

Botany Assessment Update Fall 2009

A recent review of the Botany graduate curriculum, guided in part by a previous survey of graduate student opinion, indicated the need for revision. Both faculty and graduate students felt that the number and diversity of courses required were difficult to complete in the recommended period for degree completion, in view of time needed for research and teaching activities. In response, the department asked clusters of faculty and students representing each major research area to develop a recommended curriculum tailored to the training needs of each field. As a result, the Botany Department now offers four curricular tracks: General Botany, Ecology, Evolution, and Molecular, Cellular, & Developmental Biology. In future implementations of its Graduate Program Assessment Plan, the Botany Department will evaluate the effectiveness of this curricular change in three ways: by incorporating questions about it into annual graduate student surveys, looking for correlations with graduate research productivity and teaching performance, and (when sufficient time has passed) comparing survey responses of alumni who matriculated before and after implementation of the curricular change.