

**PROGRAM REVIEW STATUS REPORT**

**PROGRAM: Liberal Arts: Biology**

Date last updated: \_\_\_\_\_

Update provided by: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCE REQUESTS</b>		<b>STATUS OF ACTIVITIES AND REQUESTS</b>	
<b>DATE RECORDED</b>	<b>AREAS, ACTIVITIES, AND REQUESTS</b>	<b>DATE OF STATUS REPORT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
May 2014	<p>Collaboration – Active biologists, potential students and their families, current students, and those with general interest in biology, have no official NECC web access to the NECC biology department and their faculty. This is in part due to the inability of members of NECC’s science department to come to a consensus with those in charge of NECC’s webpage, and lack of institutional support in this matter. Professional colleagues outside of NECC have stated that they are unable to locate NECC faculty members, even after extensive internet searches for them. Thus, those outside are unable to follow the scientific advancements in which NECC biology faculty may be involved, limiting potential contacts and collaboration.</p>		
May 2014	<p>Person and Professional Growth – Biology Science faculty members who wish to continue with the business of actual science (i.e., research) face undue burden. This assessment is based upon excessive teaching requirements, lack of allocated research space on campus, and lack of financial incentive to pursue professional publication or rank advancement. Professional publications from</p>		

	<p>Ph.D. science faculty in refereed journals are grossly undervalued and have been largely disregarded by the non-science NECC Community at Large. An important part of NECC's mission is to be 'a comprehensive center of educational excellence' (as stated in NECC's mission statement). This goes hand in hand with the stated mission of the Liberal Arts/Biology program 'to prepare students for further study towards the bachelor's degree in biology by providing coursework and laboratory experiences in biology and other natural sciences...' Disincentive for biology faculty to have an active ongoing research program minimizes the true science to which we are able to expose our LA: Biology students. This deprives them of critical exposure to actual (vs. contrived in lab experiments) practice of the scientific method, develop critical thinking skills, and the potential to be included as junior authors in scientific publication and deliver presentations at scientific meetings.</p>		
<p>May 2014</p>	<p>Improve Student Learning and Retention and Graduation rates. Retention, graduation and transfer rates for this group are as follows:</p> <p>2003-2007  Average Total students enrolled in program=47  Average retention rate from previous fall=46%  Average Graduates per year=1  Graduation Rate=2.5%  Average 4 year transfers per year=7  Percent transfers=16%</p>		

	<p>2008-2011  Average Total students enrolled in program=93  Average retention rate from previous fall=49%  Average Graduates per year=3  Graduation Rate=3.5%  Average 4 year transfers per year=14  Percent transfers=16%</p> <p>This low rate of graduation, even though increased after 2007, coupled with a 16% transfer rate, is reflective of the fact that many students initially enter the program, but do not complete it. The retention rates have increased slightly (though insignificantly in a practical sense), but remain below 50%. The percentage of students transferring to 4-year colleges has remained consistent since 2003.</p> <p>Many factors contribute to this include lack of preparation upon arrival, difficulty in completing the program requirements in reasonable time (such as a course under enrollment/unavailability) and early transfer. A more structured predictable program will help to increase retention rates and to increase graduation before transfer.</p> <p>When students graduate with an LA: Biology degree, they lack Organic Chemistry, which is a normal 2<sup>nd</sup> year-long requirement in B.S. Biology Programs.</p>		
May 2014	<p>There is no official departmental mechanism to communicate to the Liberal Arts: Biology students on a regular basis. Several fruitless attempts to develop an independent departmental website have occurred.</p>		

May 2014	Core biology courses are populated mostly by non-majors		
May 2014	Ability of Liberal Arts: Biology majors to take only 1 elective.		
May 2014	Lack of actual attractive electives that are actually taught.		
May 2014	Recently retired full time faculty in the biological sciences has not been replaced		
May 2014	There are increasing course offerings at Lawrence campus and few full time faculty on that campus to teach these courses.		
May 2014	Haverhill labs are outdated.		
May 2014	The Natural Sciences budget is inadequate.		
May 2014	No formal retention policies exist and student graduation rates are still low.		
May 2014	No Biology Program Coordinator exists.		
May 2014	Need for acceptable comprehensive assessment tool still exists.		