



## Molecular & Cellular Biology Program

University of Washington/Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

1959 NE Pacific Street, T-466 / Box 357275

Seattle, WA 98195-7275

(206) 543-0253 office (205) 685-8174 fax

[www.mcb-seattle.edu](http://www.mcb-seattle.edu)

February 8, 2011

James Antony  
Associate Vice Provost  
& Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
Graduate School  
Box 353770  
University of Washington

Re: Response to Report of the Review Committee for the Molecular and Cellular Biology Interdisciplinary Program

Dear Dean Antony:

Recently David Canfield-Budde forwarded the review committee's report on the MCB Program. At his request we are responding to that assessment of the MCB Program in the context of this letter.

First, we both wish to thank the committee, in particular the review committee chair, Prof. Yongmin Kim of Bioengineering and Electrical Engineering, U.W. This committee dealt with all the interacting elements of the MCB Program—directors, Steering Committee, faculty, students and staff—with a cordial interest that gleaned sincere responses from interviewees. This resulted in a fair appraisal of the MCB Program's efforts and excellence. The report was overwhelmingly positive of the MCB Program. The review committee did have a number of excellent suggestions that we address individually below. Our responses are presented after each underlined recommendation.

1. That MCB implement a monthly student seminar showcasing the students' research work—to increase student interactions.

The MCB students already organize such a seminar series with one set of seminars occurring at the UW on a monthly basis and another set at the FHCRC on a biweekly basis. Part of the objective of this seminar series is to provide the

students with an opportunity to hone their presentation skills. The MCB program will continue to encourage participation in this series.

2. That a Curriculum Committee of active MCB teaching faculty be established to produce a periodic report on curriculum needs.

This is an excellent suggestion. The MCB Directors will work with the Steering Committee to identify faculty members who might form this committee with overlapping 5-year terms.

3. That some way be found to encourage Departmental Chairs to credit MCB faculty for MCB courses.

We would greatly appreciate guidance from the UW leadership in finding a solution towards this problem.

4. Curriculum changes: that MCB encourage the creation of tutorial courses for interested students with an individual faculty member to cover specific areas of interest; that credit for courses in scientific writing and public speaking can be included in MCB credit requirements; that MCB implement a statistics course with or without the assistance of the Biostatistics Department.

We already have a tutorial course number that has been used on occasion. MCB students take courses offered by various departments in writing and public speaking, and we allow them to use these courses to satisfy MCB credit requirements. The MCB webpage will now include a section under “Program Requirements” explaining that courses in public speaking and scientific writing will in future satisfy Program requirements. One of the tasks for the new Curriculum Committee will be to identify faculty who could teach biostatistics for MCB students or to work with the Biostatistics Department in the School of Public Health to adapt present courses for the needs of PhD students in the biomedical sciences. We would appreciate help from the respective Deans of the Medical School and School of Public Health in finding a solution towards offering such a course.

5. That the Steering Committee be replaced with an abbreviated Oversight Committee, of individuals representing the major constituents of the program.

We appreciate this suggestion.

6. That an Executive Committee be formed to discuss more in depth more program-related topics and decide issues. This committee would consist of faculty chairs of the Areas of Interest, but also include student representatives.

This recommendation fits with our plan to broaden faculty participation and providing expertise through the breadth of the program. We expect that such a committee would also provide important insight into curriculum development.

7. That the MCB Program institute a minimum requirement for faculty participation in the program, for example, teaching, committee service, and recruitment. An official record would be kept of faculty participation and confirmed annually by the faculty member.

We appreciate this suggestion. The recently revised MCB webpage has a faculty profile for individual faculty members that can be expanded to include a report on program participation in which academic year. A report can be generated from this data after the MCB faculty has been prompted to update their profiles during Summer Quarter. We will begin discussions with the Steering Committee (or a newly formed Executive Committee) and take input from our faculty to establish a minimum requirement for faculty participation.

8. That the MCB Program be provided with additional fiscal support from the School of Medicine and the Graduate School to increase student enrollment by 20%.

The MCB Program would welcome the ability to increase its student body with the provision of extra funding from the University.

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

Sincerely,

David Raible  
U.W. Co-Director

Michael Emerman  
FHCRC Co-Director