

February 18, 2015

Michael G. Borland, Ph.D.
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
237 Hartline Science Center
400 E 2nd Street
Bloomsburg, PA 178815

Dear Professor Borland:

Thank you very much for your application for ASBMB department/program accreditation. After careful consideration, the committee has decided to grant your program **PROVISIONAL** accreditation status for **three years, June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2018.**

We very much appreciate your interest in our program, as well as the time and effort that you have invested in preparing your application. While the evaluators noted particular strengths in your program, some areas of concern were identified according to our criteria.

Aspects of your application that were considered particularly noteworthy included:

- Strong experiential learning and extensive lab experiences
- Excellent integration of inquiry based learning into the curriculum
- Thorough assessment of student performance and learning objectives in individual courses
- Within faculty research, it was good to see publication in *Biochem. Mol. Biol. Educ.*

Despite the overall strength of your application, several areas of relative weakness, ambiguity, or concern were identified:

- The small numbers of students each year raises questions about the sustainability of the program.
- A minimum of three biochemistry faculty members is required for accreditation. While your program currently meets this requirement, fewer faculty members would put accreditation at risk.
- While the curriculum appears to cover all cores concepts, the emphasis does not appear to align well. Specifically, the designation of courses in Microbiology and Cell Biology as required, while Molecular Biology and Genetics are electives seems odd. This is not necessarily a weakness, but is there a rationale for this?
- Math requirements are solid, but there does not appear to be any statistics required. Is this covered somewhere in the curriculum?
- It is stated that independent research is encouraged, but not required. How many Biochemistry students pursue independent research, and with which mentors? The application contains evidence of active student mentorship by the participating faculty members, but research experiences for Biochemistry students cannot be discerned. What percent of Biochemistry students elect to take CHEM492 and CHEM493? Are these courses specific to Chemistry

projects/students or do they apply to Biochemistry projects/students as well? Future applications should include information about research experiences specific to Biochemistry students rather than (or in addition to) department students as a whole. It was not clear that there are sufficient numbers of research-active faculty to mentor students.

- The program offers good exposure to written communication skills, but opportunities for oral presentation appear to be limited to CHEM281 and perhaps electives. Do other required courses involve oral presentation?

Some of these concerns are clearly beyond the control of the department/program. We hope that our flagging them allows you to make a case to your administration for additional resources.

We would welcome a renewal application in the spring of 2018. Either Andrew Macintyre in the ASBMB office or I would be happy to discuss with you what materials should be (re)submitted at that time.

As an alternative to 3-year provisional accreditation, you may wish to pursue the appeals process outlined in the accreditation guidelines: “Unsuccessful applicants can resubmit a revised application at the next convenient deadline. It is recommended that resubmitted applications include a letter briefly outlining their response to the prior evaluation summary.” It is your choice as to whether to reapply immediately under the appeals process or to wait until 2018 as described above.

If you reapply after three years, please be sure to consult the website and guidelines again since we are in the process of revising materials as we evaluate the accreditation program.

Again, we thank you for your well-conceived application and congratulate you on the strengths in your program. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Adele J. Wolfson for the ASBMB department/program accreditation sub-committee