
On October 23rd, the University of Washington Graduate & Professional Student Senate had one GPSS Senator and the GPSS Chief of Staff attend a 60 minute program review meeting with 8 graduate students in the Department of Biochemistry (DOB). The program review was also attended by a peer committee, who facilitated and asked students questions pertaining to their program. This review evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the perspectives of the DOB students. This report summarizes students' feedback for the consideration in the Graduate School Council's review of the DOB program. All students were invited through department emails and the 8 students who attended consisted of 5th-8th years.

Interdepartmental Collaboration

- Good opportunities for collaboration outside of the department exist but given the breadth of the department's activities, there sometimes is not a large amount of collaboration within the department itself.

Committees

- Generally, committee members have input on student research projects.

Program's Communication with Students

- Students felt the department has done a good job of maintaining an "open-door" environment.
- Some students felt that the distinction between the Biochemistry and Molecular and Cell Biology (MCB) umbrella program was not adequately clear when applying to the programs.

Students' Confidence in Career Paths

- For the most part, students felt confident and knowledgeable about transitioning into careers after completing the program, but pointed out that some would benefit from more structured guidance and counseling, particularly for non-academic career paths.

Research Groups

- Some students felt that they could have been made aware sooner that not all research groups are capable of taking on students after rotations.
- Research group web sites are very out of date, to the point where it is difficult to determine what some of the labs are working on.

Presentations

- Students felt that a formal mechanism for feedback on rotation presentations, particularly involving a paper form, would be extremely helpful.
- Students believed they would benefit from an opportunity to give a large presentation on their research in front of the entire faculty, with feedback.

Program Courses

- There were unanimous complaints about the *Biochem 503* course. It was described as “abysmal”, poorly organized, and inconsistent.

Students' Involvement in Recruitment

- Some students felt that although they are given the opportunity to participate in the recruitment process, the faculty may not be soliciting or weighing their opinions when making acceptance decisions.

Overview

Overall, the students seemed quite happy with their program. When asked if they would change anything about their decision to come to UW, they all said "no" and that they were content with where they were now, academically. Although they had some complaints about their initial years in the program, it seems it was just a matter of adjusting that got them comfortable within their environment. Having said that, the review could've benefited from having one or two first or second years attending as well. Many of the upper-classmen seemed unaware of any recent changes the department may have gone through, pertaining to first and second-year courseworks.