria on campus.
				By deadline: Fall 2025
				Responsible Agent: Chair, Vivarium user group
Recommend shared facilities costs be subsidized to market rates	X	X	X	Dept: Review shared facilities user costs at UMBC (for imaging, MCAC, graphics, animal costs, etc.) with Administration and recommend rates be subsidized to market/local rates through indirect costs.
				By deadline: Fall 2025
				Responsible Agent: Chair, research committee, biology faculty on research council

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RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL				
Improve productivity of current faculty	X	X	X	Dept: Fill administrative positions to streamline workloads; provide peer support and faculty mentoring; maintain/update workload policies; expand support of graduate program to ensure sufficient lab personnel.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, graduate program committee, workload committee
Maintain current numbers of faculty	X	X	X	Dept: Develop a hiring plan to replace faculty who retire; continue to promote collegiality, mentoring, and peer support among faculty.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, executive committee, faculty mentoring committee, with contributions from all faculty
Support innovative teaching and excellence in the classroom	X	X	X	Dept: Improve/expand course assessments; reward professional development, encourage FDC participation; provide more TA training; increase number of CURES research-style classes.
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, executive committee, faculty mentoring committee, with contributions from teaching faculty

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Improve equity in teaching to support productivity	X	X		Dept: Re-evaluate and establish workload policy for improved equity in teaching (with a focus on lab classes and graduate classes) and maintain research productivity
				By deadline: Fall 2027
				Responsible Agent: Chair, workload committee
FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE				
Improve facilities with attention to Schwartz Hall as well as upgrades/maintenance in electrical lines, plumbing, HVAC, hot water outages, and security, in all areas of use by Biological Sciences	X	X	X	Facilities need to be sufficient to support R1 research status. Dept: Identify areas of need and strategies to work around problems; partner with Facilities Management to assess and maintain infrastructure (building) concerns; encourage building replacement; limit key/swipe access to buildings.
				By deadline: Fall 2027 and future
				Responsible Agent: Chair, building manager (Sam Williams)
Evaluate/improve facilities with attention to teaching labs	X	X	X	Dept: Clean and take advantage of painting and other simple improvements, and make sure labs are properly stocked.
				By deadline: Fall 2025 and future
				Responsible Agent: Chair, building manager (Sam Williams), with contributions from teaching faculty

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Improve facilities with attention to research labs	X	X	X	Dept: Assess needs for common equipment to determine what to purchase and make sure common equipment is all working and accessible (qRT-PCR, incubators, autoclaves, gel documentation, Typhoon, etc.).
				By deadline: Fall 2026 and future
				Responsible Agent: Chair, building manager (Sam Williams), with contributions from research faculty
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Improve communication with all parties	X	X	X	Dept: Ensure regular communication with administration (Department, Dean, Provost, VP Research office/Research Council) through meetings, email, website updates, to improve transparency about policies and resource allocation and grant F&A (indirect cost) use.
				By deadline: Fall 2026
				Responsible Agent: Chair, Research committee, biology faculty on Research Council, Business services staff
Obtain and share budget information with Department members	X			Dept: Have the Chair provide additional detail and improve transparency about resource allocation within the Department
				By deadline: Fall 2026
				Responsible Agent: Chair, Business services staff

Approved (Initials and Date):

WRL 01/07/2025

msg 3/6/25

PRe 3/6/25

JBH 3/5/25

SF 3/6/25

March 06, 2025

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