

MSU Departmental Assessment Update Spring 2009

Department: Veterinary Molecular Biology

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Degrees/Majors/Options Offered by Department
Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology—Animal Systems Option

Biotechnology-Animal Systems Option Assessment

Presented at the May 14, 2009 Faculty Meeting

Faculty present: Robert Cramer, Michele Hardy, Allen Harmsen, Mark Jutila, Benfang Lei, David Pascual, Mark Quinn, Jay Radke, Edward Schmidt, Jovanka Voyich-Kane

Overall, students gave positive reviews of the biotechnology program on their exit interviews and Aleamoni/Knapp ratings in 2008/2009. These are two of the primary mechanisms used for feedback. The third mechanism is internship evaluation, which is discussed below. Many students indicated this is the best science-based degree program at MSU because it provides them skill needed to directly enter the workforce. The graduates have been very successful in getting jobs or getting into graduate/professional schools. This year, three of the four graduates were accepted to Veterinary School.

Changes made to the program this year based on faculty recommendations, etc.:

- The DA-1 form has been revised again to indicate the new numbering of all courses at MSU. Course required for the Pre-Vet students to meet Veterinary School admission requirements are clearly indicated.
- VTMB 421 and 422 curricula are being reevaluated to address any overlap and adapt to instructor changes.
- Internships are being evaluated to make sure the projects are meeting the required scope.
- A call for faculty interested in serving as advisors was initiated.

Some major comments and suggested changes to consider are summarized below:

1. Courses

Outcomes

- In general, Aleamoni ratings were improved over the previous year indicating we are doing a good job teaching the biotech courses.
- As in past years, the students indicated the Methods courses and Internship were the most valuable.

Issues

- Some students commented that VTMB 421 and 422 should be coordinated better.

2. Advising

Outcomes

- Overall, the students were satisfied with advising.

Issues

- Students indicated that switching to the Animal Systems advisors should occur as soon as possible after they select the Animal Systems Option. This has been improved in recent years.
- Some students indicated they did not meet much with their advisors. While students need to be reminded to meet with their advisors, it is up to the student

to make the appointments. Registration PINs will not be given to students without advisor meetings.

3. Internship

Outcomes

- Four students completed internships. The quality of some of these internships seemed lower this year.
- The students again commented on the importance of a good internship experience.

Issues

- More students are taking internships during the academic year. Summer is more desirable.
- With the loss of internships at LigoCyte, there are fewer opportunities in Bozeman. Students seem to be having a difficult time identifying suitable internships.

Recommendations (minutes) from the faculty meeting (5/14/2009):

- Revision of VTMB 421 and 422 curricula should be completed this summer/fall.
- The internship program needs to be evaluated to make sure opportunities are available and the projects are meeting the required scope. The students also need to make a better effort in finding internships. It is recommended that the internship be completed prior to their last semester. Internships in the last semester are not recommended due to declining student motivation in their last semester.
- Improved evaluation of internships was discussed. Based on the recommendations, the paper will be required at the end of the internship instead of delaying it until the Capstone. The papers will be evaluated and graded by a Departmental Committee of at least three faculty members. Internships could be changed from P/F to actual grades.
- A new biotech advisor will be assigned from among the junior faculty members.