

CALS Academic Planning Council

6201 Microbial Sciences Building

March 15, 2022, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

2021-22 meeting materials found at:

<https://uwmadison.box.com/v/CALSAPC21-22>

Attendees: Todd Courtenay, David Eide, Barbara Ingham, Medhi Kabbage, Eric Kruger, Jamie Nack, Francisco Peñagaricano, Ivan Rayment, Guanming Shi, Michael Thomas

Absent: Jed Colquhoun, Xuejun Pan, Thea Whitman, Michael Xenos

Ex Officio: Kate VandenBosch, Doug Reinemann, Karen Wassarman

Guests: Charles Kaspar (item #2, departed at 1:40 pm)

Welcome and introductions

Review agenda

Revisions to current agenda

- *No revisions were made to the agenda.*

Consent Agenda

1. February 15, 2022 meeting minutes (Box)
 - *Item 1 was approved by consent.*

Action and Discussion Items

2. Biochemistry program review: 1st discussion, w/review committee chair
 - *For Biochemistry, the review committee opted to separately review the undergraduate program and the Integrated Program in Biochemistry (IPiB) graduate program that is co-administered by the departments of Biochemistry (CALs) and Biomolecular Chemistry (School of Medicine and Public Health - SMPH).*
 - *Chuck Kaspar, chair of the Biochemistry program review committee and professor of Bacteriology, attended to speak on behalf of the review committee.*
 - *The program review process was delayed some due to the pandemic and all interviews were conducted via Zoom, which the review committee acknowledges may have had impact on participant responses, as opposed to being able to meet in person.*
 - *Review of Biochemistry's undergraduate program*
 - *Biochemistry is the largest department in CALs with 35 faculty.*
 - *The major is offered both through CALs and the College of Letters & Science (L&S) but administration for both majors is carried out by Biochemistry.*
 - *Undergraduate advising is done through an advising hub fully supported by CALs.*
 - *The proportion of female undergraduate majors is below the CALs average of degree recipients.*
 - *Interviews conducted with undergraduate students indicated they were satisfied with the program but would like more opportunities for direct interaction with faculty and an additional laboratory opportunity earlier in the program of study.*
 - *The Biochemistry undergraduate major requires three Biochemistry courses; all other required courses are offered through other departments (e.g. Chemistry, Physics, Math, Biology).*
 - *The curriculum provides flexibility which is appreciated by students, but they don't typically take a Biochemistry course until their junior year. This, in addition to the fact that the first*

Biochemistry course is a large class, makes it difficult for students to become part of a community and make connections with other students and the instructor.

- *The review committee supports the program's five-year plan to increase the number of sections in the larger courses to maximize the student experience and student-instructor interactions.*
- *The review committee questioned whether the three required Biochemistry courses have sufficient breadth to cover all areas of biochemistry as well as if it was possible for one laboratory course to cover even basic biochemical methods.*
- *Students interviewed suggested having a course on laboratory methods earlier in their study would help maximize later laboratory experiences.*
- *In the review committee's discussions with assistant professors, they found the assistant professors felt supported in research startups, grant preparation, and collaborations and that they appreciated feedback from co-instructors in courses they taught, as they found teaching in large classes challenging.*
- *Questions and feedback from the committee on the undergraduate program review*
 - *Under the challenges listed, did the review committee give thought to what is highest priority?*
 - *Priority items include reducing the large class sizes by offering multiple sections and having an introductory course to basic laboratory skills offered early in the course of study.*
 - *Does the department have the capacity for that kind of introductory course?*
 - *Yes, the review committee believes this to be the case.*
 - *Are there student organizations in the department?*
 - *Yes, but due to the pandemic they may not have been actively gathering.*
 - *The department also holds events that are social in nature for community building among faculty, staff, and students.*
 - *The curriculum requirement for the major includes the three required Biochemistry courses but the majority of a student's coursework is not in the department. Is there an interest in changing the curriculum?*
 - *Other courses are offered by the department, which students may take as electives, but there weren't clear numbers to indicate how often this is happening.*
 - *There is some interest in exploring the curriculum which is addressed in the department's five-year plan and has been discussed by the department.*
 - *What is the benefit to CALS for the Biochemistry major to be split between CALS and L&S?*
 - *In the review committee chair's opinion, it's not really fair, as CALS is doing all the administrative work and L&S is benefitting from that.*
- *Review of Biochemistry's graduate program: Integrated Program in Biochemistry (IPiB)*
 - *IPiB is run jointly by the Departments of Biochemistry and Biomolecular Chemistry.*
 - *Positives of the IPiB program include security of funding for graduate students, the quality of mentors that host rotations, the support of outstanding new faculty members, inter- and intra-departmental collaborations, rigorous courses and program structure and timeline that are all well-defined, state-of-the-art facilities, breadth of research programs, and a nationally ranked program.*
 - *A steering committee administers the program, and its membership is appointed by the chairs of Biochemistry and Biomolecular Chemistry.*
 - *There are potential areas for improvement in terms of recruiting, as IPiB competes with related graduate programs on campus, some of which include trainees with active extramurally-funded biochemical research programs.*

