Biology Retreat 2013:
Increasing Connectivity and
Reinforcing Our Sense of Purpose

Proposed Agenda

Thursday – 1103 BRB

1:00 pm  State of the Department

- Opening Remarks – Jerry Wilkinson
- Optimal workflows – Cathy Beard
- Overview of Curriculum – Reid Compton
- Departmental Budget and Research Portfolio – Jerry Wilkinson

2:30 pm  Faculty Presentations – Research Focus

- Lipid channels in apoptosis: regulation by proteins – Marco Colombini
- Studying neural circuits with high throughput electron microscopy – Josh Singer
- Recent next generation sequencing results – Carlos Machado
- How deep sequencing changed my (worm) sex life – Eric Haag

3:45 pm  Break

4:00 pm  Faculty Presentations - Teaching and Curriculum Focus

- Rethinking how we teach: Physics – Karen Carleton
- The Maryland Neuroimaging Center (MNC) and neuroscience at Maryland – Jonathan Simon
- What’s going on in conservation/environmental science? – Karen Lips
- A social network analysis of department faculty – Bill Fagan

5:30 pm  Reception (Atrium, Stamp Union)

6:00 pm  Buffet Dinner (Atrium, Stamp Union)

7:00 pm  Dean’s Address – Dean Jayanth Banavar

Dean Banavar will discuss his research, followed by a short dialogue about his vision for the department and biological sciences within CMNS
Friday – SESYNC, Annapolis

8:00 am  Continental Breakfast

8:45 am  Welcome, Introduction and Opening Remarks

- Welcome - Margaret Palmer, Executive Director, SESYNC
- Review Retreat Purpose – Tom Kocher
  - Identify common goals will lead to a discussion of how we can better achieve those goals in teaching and research
  - Begin to define the role of our department within the college in the context of calls to consider alternative organizational structures.
- Brief reflections on Dean’s remarks from Thursday by participants
- Review Retreat Agenda – Kevin Bryan, Facilitator, Meridian Institute
- Key questions to consider throughout the day:
  - What goals and objectives can we establish that better reflect or impact the purpose of our department?
  - How can we work better across faculty, staff, and students to accomplish our goals and objectives?
  - Are there alternative organizational structures that better enable us to achieve our goals and objectives?

9:30 am  Introduction to Curriculum and Teaching Session

- Review initial Strengths and Weaknesses handout for Curriculum and Teaching discussion
- Provide directions for breakout sessions

9:45 am  Curriculum and Teaching: Intra-Discipline Curriculum Breakout Session 1

- Provide comments on strengths and weaknesses
- Identify things we can do to revolutionize our curriculum and teaching

10:15 am  Curriculum and Teaching: Lower Level Curriculum Breakout Session 2

- Discuss the lower level curriculum
- Discuss opportunities to connect faculty to curriculum development

10:45 am  Break

10:55 am  Curriculum and Teaching – Review of Breakout Session Ideas and Priorities

Back in the plenary session, each breakout group will summarize the highlights of their discussions and outline the key ideas identified in their discussions, with some identification of the highest priority ideas for action. The full group will have an opportunity to ask questions about the ideas from each breakout group to better understand those ideas. As the full group advances through this
discussion, we will create a “parking lot/bike rack” for ideas that may involve changes in organizational structure to achieve.

11:35 am  **Introduction to Session on Research**
- Review initial Strengths and Weaknesses handout for Curriculum and Teaching discussion
- Provide directions for breakout sessions

12:00 pm  **Lunch**

12:30 pm  **Research - Breakout Session**
Participants will move directly into designed interdisciplinary breakout groups and will address the following issues related to departmental research:
- Collaboration and connectivity in research
- Brainstorm things we could do to improve research productivity
- Brainstorm things we could do to improve research connectivity
- Research environment for faculty and students
- Promoting graduate student research and training
- Promoting postdoc research and training
- Big questions we are uniquely equipped to address

1:30 pm  **Research - Review of Breakout Session Ideas and Priorities**
In a fashion similar to the morning session on curriculum and teaching, each breakout group will offer the key ideas identified in their discussions, identifying the highest priority ideas for action. The full group will discuss those ideas and conduct further prioritization. Again, we will create a “parking lot/bike rack” for ideas that may involve changes in organizational structure to achieve. Finally, we will discuss connections between the research and curriculum discussions

2:15 pm  **Introduction to Session on Purpose of the Department**
- Review initial Strengths and Weaknesses handout for Purpose of the Department discussion
- Summarize items previously placed in “Parking Lots” relevant to this topic

2:30 pm  **Break**

2:45 pm  **Purpose of the Department - Breakout Session**
In this breakout session we do not expect to make decisions about alternative organizational structures; instead, we hope to discuss the way that alternative structures may impact the teaching and research goals identified in the previous sessions. We want to hear feedback on issues related to departmental purpose:
• How do we benefit from being in a ‘Department of Biology’?
• What can we do in a broad interdisciplinary department that we couldn’t do under a different organization?
• Should we change our name to Integrative Biology? (Or, is there another name that better represents who we are, and what we could be?)
• What can be done, within the current departmental structure, to improve our departmental function and environment?
• What things could we do to improve teaching and research functions within the current structure?
• Do we want the Dean to pursue discussions about the organization of biological sciences in the college?

3:30 pm  Purpose of the Department – Review Breakout Session Ideas and Priorities

4:00 pm  Review of Priority Issues and Next Steps

In this session, the group will review the priority issues identified throughout the meeting and clarify the potential action items associated with those issues. Participants will be asked to prioritize the ideas identified throughout the day along the following lines:

• Things we can do now (internally, without additional resources)
• Things we can do internally, with a small infusion of resources
• Things that would be valuable to do, but need substantial external resources/time

5:00 pm  Adjourn – Optional dinner with colleagues in Annapolis

AFTER THE RETREAT

The retreat committee will develop a report that identifies specific actions and timelines for accomplishing the goals identified at the retreat. Report by March 1, shared with faculty for discussion, approval and action.