

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
BIOLOGY TEACHING, BOX 355320

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TO: Dean Marsha Landolt
The Graduate School, Box 351240

FROM: John Edwards, Biology Teaching Group Chair
Zoology, Box 351800



Helen Buttemer, Graduate Student Advisor
Biology Teaching, Box 355320



The report of the review committee for The MAT in Biological Sciences has been reviewed by John Edwards, Helen Buttemer and various members of the the Biology Teaching Group, the supervisory committee for the MAT program. The following comments represent the consensus of responses.

Overall, we consider the report to be thorough, balanced and thoughtful. We are pleased that the report is so strongly positive and recognizes the importance of a graduate-level degree for professional high school biology teachers. We do have some specific responses however which are presented below, not necessarily in order of importance.

1. Pedagogy for biology teaching is raised as a desirable component of the program. We appreciate this point but we would counter that pedagogy for biology teaching is, in fact, already a theme of the program in the form of direct involvement of students in real science activities. We do not feel that it is appropriate to initiate a specific course in pedagogy, given the existence of relevant courses elsewhere on campus. We wish to maintain a sharp focus on the content and research elements of the degree requirements.
2. We agree that the name of our degree, Master of Arts for Teachers (MAT), leads to potential confusion with the College of Education's Master's Degree program leading to initial teacher certification (MIT). Both the name of the degree and the relationship of the degree to the existing Biology program require further discussion. We believe that the Biology program is the appropriate home for the MAT in Biological Sciences degree program.
3. The critical issue that must be faced is the future of the program. We are acutely aware that small programs are vulnerable to the bureaucratic ax, irrespective of quality. On the other hand, the expansion of our program, which has depended heavily on voluntary participation of faculty and staff, will need funding. To the extent that the MAT program represents the type of quality outreach for K-12 educators recommended as a priority by President McCormick, it may be that the Office for Interinstitutional Initiatives directed by Louis Fox will be able to play a part in developing a support base that would allow the MAT program to grow. Further, it may be that the Master of Arts for Teachers in Biological Sciences is a model degree program which should be emulated by other science disciplines and thus grow above the viability threshold.