



Senate Committee on University Planning

Academic Review Summary: Department of Biology

Site Visit	October 24, 25, 27, 28, 2022 (Half Days)
Informal Response to Planning	February 6, 2023
Formal Response	February 6, 2023
Implementation Update	Fall 2024
Midterm Review	Winter 2027

Review Team Members:

- Dr. Marva Sweeney-Nixon, Professor, Department of Biology, University of Prince Edward Island
- Dr. Allison McDonald, Professor, Department of Biology, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Dr. Craig Brett, Professor, Department of Economics, Mount Allison University

Note: The following recommendations are taken mostly verbatim from the external review. For context they should be read in conjunction with the department's formal response.

Recommendations of the Academic Program Review

1. Needs to be a faculty replacement in the near-term. High number of research-related course release requests with minimal overlap in expertise between faculty members, leads to significant challenges. It creates unpredictability and stress for Department Head, faculty and students.
2. Prioritize BIPOC candidates in future hires
3. Consider offering full-year contracts to lab instructors. They have heavy workloads and work overtime hours with no extra pay. Short contracts make taking the time in lieu, challenging
4. Increase the administrative assistant hours. The current job is a bit too demanding for one person.
5. Find private space for the instructor/technicians to work in, at least for private student meetings
6. Arrange for more funding support for the graduate program. Ten hours of TA funding per week instead of five hours

7. Consider offering graduate level courses, however, is not feasible for faculty to teach these without potentially remodeling the current undergraduate courses
8. Create travel and PD funds for graduate students. Access professional development funds beyond what supervisors provide
9. Have appropriate housing on campus for graduate students, perhaps having rooms in residence available for grad students or turning on e of the satellite residences into a graduate residence
10. Develop a comprehensive training program for graduate students and post-docs that address health and safety policies and best practices.
11. Mindset shift from M.Sc. students and post-docs as afterthought or add-ons to junior scholars as an integrated component of the department and the university.
12. Upgrade Flemington building should be top priority. If not possible, addressing the major structural issues immediately
13. Refurbish the greenhouse so that it can again be used for teaching and research. Facilities Management is engaged in the process
14. There is significant contribution to the overhead funds made by NSERC-funded researchers in the Biology Department and it's recommended that some of these funds be set aside for the Biology Department to be used as CFI-matching funds, equipment refurbishment/replacement, and graduate student funding.
15. Find ways to give researchers more timely information about their accounts. New system for viewing accounts and completing requests for transactions is being rolled out
16. Create an institutional health and safety office responsible for training and ensuring compliance (this would benefit faculty, instructors, and students)
17. Hire a science librarian and upgrade the institutional repository