

**PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION
PLAN PROGRESS REPORT
Entomology Department
2021 - 2022**

The below excerpt is from the Departmental Self-Study Report submitted for the 2022-2023 Periodic Program Review as a summary of all progress on recommendations from the prior program review.

The Department of Entomology underwent a periodic review in 2016-2017.

In the 2017 Self-Study document, the Department outlined four specific areas for improvement. These areas reflect the results of a 2015 UK Human Resources survey and include:

- Improve laboratory and office space
- Move Entomology Faculty out of the Animal Pathology (Dimmock) Building.
- Renovate laboratory space in Ag. Science North.
- Move molecular biology research to the Plant Science Building.

Space quantity and quality continue to be challenging. While Animal Pathology remains a resource for certain components of several programs, no research programs are entirely housed there, an improvement from the last review. Additionally, we have undertaken extensive renovations in Ag. Science North, and as of June 2022, there have been 12 laboratories and 45 offices renovated. Entomology has a strong research presence in the Plant Science Building, but as additional faculty embrace molecular tools in their research programs, it becomes an unrealistic goal to fully consolidate.

In addition to holding a regularly scheduled faculty retreat (which is now done annually), the following recommendations were made by the External Review Committee in Feb 2017 and agreed upon by the Chair and CAFE Dean in April 2017.

1. The future focus of the department and new faculty hires. Develop a transition strategy to manage retirement of key extension personnel to ensure program continuity for stakeholders and county agents. Consider transfer of some federally mandated programs to the college.

ACTIONS:

- a. In Faculty meetings and at Faculty retreats, a significant amount of time is spent articulating the vision and guiding development of the Department of Entomology's long-range strategic plan. Faculty meetings are held monthly during the academic year, and the Faculty retreat has become an annual event.
- b. In 2018, a departmental planning committee consisting of all junior faculty (Assistant and Associate Professors) was formed. This committee formulated four new faculty positions that were designed to replace several retirees. The committee's method was to identify the key conceptual areas of expertise and teaching abilities of departing members. They then

identified cutting-edge methods, tools, approaches, and areas of emphasis in the field of entomology that intersect with these areas and abilities. Merging these pieces, the committee then crafted position descriptions that targeted well-trained scientists whose modern and exciting research programs simultaneously balance the intellectual losses associated with retirements. These positions were presented to the faculty for feedback, and two hires so far have been made.

- c. Administration of the federally mandated Pesticide Applicator Training program has been reorganized and handled by Dr. Bessin.
2. Review the suitability, relevance, and availability of all departmental course offerings. Develop a plan to enhance undergraduate enrollment and course offerings.

ACTION:

The Curriculum Committee critically evaluates graduate and undergraduate course offerings at least annually. Since the last review, we have created numerous additional courses, including an online version of ENT 110, Insect Biology; ENT 209, Bees and People; ENT 220, Plague, Pests, and Pestilence: History and Global Perspective; ENT 509, Brains and Buds: Neuroscience of Pollination; ENT 695, Agroecology; and importantly, ENT 770, Practicum in Entomology Teaching. Additionally, we have or are in the process of removing obsolete courses from the books that haven't been offered due to a lack of interest, relevance, or an instructor.

3. Create meaningful graduate Research Assistants' opportunities for teaching experiences and access to travel funds. Critically evaluate Research Assistant stipends.

ACTIONS:

- a. Faculty approved creation of an *ENT 770 Topical Seminar: Practicum in Teaching* to provide opportunities and academic credit for teaching experiences for graduate students. Since its initial offering in 2018, 21 graduate students have taken advantage of teaching opportunities both within and outside of ENT courses. Students and instructors work with the DGS to ensure these opportunities are meaningful and contain elements beyond simple grading assistance.
- b. There are 2 paid Teaching Assistantships (one each for ENT 110 and ENT 209) and one paid grader for ENT 110.
- c. Graduate students are provided up to \$400 travel support for one conference presentation per year if nominated by their faculty advisor.
- d. Graduate Research Assistant stipends have increased incrementally. In 2018 RA stipends were \$18,000 annually, in addition to health insurance and tuition. In Fall 2022 RA stipends are \$25,000 (an annual increase averaging \$1750), again with health insurance and tuition covered. These are competitive with our benchmark institutions, which range from \$19-\$32K.

4. Consolidate the department into a single location.

ACTION:

Without additional infrastructure, this remains an elusive goal.

5. Identify mechanisms to increase collaborative research within the department and across colleges.

ACTION:

There are numerous federal grant programs that encourage collaborations within the department and across departments and colleges; we have 107 federal grants that include collaborators outside our department. These collaborations stem from common research interests but also service teaching and undergraduate mentoring efforts that build broader communities beyond the department. Faculty have also applied for several university-level funding mechanisms designed to enhance intercollege collaboration. These include the Ignite program, programs offered by the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Commonwealth Undergraduate Research Experience fellowship to fund undergraduate summer research, and the Research Priority Area Program. Faculty are encouraged to explore collaborative opportunities through mechanisms such as NSF Center for arthropod management technologies, CAMTech.

6. Develop opportunities for staff professional development, career enhancement, and social event planning.

ACTION:

Professional development is 5% of staff effort. Department staff members are encouraged as part of their benefits package to take advantage of 1) UK's Staff Professional Development Fund, which provides a match for funds related to staff travel and training, 2) the opportunity to enroll in one UK course per semester, and 3) MyUK learning platform for unlimited web-based training. Additionally, a Departmental Social Committee actively seeks opportunities to increase social interactions and group activities; this has been particularly challenging the past two years due to covid constraints.

7. Support in-state travel by extension faculty.

ACTION:

After multiple discussions with Associate Deans of Extension, this suggestion has not been implemented due to lack of funding.