

Agenda and Minutes
Neuroscience Program Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting
May 1, 2015
101 Giltner Hall
1:30-3:00 PM

Attendees: Jim Galligan, Laura Symonds, Peter Cobbett, Kyle Miller, Colleen Hegg, Marc Breedlove, Kathy Halievski, Andrew Kneynsberg (guest)

1. Summary of academic program review Galligan

Complete academic program review (reports from internal and external review committees) will be posted on the program website. Overall review was positive but a number of recommendations were made:

- i) Diversify sources of support for graduate students
- ii) Update graduate curriculum and consolidate coursework as much as possible into year 1. Incorporate active learning approaches into the courses. Expand molecular and cellular content
- iii) Organize multi-laboratory boot camp type activity for 1st year students.
- iv) Consider transitioning to a Department of Neuroscience while maintaining interdisciplinary Ph.D. training program.

2. Department of Neuroscience Galligan

The growth of the undergraduate major has presented challenges not easily met by an interdisciplinary program. Program status also limits growth of neuroscience research and education at MSU, particularly faculty recruiting and hiring. Transitioning to departmental status would help address these issues and provide long term stability and predictability. A preliminary proposal has been presented to Dean Kirkpatrick and has received his support. A more detailed proposal will require broad input and a committee will be formed to develop this proposal.

3. Awards Committee Galligan

The VPRGS has recently emphasized the importance of increasing the success of MSU faculty in competing for awards and fellowships recognizing excellence in research and other scholarly activities. Award success is a metric that contributes to the calculation for AAU membership. There was discussion about formation of a program awards committee. It was decided to have the FAC serve as the awards committee for 1 year to "pilot" this new initiative. It will be important for the Neuroscience Program awards efforts to coordinate with the home department of faculty to develop the most competitive nominations. A spreadsheet with a list of awards and nomination deadlines will be provided to FAC members.

4. Curriculum Committee Galligan

A curriculum committee will be formed in the very near future to help manage curricular changes in the graduate program and continued growth of the undergraduate curriculum. The committee will consist of ~5 people.

5. NEU 839 & 804

Galligan

Jack Johnson has done an outstanding job as course coordinator for NEU 839 for many years. In order to maintain the high quality of this important course in the long term future, a transition plan needs to be developed for a new course coordinator. Jack will be consulted about his recommendations for the long term future of the course. The plan will be to have the new instructor co-teach/assist the course next year.

Marc B will not be teaching/coordinating NEU 804 as he is developing a new undergraduate course in developmental neuroscience. Need to find a replacement for Marc. A good strategy that worked out this past year was having the students teach the class during the first session of the week, and discuss a relevant journal article in the second session of the week. Students must take a quiz before discussion to ensure that they have done the assigned reading. Another option is to have the course group taught.

6. Report on Grad Student Recruiting

Cobbett

The graduate program has 7 incoming students including two DO/PhD students. 5 will be taking advantage of early start fellowships where the students will complete their first rotation during the summer. Peter Cobbett did an outstanding job of running a successful recruiting effort.

7. Update on U-grad program

Symonds

There are 540 neuroscience undergraduate majors. This greatly exceeds the predicted steady state maximum of 400 students. In order to meet the graduation needs of the students two new laboratory course sections (24 students each) will needed to be offered each year. Providing staffing for the lab course is an immediate need. In addition, 9 new courses are being offered in the coming year. The rapid growth of the u-grad major is very exciting but it also provides new challenges that require additional faculty and staff.

8. New Business

None

9. Old Business

None

Adjourned at 2:50 PM.

Summary of Academic Program Review

Internal review committee:

- Professor Greg Swain (Department of Chemistry and a Neuroscience Program Member)
- Professor A. J. Robison (Department of Physiology and the Neuroscience Program)
- Professor Caryl Sortwell (Department of Translational Science and Molecular Medicine and a Neuroscience Program Member)
- Professor Sue Conrad (Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics)
- Professor Rique Campa (Associate Dean of the Graduate School)
- Dr. Christina Ragan (Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Neuroscience Program)
- Mr. Andrew Kneysberg (Ph.D. Graduate Student in the Neuroscience Program)
- Ms. Ninotchka Del Valle Dorta (Ph.D. Graduate Student in the Neuroscience Program)
- Mr. Dylan Miller (Undergraduate Student in the Neuroscience Program)

External Review committee:

Alan Sved, University of Pittsburgh

James Herman, University of Cincinnati

Kristen Keefe, University of Utah

Summary

Graduate program:

Recruit most competitive graduate students, rather than bringing in a set number of students.

Neuroscience Graduate Program must remain a broad-based, interdepartmental program rather than a program based in an emerging Dept. of Neuroscience.

Curriculum revision: a) Move most coursework into year 1 b) Provide hands-on experiences in a methods and experimental design course divided between the EL and GR campuses c) Use more "active learning" approaches for delivery of the graduate curriculum; d) Provide greater coverage of cellular and molecular biology; e) Ensure that faculty have the necessary training or technical support to effectively deliver content via distance technologies.

Work in concert with the Graduate School to deliver its courses (e.g. RCR) and professional development opportunities via video and/or in parallel on the GR campus.

Need increased mechanisms for graduate stipend support.

To assure continued growth of MSU as a leader in neuroscience research, attention will have to be given to improving infrastructure (e.g. Giltner Hall)

Continue initiatives to ensure timely progression of students through the program and to completion of the PhD

Undergraduate Program

Needs significant additional resources without impacting the graduate program.

Faculty engagement is critical and NSP faculty in diverse departments will need to be kept involved. Communication is key relevant to the formation of the Neuroscience Department.

Careful consideration will need to be given to the teaching the curricula of both a graduate and undergraduate program without overburdening individual faculty. Creative synergies between courses in the two programs should be considered.

Laboratory research is a valuable component of the major and the program will need to be creative in finding suitable laboratory experiences for the large number of majors.

Neuroscience Ph.D. students fall, 2015

Kathryn Miller (Kalamazoo College)

Candace Savonen (DO/PhD)(Oakland University) (1st rotation: Mazei Robison, early start)

Marie Doyle (Carnegie Mellon)(1st rotation: Kanaan, early start)

Natosha Mercado-Idziak (GV State)(1st rotation: Vega, early start)

Celizbets Colon-Ortiz (UPR Cayey)(1st rotation: Jordan, early start)

Narayana Yelleswarapu (DO/PhD)(University of Pittsburgh)(1st rotation: Swain, early start)

Patricia Perez-Bonilla (UPR-Rio Piedras, early start)

Update on U-grad Program

