

Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Department of Biological Sciences (beginning 2017)

DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Department of Biological Sciences is to provide high quality teaching and research at the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate levels in biological sciences. The goals of the department include:

- 1) preparing individuals through education and life-long learning to become leaders and contributing members of society
- 2) discovering, applying, and disseminating science-based knowledge

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL 1: *Scholarly and creative products of the highest quality and scope, resulting in significant positive impact for the region and the world.*

Objective: Increase the number of PhD students¹ by 1 student/year over the next 5 years.

Successful graduate students are one of the most important products we can produce. Increasing the number of graduate students amplifies the range and impact of the research conducted within the department. It raises our research profile within the state and across the world. This will be achieved by increases in extramural funding and, possibly, aided by a current COGS proposal that would waive all tuition and fees for graduate teaching assistants.

¹includes students in Biological Sciences and interdisciplinary programs (e.g., Bioinformatics and Computational Biology)

GOAL 2: *Suggest and influence change that addresses societal needs and global issues, and advances economic development and culture.*

Objective: Increase extramural research expenditures² by 25% over the next 5 years.

An elevated level of extramural funding will allow our faculty to explore new areas of the biological world that will benefit society. The benefits of increased funding will also provide support for our graduate program and allow more opportunities for undergraduate students and postdoctoral fellows. This will be achieved by increasing the number of external grant proposals from federal agencies and increasing partnerships/collaborations with private entities.

²does not to include COBRE funding

GOAL 3: *Increase our educational impact.*

Objective: Increase undergraduate student enrollment by 25 students/year over the next 5 years.

The successful completion of a student with an undergraduate degree is the best educational impact we can make for the state and nation. Increased enrollment will be aided primarily by the introduction of a new Biological Sciences major, Medical Sciences. Secondly, we are employing mechanisms to increase retention of current students, thereby maintaining enrollment.

GOAL 4: *Foster an inclusive, diverse community of students, faculty and staff and improve cohesion and morale.*

Objective: Hire talented faculty and staff to meet the strategic goals of the department. Three new faculty members and one staff member will be added over the next 5 years.

The increases in undergraduate and graduate students proposed in this plan, and increased extramural funding, will necessitate additional faculty and staff. With the addition of a new Medical Sciences major to Biological Sciences one area of desirable teaching expertise is infectious disease ecology. New staff will be hired as necessary to support faculty growth of the department.

Approved by a majority faculty vote on February 13, 2017.