

BioInquiry Proposal
 Issues CCC and the Dean's Office have identify/BIOL responses
 1-26-2016

Concern #1:

- * There are too many goals for just one course.
- * Teaching evaluations are not really assessing the course learning outcomes.

Recommendation:

The Department of Biological Sciences will conduct an assessment of the new BioInquiry course in two years. This assessment must include a review of student's learning goals.

Response:

Biology accepts the recommendation to conduct a thorough assessment of the impact of Bioinquiry in two years. Pre and post-course SALG (Student Assessment of Learning Gains) surveys have already been implemented in Bioinquiry (Fall 2015). In addition similar assessments are currently underway to compare learning outcomes of students in Cells & Heredity that have/have not completed Bioinquiry.

Concern #2:

- * BIOL may not have enough instructors to properly serve BioInquiry and other academic demands.

Response:

Biology is aware of the issue. To address it, the department will reduce the number of BIOL electives available every fall semester. Based strictly on one-to-one correspondence in the core and that we anticipate needing 3 sections of Bioinquiry (unless enrollments dramatically ramp up), the faculty course sections in the fall will increase by 2. The # of credits in the biology electives is decreased by two credits so we will offer one less elective course per year. Given that there is ample space in the Science in Context courses in the past two falls (table below), we will offer one less Science in Context course section in the fall.

	Evolution	Marine Biol	Human Biol	Human Sociobio	Chem & Art	Chem & Art	WWW	Astronomy		Open Seats
Fall15	30	31	8	21	20	20	14	16		71
	Evolution	Evolution	Human Biol	Chem Tech	Chem & Art	Chem & Art	WWW	Astronomy	Faith & Sci	Open Seats
Fall14	32	31	14	19	21	22	6	12	18	64

If Bioinquiry succeeds, we do anticipate increased retention potentially resulting in an uptick in Biology elective course demand over the next few years.

Concern #3:

* There are potential issues with students in other Science majors, the Honors Program and Pre-Health Program, including scheduling.

Response:

Bioinquiry will not impede students in other majors from taking Cells & Heredity or Biology of Organisms. These course were both offered in fall 2015 and spring 2016 to accommodate the needs of other majors and biology majors with AP credit. We will continue to offer ample seats in both courses in the fall and spring to accommodate students seeking to complete these core biology courses.

Concern #4:

* BIOL is serving a diverse population of students, and the course may not address the needs of more advanced students.

* Having a major course as non-mandatory creates problems to track students' progress on SIS

Recommendations:

* Make the course a BIOL elective, or a BIOL FYS (which means that it would be open to all students, not only BIOL students)

* Create an assessment tool to decide what students need the course

Response:

The department prefers Bioinquiry as mandatory course for all BIOL students. Students who fail or withdraw from Bioinquiry will be required to complete it in the subsequent fall semester. Sophomores switching to Biology will be required to take Bioinquiry. Transfer students with no course comparable to Bioinquiry will be required to take Bioinquiry. The course will be open access to all students.