

Evaluation Report for Program Review Face to Face Meeting University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Biology (BA, BS, BSE), 2025- 2026

Date: April 10, 2026

In Attendance: Interim Provost Robin Fox; Dean Jason Janke (L&S); Department Chair Heather Pelzel; faculty and staff in the Biology program Amber Kanneraad; Program Review Team Chair Cody Marie Busch; Program Review team members Corey Davis, Dale Splinter (College Expert); Assessment Representative Katy Casey

Overview of review team evaluation, program comments:

The review team noted several strengths evidenced in the program's self-study. This program has accomplished and committed faculty that have made great strides to engage students in and outside of the classroom. The program has intentionally worked collaboratively across the college and developed strong relationships between departments.

Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:

1 – The review team noted the many achievements of faculty highlighted in the self-study report. Has there been any consideration of how the program could more actively highlight their many students and faculty successes using it as a tool to recruit students to the major?

The group discussed several ways the program could better capitalize on faculty accomplishments and existing programming to support student recruitment. Faculty achievements are already being shared on the program's Facebook page, and there was agreement that continued collaboration with the marketing team could more strategically highlight faculty stories, research, and student outcomes. The chair noted that some positive attention in this area has occurred, but there may be opportunities to be more intentional and consistent.

A previously funded high school (HS) outreach mini-grant helped strengthen relationships between the program and local high schools; however, there are currently no plans to continue this effort. The faculty member who coordinated the initiative observed that many high school contacts were unaware of the size and scope of the science program, suggesting a missed opportunity to better communicate program capacity and strengths.

Faculty and students have participated in individual outreach activities, such as assisting with judging the Fort Atkinson Science Fair. While these efforts are valuable, outreach to high schools and the broader community was described as largely ad hoc, with no coordinated or strategic approach to recruitment across schools or regions.

There was also discussion about the importance of understanding where prospective students spend their time (e.g., specific social media platforms) and tailoring marketing efforts accordingly. One idea raised was the potential creation of a 1-credit internship in which students would assist with marketing and outreach, leveraging student perspectives while providing experiential learning opportunities.

Overall, the discussion highlighted strong existing assets—faculty accomplishments, student involvement, and past outreach success—but emphasized the need for a more coordinated, intentional recruitment strategy to maximize their impact.

2 – How can collaboration between Biology and the College of Integrated Studies enhance opportunities and outcomes for students pursuing health science careers?

The discussion highlighted ongoing challenges and opportunities related to creating new programs and strengthening collaboration across departments. Biology faculty expressed concern that they are often excluded from early conversations about health-related program development. They noted that they are frequently brought in only after key decisions have been made, typically framed as requests for support rather than as collaborative partners in program design. This pattern has contributed to some tension and underscored the need for more intentional, transparent, and inclusive discussions at the earliest stages of program development.

Concerns about current programming at the Rock campus were raised, noting that shortened introductory biology courses may not adequately prepare students for success upon transfer to the main campus. Specifically, the limited scope and depth of these courses were seen as potential barriers to student readiness and continuity within the major.

Examples of more effective collaboration were also discussed. In Kinesiology, the development of new emphasis such as a pre-professional emphasis in human performance—did include consultation across departments, which was viewed positively and offered a model for future efforts. Similarly, interdisciplinary collaboration with Business in biotechnology was described as a promising initiative. A proposed biotechnology emphasis with an industry focus is being developed based on feedback from alumni and advisory board members, who emphasized the value of integrating foundational business knowledge into scientific training.

Overall, the discussion emphasized the importance of early and meaningful cross-department collaboration, alignment of curricula across campuses, and responsiveness to student and industry input when developing new programs and emphases.

Recommended Actions:

Recommended Action #1

Continue developing a meaningful and sustainable assessment plan by defining clear criteria for measurement and outlining how the data will be used. Ensure the plan addresses all elements, including individuals responsible for implementation, findings, actions taken, and strategies for continuous improvement.

PROGRESS REPORT: Provide an update on the assessment process (e.g., measurement tools and criteria, how work is distributed) and data collected so far on student learning outcomes. **Due October 1, 2027.**

Recommended Action #2

Follow assessment data to evaluate current offerings and identify new areas for various emphases or certificates.

Recommended Result:

Continuation with minor concerns

Next Self-Study and/or Progress Report Due Dates:

1 - Next FULL self-study will be due to the Dean on May 1, 2032 and to the Assessment Office on August 1, 2032

2 - A progress report will be due October 1, 2027, to the Dean, and November 1, 2027, to the Assessment Office

For a copy of the full evaluation report and detailed comments, please reach out to the assessment office: assessment@uww.edu.