

Weber State University, Department of Microbiology, Faculty Response to 2018 19 Program Review

Review Date: March 26⁶27, 2019

The Department of Microbiology thanks the program review for their detailed and constructive feedback regarding the Strengths, Areas of Improvement, and Recommendations for standards A6H. We will address each of the standards below. There are four areas that we found particularly important: preparing students for the workforce, helping students move efficiently towards graduation, research capacity, and faculty workload.

Standard A. Mission Statement

The Review Team found the Microbiology curriculum to be well-thought-out and to have a strong set of core courses as well as excellent electives for the students to choose. The courses support the mission and goals of the Department, which has been formalized in a strategic plan. Each course is aligned with broad goals and specific learning outcomes. The learning goals were developed by the Department using the American Association for the Advancement of Science Vision and Change document and the American Society for Microbiology Undergraduate Curriculum Guidelines.

We agree with the Review Team's recommendation that more work needs to be done regarding closing the loop on assessment and sharing information regarding best practices among faculty teaching the same or similar courses. We plan to accomplish this by including it as an action item in our strategic plan. This plan will be to devote some of our department meeting time for the task of assessing one or two specific outcomes and how they will be accomplished in the courses that applies to our curriculum map. This will take several semesters; the timeline will be delineated in the strategic plan.

Standard B. Curriculum

The Review Team found the Microbiology faculty have been compliant with the General Education revitalization effort on campus and designed their General Education courses around a Big Question and Signature Assignment. The Review Team thanked the department for supporting innovative general education courses. They suggested perhaps rebranding the MICR 1153 (Introduction to Public Health) course so that it would appeal to a wider audience and attract more students to the College of Science and the Department. We agree that updating the course descriptions and working with department advisors from other colleges may help attract a wider audience and bring more students into the College of Science. We support the Review Team's recommendation that the department could do a better job developing a more uniform vision regarding the learning outcomes for MICR 1113 and MICR 1153 so that the course learning

outcomes are more similar within the same or different semesters. This will be addressed in an action item in our new strategic plan.

plan. We plan to take advantage of campus resources and ask for additional support if needed. The Review Team suggested a good plan would be to focus on one learning outcome per year and

Administrative Assistant and our Laboratory Manager. We agree with the Review Team that the Department needs to continue support staff professional development and support. Staff will be encouraged to apply for professional development grants to attend conferences. However, in order to address the demands of the positions the administrative assistant position needs to become full time and both staff positions need salary increases.

Standard G. Relationships with External Communities

Establishing internships provides additional opportunities that prepares students for the workforce and it is and will continue to be a part of the strategic plan for the Department. The feasibility of providing an opportunity for internship or similar experience for every student (through Capstone experience) is a worthy goal for the department. The Build Dairy program is excellent example of a successful partnership. We will continue to work with our advisory board to build relationships with companies in the area, alumni who may be able to assist us, and new relationships such as with Hill Air Force Base.

Standard H. Program Summary

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- b. Investigate alternative schedules or formats for course offerings
 - c. Provide student support through TAs or SIs to provide more attention to struggling students
- 3. Increase research capacity
 - a. Look for opportunities to increase research space
 - b. Strategically hire new faculty with an interest in undergraduate research opportunities
- 4. Faculty workload
 - a. Work through the College to develop a workload model that includes more credit for laboratory courses.
 - b. Hire additional faculty.

The Department is committed to maintaining that important balance between a strong research agenda and teaching excellence. The final version of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan will be available in June 2019.