

COPLAC Summer Institute on Liberal Learning in the Disciplines
Departments of Biology
5-7 June 2008

26 faculty members attended from 9 COPLAC institutions.

Concurrent Session Topics:

- Requirements of the Biology Major
- Assessment Across the Biology Curriculum
- Using the Curriculum to Prepare Students for Undergraduate Research
- Senior Capstone Projects and Demonstration of Competency/Proficiency
- Strategies for Balancing and Integrating Teaching, Scholarship, and Service
- Faculty Peer Collaborations and Career Development Issues
- Managing Undergraduate Research Students and Their Projects
- Effective Advising

Summary of Best Practices in Biology at COPLAC Institutions

1. Curricula prepare students to demonstrate contemporary skills and competencies in investigating biological phenomena.
2. Departments provide a research-focused, investigative, inquiry-based curriculum emphasizing major themes (e.g. function, development, and evolution) that connect across biological subdisciplines.
3. There is broad faculty mentoring of independent undergraduate scholarship activities using a variety of models appropriate to the departmental and institutional missions.
4. Departmental assessment focuses on curricular goals; long-term assessment data guide programmatic improvement, reallocation of department resources, and acquisition of additional resources (funding, new lines, equipment, etc.).

Final Plenary Session Recommendations

- Provide monetary, temporal, personnel, and physical resources to support research-focused, investigative, inquiry-based curricula and undergraduate scholarship.
- Count as part of faculty workload, and reward with credit (towards promotion, tenure, and merit), excellent mentoring of student research.
- Provide full contact-hour teaching credit and equivalent compensation for laboratory courses, which are an integral and necessary component of biology curricula.