

Molecular and Cellular Biology Program

The University of Washington and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

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DECEMBER 18, 2000

Dr. John T. Slattery
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
The Graduate School Box 351240
University of Washington

Re: Response to Report of the Review Committee for the Molecular and Cellular Biology Graduate Program of the University of Washington and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 17 November and for passing on the report of the committee. Per your request we sent the report to every student and faculty member of the MCB program, soliciting feedback. As we received only limited feedback (mostly of a congratulatory nature) we are writing the response to the Review Committee ourselves. As prelude to our response, we thank the entire review committee, especially Dr. Trask (chair) for drafting the report, and Dr. Raulet (UC-Berkeley) and Dr. Taylor (UCSD) for their willingness to travel to participate in the review.

We agree with all of the recommendations made in the 9 page text, and the 7 key recommendations made on page 9. We especially agree with the suggestion to increase the size of the program by at least 20% given the enormous success of the program to date. We trust that points 1, 2, 5, and 7 will be considered by the relevant administrative entities, and we would be happy to provide any resources or information to help facilitate implementation of these recommendations. The other recommendations are addressed below:

Recommendation 3. The committee recommends that the MCB Steering Committee oversee the courses offered to MCB students. In the past the MCB has generally not offered many courses, and has relied on courses offered by departments. The main core courses taken by MCB students, the so-called 5-week conjoint modules, were administered by Associate Dean Dan Dorsa and a committee that assisted him. The MCB Steering Committee met with Dean Dorsa on 22 November and discussed whether it would be desirable and appropriate for the Steering Committee to take a greater role in course oversight, and everyone felt that this was worth a serious effort. Effective autumn, 2001, the MCB Steering Committee will therefore oversee all conjoint modules offered to first year students of both interdisciplinary students, and departmental students. In the interim, the Steering Committee will meet in January, 2001, to further discuss the existing conjoint modules, and recommend changes that can be implemented by autumn.

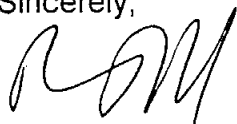
Elective graduate courses will continue to be offered by departments, as those courses have been generally well-received. The Steering Committee will also review these electives to determine if there are missing areas that should be covered, redundancies, and whether all existing electives are still appropriate.

Recommendation 4. The committee recommends that the MCB work to increase faculty involvement in MCB activities. The MCB has always worked to foster this involvement, and we are happy that the committee has reinforced the importance of this involvement. Hopefully when we make this point to faculty prior to MCB rotation talks, and dissertation defenses, the faculty will begin to attend in greater numbers. The difficulty remains that as long as UW faculty have both departmental programs and interdisciplinary programs, the sheer number of events to attend will tax their ability to participate. However, we shall continue to do what we can to foster involvement.

Recommendation 6: The committee specifically suggests that the conjoint modules offered to first year students be reviewed by a high level committee. The MCB Steering Committee will now serve this function, as outlined above regarding recommendation 3.

We thank the committee again for its thorough and thoughtful review.

Sincerely,



Randall T. Moon and Barry Stoddard
Co-Directors, MCB Program