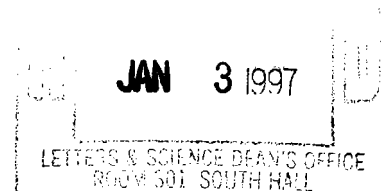


DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

ZOOLOGY RESEARCH BUILDING BIRGE HALL LOWELL E. NOLAND HALL
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN — MADISON

30 December 1996

Dr. Alexander J. Nagel
Associate Dean
College of Letters & Science
301 South Hall
CAMPUS MAIL



Re: Department of Zoology Assessment Plan

Dear Dean Nagel,

Zoology proposes a continuing, five-point program to monitor the evolving judgments of students over a time period extending from undergraduate years to beyond graduation. It will require several years to complete the data set for any particular cohort, but useful information can nonetheless be pieced together from the responses of different age-groups. Some of the measuring instruments have been in use by Zoology for some time (items 1, 4, and 5 below), and preliminary information is already available.

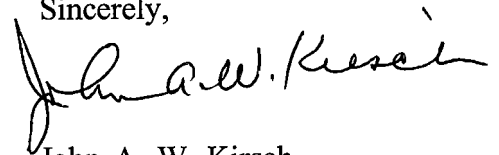
Our plan is to use the following five methods in parallel for assessment:

1. Course evaluations. We use a standardized form for all of our courses which permits ready comparison among our offerings and instructors. Such evaluations are perhaps the least valuable means of assessment because they represent immediate, and generally context-free, judgments often divorced from the larger picture of modern biology or the students' personal career goals.
2. Direct enquiries to majors. We propose periodic email contact with a designated suite of junior and senior zoology majors as a means of obtaining information regarding how well our program is meeting their evolving (and presumably maturing) expectations.
3. Targeted mailing to alumni. Perhaps the most dramatic change in perception of the value of undergraduate education comes when the student enters the job force or undertakes professional, postgraduate training. We intend to follow the same group of majors mentioned under (2) above beyond graduation, making a special point of contacting them at two-year intervals.
4. Newsletter. During the past three years we have developed effective, two-way contact with alumni of all ages through our yearly departmental report. This publication provides a means to solicit information about our longer-term success from the perspective of graduates at all stages of their careers up to and including retirement.
5. Graduate-student success. The most focussed part of our program is probably the training of Master's and Ph.D. students for academic and other research- or teaching-oriented positions.

We maintain - and intend to expand - a database of the whereabouts and appointments of all such students, which is proving valuable in identifying the range of options available to trained biologists, and hence influences the content of undergraduate as well as graduate courses.

While the first and fourth items above represent continuing use of methods already in place and for which departmental funds have already been allocated, items 2 and 3 will incur additional costs in organization and implementation, as will expansion of the database for tracking graduate students (number 5). We therefore request \$1000 in the first year to devise, produce, and distribute the questionnaires required to gather the desired information and to engage in the necessary personal contacts. Needs in subsequent years will be evaluated as the program progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. W. Kirsch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John A. W. Kirsch
Acting Chair

cc/Dean Certain; Profs. Porter & Bownds