From: Provost Office
To: Abler Michael L; Brice A Glenn; Cooper Scott T; Downey Nicholas J; Galbraith Anne M; Gerber Daniel T; Gillis Rick; Haro Roger J; Howard David R; Maher Margaret A; Miskowski Jennifer A; Montgomery Chad; Sandheinrich Mark B; Sandland Gregory J; Saros Jasmine E; Seebach Bradley S; Strauss Eric A; Thomsen Meredith A; Tyser Robin W; Volk Thomas J;
cc: Mclean Karen P; Hoar Robert H; Hoffman Michael A; Morgan Betsy L; Wilson Carmen R;
Subject: Academic Program Review
Date: Thursday, May 15, 2008 3:05:27 PM

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

April 15, 2008

To: Members of the Biology Department

From: Bill Colclough, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Re: Academic Program Review

As one component of a commitment to excellence at UW-La Crosse, academic departments undergo an Academic Program Review (APR) on a regular cycle. Departments that have external accreditation, participate in UW-L's APR the year following their accreditation review. Departments without external accreditation participate in the process every seven years and the process includes an external reviewer. Free standing minors go through an abbreviated process every seven years.

Each department develops a self-study as part of the process that reflects on curriculum, assessment, new initiatives, personnel, and support for achieving the program's goals. Academic program review is the responsibility of the faculty who comprise an academic department. Consequently, we are sending this letter to all members of your department.

The Biology Department will undergo review by APR in 2008. The department's last APR was reviewed by Faculty Senate in 2002.*

In the latest review the recommendations listed below were put forth by APR. Since the time of the review these recommendations may have gained or lost

salience. However, in your next review, your department will be asked to describe how they responded to the recommendations.

1. *Continue improving the assessment exam and evaluate its effectiveness as an assessment tool. Trends over several years or comparison to other programs may make this a more powerful assessment tool.*

2. *Re-evaluate how faculty receive student credit hours in research and address how research loads may lead to release time for faculty members. Be more forceful during advising about getting students to take Biology 499 ("Independent research") for credit.*

3. *Advise students to take more general chemistry and general biology courses earlier in their academic careers to leave room during their junior and senior years for more upper division electives.*

4. *Downsize upper division courses, or determine whether some upper division elective courses can be have their lectures separated from labs so as to make the upper division electives more flexibly fit into students' schedules.*

5. *Formalize the expectations for tenure and promotion with respect to explicit descriptions of teaching, research, and scholarly activity requirements.*

6. *Continue representation on committees and in administration to provide a strong voice for the Biology Department on issues of resource allocation.*

7. *Develop a more formal vehicle for alumni contact, such as a more formal survey.*

Over the past several years, the Provost's Office has worked with the APR committee and Faculty Senate to ensure up-to-date and useful documentation regarding APR. At the Faculty Senate website you will find timelines, policy, self-study formats, and samples of letters and schedules for external reviewers: http://www.uwlax.edu/facultysenate/committees/APRindex.html.At the Provost's Office website, we have posted the last set of APR recommendations for each unit/department and the full documentation for several of the more recently reviewed programs. http://www.uwlax.edu/provost/assessment/apr/calendar.htm.

Please feel free to ask your chair, Faculty Senate or our office about the process if

you have questions.

CC: Karen McLean (Dean of Science and Health)
Bob Hoar (Faculty Intern to the Provost 2008-2009)
Mike Hoffman (Chair – APR 2007-2008)
Betsy Morgan (Faculty Intern to the Provost 2007-2008)
Carmen Wilson (Chair – Faculty Senate 2007-2008)

* The cycle for programs is based on the schedule posted at the link below: http://www.uwlax.edu/facultysenate/committees/APRindex.html.
Departments may request an official deferment for cause for one year. Only an official deferment alters the schedule.

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