

Program Review Executive Summary

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Western Oregon University: Biology Department (NSM Division)

Majors Reviewed:

- ☐ Biology
- ☐ Aquarium Science

Minors and Certificates Reviewed:

- ☐ Biology

Dates of Program Review: Academic Year 2021-22
External Reviewer Visit: October 2022

Date of Executive Summary: June 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Western Oregon University's Department of Biology conducted a formal program review during the 2021-22 academic year. The self-study was co-written by Professors of Biology Dr. Erin Baumgartner and Dr. Bryan Dutton, and was submitted to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS) in Fall 2022. Dr. Elizabeth Hutchinson, Associate Professor of Biology at SUNY Geneseo, conducted an external review in March 2023 and submitted a report shortly after her visit.

The program review emphasized the following programmatic strengths:

- a. Strong, personalized academic advising of students
- b. Robust contributions to General Education program
- c. Outstanding opportunities for undergraduate student research
- d. Solid, steady course enrollments (supported by service to Biology Teacher Education program in College of Education)
- e. Numerous high-impact opportunities that connect with broader community
- f. High-quality, academically sound programming
- g. Student-centered faculty, deeply engaged with student success and curricular improvement
- h. Trailer sequence that provides student-centered opportunities to stay on path toward graduation
- i. Good range of concentrations and multiple degree pathways

The following challenges were identified:

- a. Low resources, making it difficult to write and procure major grants
- b. Lack of resources to compensate support full NTT involvement in service and advising
- c. High DFW rates in certain courses, especially for under-represented students
- d. Lack of racial or ethnic diversity in faculty
- e. Heavy faculty workload with regard to both teaching and service

Opportunities include:

- a. Develop systemized approach of assessment and continual improvement, especially in high DFW courses; continue to refine curricular offerings and pathways
- b. Emphasize career preparedness more explicitly (perhaps through working with Center for Professional Pathways)
- c. Engage in more intentional marketing and publicity of programs
- d. Enhance relationships with feeder community colleges in Biology

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

New Program-Driven Initiatives	Completed	Underway	To Be Done
Request support for a BI 2X coordinator to support student success at this level			X

Request support for an assessment coordinator to focus on improving DFW rates in key courses			X
Work with Center for Professional Pathways to develop career readiness initiatives			X
Apply for internal marketing grants (if this program continues) or other opportunities to publicize/market program			X
Build on MTM work by engaging with community college partners		X	
Lobby for additional support for grant-writing and NTT engagement			X
If future vacancies occur, work with campus Search Advocate to increase likelihood of diversifying faculty			X
Continue to engage in streamlining, revising and adapting curriculum and pathways to support student success and completion		X	
Develop more systemized engagement with alumni			X