- *There was a perception among students that there are 4-5 labs which exclude certain students and that no action has been taken to address these concerns.*
- *Several students also had the impression that the steering committee lacked the capacity to resolve disputes and that the department chairs control the steering committee actions, making progress challenging or difficult.*
- *IPiB students must participate in two semesters of teaching, referred to as a teaching practicum, and serve as part of the graduate assistants training. There is contention between the two departments related to the utility and value of requiring graduate students to teach two semesters. The review committee feels there needs to be a resolution on the teaching requirement and acknowledges that while it may be valuable for some types of students, others may benefit from having the opportunity to pursue other paths for professional development.*
- *Students noted a desire for more effective career development programs.*
- *Faculty and students have a strong sense that the program is committed to their well-being and success.*
- *Students expressed concerns about the climate of the program, noting that retention of female and underrepresented students is problematic and that these groups more often did not pass the preliminary exams and left the program with MS or no degrees. This feedback was provided through conversational interview and the review committee did not see any data related to these concerns.*
- *Questions and feedback from the committee on the graduate program review*
 - *What is the status of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) training grant support?*
 - *The status is unknown by the review committee.*
 - *Is the level of students not passing qualifying exams higher than other units on campus?*
 - *This information was given in conversational interviews by separate student groups and the review committee did not see data about this.*
 - *Is it clear which department is in favor of keeping the graduate student teaching requirement?*
 - *Biochemistry favors this requirement as the IPiB graduate students help fill gaps in the undergraduate teaching mission.*
 - *Was there any discussion of the PhD minor? What is the department's intention with it going forward?*
 - *The PhD minor was only briefly discussed, and the review committee had the impression that it was not a major component of the program.*

3. Farm and Industry Short Course suspension and discontinuations

- *A detailed background of the history of Farm and Industry Short Course (FISC) is found on the supplement to the agenda in the Box folder.*
- *The decision has been made to move FISC from the for-credit to non-credit space.*
- *There is a lot of work being done to plan what comes next with the program. Oversight is moving from CALS Academic Affairs to the CALS Office of Extension and Outreach. Associate Dean Doug Reinemann is working with FISC Director Jennifer Blazek to plan and implement future programming.*
- *The proposals to suspend and discontinue several FISC four-credit certificates are listed on the agenda and is the focus for action today.*
- *Questions and feedback from the committee*
 - *Did you ask current students for feedback on the change in the program?*
 - *FISC students who attend love the program and would like it to continue as is, but that is not viable.*

- *The students who were most recently in the program now have their certificates, as they have graduated.*
- *Is the composition of the FISC participants different now than prior to the earlier change from non-credit to for-credit?*
 - *The FISC student body has been fairly constant, comprised of students coming straight from high school or with one gap year who are interested in farming, with many coming from farming families. That is a decreasing population across the state and there is decreasing flexibility for them to come to a 16-week residential program.*
 - *We hope the change in the program will allow for broadening of the audience to include other learners such as adult learners, career changers, etc.*
- *For students, what is the difference between the for-credit and non-credit programs?*
 - *When a program is for-credit, there are requirements that must be met for campus accreditation rules. FISC does not fit those requirements well.*
 - *In a non-credit program, there's more flexibility and program changes do not need to pass through governance.*
 - *Students in the new non-credit program may have experiences broken down to a week or weekend event compared to the prior 16 week residential program. Doug Reinemann and Jennifer Blazek are working on what those experiences will look like.*
- *What prompted the change from non-credit to for-credit six years ago?*
 - *Part of the rationale was to make the path from FISC to a four-year degree a more seamless process, as courses taken in the non-credit space could not transfer later to for-credit space.*
 - *As students in a for-credit program, FISC participants paid tuition and segregated fees and were full-fledged members of the student community on campus, with access to campus/student amenities.*
 - *Prior to the change, FISC operated as a "university within a university" as it had its own services, own dorms, collected its own tuition and didn't use the Bursar's Office services. This model was inefficient in use of staff time and expertise.*
- *Motion to approve the discontinuation of the listed FISC certificates: Kruger/Ingham*
- *Vote: 10-0-0*

Informational Items and Announcements

4. Robert G. F. and Hazel T. Spitze Land Grant Faculty Award for Excellence update
 - *There were no nominations submitted for the Robert G. F. and Hazel T. Spitze Land Grant Faculty Award for Excellence.*
5. Extension update
 - *The state legislature approved a base add to funding for Extension, which for CALS will translate into three new Extension-funded faculty positions.*
 - *Selections for the positions were based on proposals submitted last fall and will include hires in Agricultural and Applied Economics, Agronomy, and Biological Systems Engineering.*
 - *The provost is establishing a working group to make recommendations for best practices for Extension's partnership with schools and colleges. This will cover how decisions are made about funding and faculty affairs, including appointments of Extension-funded faculty.*
 - *The working group will be constituted and charged soon.*

The meeting adjourned at 1:58 pm.