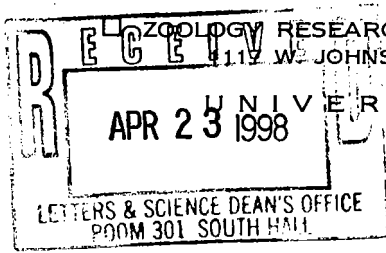


DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY



ZOOLOGY RESEARCH BUILDING
1117 W. JOHNSON ST.

BIRGE HALL
430 LINCOLN DR.

LOWELL E. NOLAND HALL
250 N. MILLS ST.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN — MADISON

MEMO

TO: Associate Dean Alex Nagel

FROM: Karen Steudel and Deric Bownds, Department of Zoology

DATE: April 23, 1998

RE: College of Letters and Science Assessment Report

Attached is a description of our departmental activities involving the assessment of our undergraduate major. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of us.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE
ASSESSMENT REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

ABSTRACT

This year the department has started the first stage of its proposed undergraduate teaching assessment process by monitoring the student course evaluations. These evaluations indicate a high level of student satisfaction. The elementary courses, which give among the lowest average grades in the college, still score above 3.5 on a 5 point scale for the questions addressed. The average values for our advanced courses in spring 1997 was 4.32 and 4.39 respectively. The average values for our advanced courses are above 4.0 with values above 4.5 common. We think that this suggests that our undergraduate teaching is meeting the expectations of students and is of high quality. Next year we plan to implement stages 2 and 3 of our assessment plan. This will involve assembling mailing lists of our current senior undergraduate majors and recent alumni, development of appropriate questionnaires, and mailings to these two groups to see how well our curriculum is meeting, or has met, their needs.

NARRATIVE

This year the department has started the first stage of its proposed undergraduate teaching assessment process by monitoring the student course evaluations. While this method does not address issues such as the suitability of content or the course's long term value, the subject of stages two and three of the assessment process, it does give valuable data on customer satisfaction. Of 18 undergraduate courses offered by the department in the spring of 1997, we have numerical evaluations for 13. Of 19 courses in the fall of 1997, we have data on 15. These evaluations indicate a high level of student satisfaction. Here, we focus on two summary questions: 1. "In comparison with other courses, rate the content of this course." and 2. "In comparison with other courses, rate the instructors". As is widely known, student evaluations are heavily dependant on their expected grade in the course. Consequently, our large introductory courses, which give relatively low grades get lower evaluations than smaller, more advanced courses which give higher grades. Nevertheless, our largest introductory course, Zoology 101, which gives among the lowest average grades in the college, scores above 3.5 on a 5 point scale for the questions indicated above. Botany/Zoology 151 and 152, also very large courses, get extremely similar scores, as does our Biology Forum.

Our advanced courses (200 level and above) get much higher ratings. The average values for such courses in spring 1997 was 4.32 and 4.39 respectively. The average values for

fall 1997 were 4.25 and 4.18. Values 4.5 and above are common (see appended table). We think that this suggests that our undergraduate teaching is meeting the expectations of students and is of high quality. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the past ten years has seen undergraduate zoology majors increase from 2 to 6% of all L&S majors. Further, our undergraduate credit hours taught have increased from 12500 to 19000 at a time when total L&S values have declined significantly. The demand for our courses can also be reflected in the fact that a number of our courses turn students away because their enrollment caps are reached.

Next year we plan to implement stages 2 and 3 of our assessment plan. With the \$1000 recently allocated by the Dean's office, we will assemble mailing lists of our current senior undergraduate majors and recent alumni, develop appropriate questionnaires, and survey these two groups to see how well our curriculum is meeting, or has met, their needs.

SPRING '97

| <u>Course</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Question 1</u> | <u>Question 2</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Zoology 101 | Animal Biology | 3.69 | 3.68 |
| Zoology 152 | Introductory Biology | 3.08 | 3.8 |
| Zoology 258 | Biology Forum | 3.57 | 3.87 |
| Zoology 260 | Introductory Ecology | 4.59 | 4.33 |
| Zoology 410 | Evolutionary Biology | 3.73 | 3.35 |
| Zoology 470 | Intro to Animal Development | 4.36 | 4.45 |
| Zoology 510 | Ecology of Fishes | 4.11 | 4.13 |
| Zoology 525 | Animal Structural Design | 4.4 | 4.53 |
| Zoology 532 | Sociobiol/Social Ethology | 4 | 4.48 |
| Zoology 572 | Laboratory in Cell Biology | 4.83 | 5 |
| Zoology 625 | Development of Nervous Sys | 4 | 4.57 |
| Zoology 677 | Internship in Ecology | 4.89 | 4.7 |

FALL '97

| <u>Course</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Question 1</u> | <u>Question 2</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Zoology 101 | Animal Biology | 3.5 | 3.15 |
| Zoology 120 | Biological Prin-Soc Impact | 2.43 | 3.76 |
| Zoology 151 | Introductory Biology | 3.64 | 3.46 |
| Zoology 152 | Introductory Biology | 3.91 | 3.17 |
| Zoology 315 | Limnology-Aquatic Resources | 4.06 | 4.09 |
| Zoology 330 | Ethology | 3.85 | 3.36 |
| Zoology 430 | Compar Anatomy-Vertebrates | 4.39 | 4.27 |
| Zoology 460 | General Ecology | 4.24 | 4.23 |
| Zoology 523 | Neurobiology | 3.89 | 4.08 |
| Zoology 523 | Neurobiology | 4.57 | 4.7 |
| Zoology 531 | Ethology Laboratory | 4.44 | 4.61 |
| Zoology 540 | Theoretical Ecology | 4.17 | 4.25 |
| Zoology 545 | Evolutionary Physiology | 4.54 | 4.31 |
| Zoology 570 | Cell Biology | 4.48 | 4.37 |
| Zoology 619 | Biology of Mind | 4.13 | 4.11 |

College of Letters and Science Assessment Report

(Due back to your Academic Associate Dean by May 1, 1998)

Department or Program Name:

Abstract: (This should be a brief summary of no more than 300 words that can be used in the College's report to the Provost's Office. The abstract should indicate the focus of assessment activities during the 1997-98 academic year. It should indicate what actions the department or program is taking to change its program as a result of the assessment. It should indicate whether the assessment was of the Undergraduate Major, the Graduate Program, or both.)

Assessment Tools Used: (Using the attached chart, please specify which assessment activities have taken or will take place in your department or program. Indicate also the year when these activities took place or will take place. If you used other tools, please describe them.)

Direct Indicators

| | Undergraduate Major | Graduate Program |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| National Exams | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Local Exams | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Capstone Course(s) | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Embedded Testing | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Student Portfolios | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Review theses & dissertations | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Performance Evaluations | <u>✓</u> | <u> </u> |
| Pre and Post Testing | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |

Indirect Indicators

| | Undergraduate Major | Graduate Program |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Student Surveys | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Exit Interviews | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Alumni Surveys | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| Employer Surveys | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |
| External Reviews | <u>NA</u> | <u> </u> |