

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN BIOLOGY

CLARIFICATION OF ROLES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

The two years have seen a number of important improvements in the functioning of the Undergraduate Program in Biology and in services to students in the biological sciences with the increased oversight due to a Faculty Director, along with new staff bringing new approaches and skills. As a consequence of the changes, numerous questions have also arisen about roles of the associate chairs from the two departments, the director, the Program in Biology Steering Committee, and the department chairs. Specifically, the original document describing Responsibilities of the Faculty Director (approved by both departments) is fairly detailed with respect to responsibilities of the Director, but somewhat sketchy about responsibilities of the Associate Chairs in each department.

This document is largely clarification of the role of associate chairs, but does involve one change to recent practice in the Program regarding graders. We propose that the grader budget given to Biology be partitioned to Biology, EEB, MCDB according to the courses taught (see descriptions below) and responsibility be given to the Program in Biology Steering Committee or appropriate associate chair as described below. For administrative ease, the allocation for an academic year could be based on SCH in the previous year.

REVIEW OF SOME HISTORY AND BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Departments of EEB and MCDB have no undergraduate student services staff in their separate offices. Instead, the Program in Biology was created as a vehicle to manage shared services, specifically,

1. undergraduate student services for all courses taught by EEB and MCDB faculty (e.g., currently GSI assignments, advising, teaching laboratory support, web site maintenance, paperwork involved in new course development, classroom assignments, registration, waitlists, course evaluations, etc.).
2. purchasing,
3. maintenance and building support in Kraus.

In addition, the Program in Biology provides a mechanism (through the Undergraduate Program in Biology Steering Committee) for shared decision-making about shared academic programs, i.e., the Biology, General Biology, and Plant Biology majors, co-taught Biology courses, and some aspects of all Biology courses.

The Departments and their individual faculty members make their primary contribution to the teaching mission of LSA through undergraduate courses, majors and related activities. College-level budget decisions are made in part based on undergraduate enrollments and concentrators and department-level budget allocations or budget cuts are made based on their own academic priorities and philosophies. Similarly, a significant component of faculty evaluation is based on their teaching role. Therefore it is essential that the separate departments have final decision and oversight roles for all questions concerning resource

allocation (e.g., section/lab components of courses, section size) and management of teaching-related issues for faculty.

ROLES OF ASSOCIATE CHAIRS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AFFAIRS IN EEB AND MCDB AND THEIR UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES/AFFAIRS COMMITTEES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

All resource allocation and academic decisions for all courses taught exclusively by faculty in their department or “owned” by their department, including Biology courses taught by members from only one department, and all majors solely in one department (CMB and EEB). All management of teaching-related issues for any faculty from their department, regardless of course.

These include:

- Instructor assignments
- Discussion or lab section needs (GSI slots) and sizes
- Faculty advising expectations
- Allocation of graders for the courses defined above
- Course approvals (Biology courses additionally need approval from Program in Biology steering committee)
- Major requirements and policies
- Honors requirements and degrees
- Handling of grade grievances and other teaching-related concerns for department faculty and GSIs

NOTE: For any EEB or MCDB courses that may be required or are often used for joint majors (e.g., EEB 390 and MCDB 310), any important changes **must** be discussed with the Undergraduate Program in Biology steering committee, but final decisions rest with the department. For Biology courses, all such changes must be discussed with the Undergraduate Program in Biology steering committee, but only changes to existing courses that require college approval (e.g., changes in number of credits) require steering committee approval.

Roles of the Undergraduate Program in Biology Steering Committee (Faculty Director, EEB Associate Chair, and MCDB Associate Chair), following approval by departments

Resource allocation and academic decisions for shared majors not involving other units (Biology, General Biology, Plant Biology) and courses in Biology that are co-taught by EEB and MCDB faculty during the same semester or in alternative semesters (currently Biology 305, 207, 230)

These include:

- Discussion or lab section needs (GSI slots) and sizes
- Allocation of graders for the courses defined above
- Course approvals (also for all Biology courses)

- Major requirements and policies
- Honors requirements and degrees
- Select recipients for undergraduate awards housed in Program in Biology

ROLES OF THE FACULTY DIRECTOR OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN BIOLOGY

- Formal reporting line to chairs of MCDB and EEB, with responsibility for an operating budget in consultation with the chairs.
- Supervise the Student Services Manager in the Program in Biology office, along with Key-Ads of MCDB and EEB, in providing student services for students enrolled in all Biology, EEB, and MCDB courses and majors in any of the biological sciences. The associate chairs in the departments also work directly with the Student Services Manager to ensure staff support for all their responsibilities.
- Chair regular meetings of a Program in Biology steering committee, which shall consist of the Director and the Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Studies in MCDB and EEB, and be supported by the Student Services Manager for the Program. This committee approves new Biology courses, cross-lists, changes to major requirements or policies, and decides which changes require departmental approval, determines which students receive honors degrees for the joint majors, and selects recipients for undergraduate awards.
- Oversight of processes involved in setting and implementing requirements, advising, Honors program for the majors in Biology, General Biology, and Plant Biology.
- Coordinate with Program in Neuroscience faculty director to ensure student services functions assigned to the Program in Biology staff are accomplished.
- Be an ex officio member of the steering committees for the Microbiology and Neuroscience majors.
- Coordinate with EEB and MCDB associate chairs to ensure that all courses required for Biology, General Biology, Plant Biology, Microbiology and Neuroscience majors are offered with appropriate balance among semesters.
- Coordinate with EEB and MCDB associate chairs to ensure long-term planning for instructors for required courses.
- Oversight of all joint policies between EEB and MCDB regarding undergraduate instruction, including policies for independent research, honors, and grade grievances. Ensure that approval by appropriate MCDB and EEB committees/faculty is received for any modifications of policy.
- Oversight of the process for GSI appointments and training for all Biology, EEB, and MCDB courses.
- Oversight of Undergraduate Teaching Assistant program, including periodic review of effectiveness of UTAs as required by current MCDB/EEB policy.
- Oversight of Biology Program web page.
- Oversight of transfer credit evaluation process for biology courses.
- Coordinate with support programs to increase diversity in the biological sciences, e.g., the M-Bio Scholars Academy and CSP.
- Handle any grade grievances involving the associate chairs.

- Develop policies and programs and write proposals to enhance services for students in the biological sciences. Such initiatives are up to the Director; some possibilities include development of learning goals for the joint majors and approaches for assessment, establish a peer advising program, programs to enhance career exploration, expand the honors program for the biology majors (e.g., seminars, upper level writing, etc.), summer internship program, ePortfolios, increase interactions among undergraduate students in the biological sciences

Approved by MCDB Exec Committee:

July 29, 2013

Approved by EEB Executive Committee:

July 31, 2013