

Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology

Prepared by Thomas W. Phillips

Degree Program(s) Assessed	Assessment Methods	Number of Individuals Assessed
B.S. --Entomology M.S. --Entomology M.S. --Plant Pathology Ph.D. --Entomology Ph.D. --Plant Pathology	Written and oral exit interviews in addition to information from Curriculum Vitae on professional placement.	1 (1 graduated) 4 (4 graduated) 2 (2 graduated) 2 (2 graduated) 2 (2 graduated)

Analysis and Findings

Copies of the written exit questionnaires are available upon request. All students were given or mailed printed forms to complete, and all graduates this year participated in an oral exit interview during this assessment period. Oral interviews were conducted by the Department Head as follow-ups to the written instrument. Interviews allowed graduates to comment freely about concerns or suggested improvements for the program.

The relatively small samples sizes of interviews from the five degree programs preclude conduct of any useful statistical analyses. All exit interview responses were positive. The following summary reports the average numerical score (ranging from 1=Excellent, to 4=Poor) given for departmental faculty and their instruction for the following seven assessment factors: quality of teaching, interest in intellectual growth of the student, sensitivity to student needs, quality of advising, quality of total curriculum, overall departmental quality of instruction, and opportunities for creative development. The one B.S. Entomology student, 1.2; the four M.S. Entomology students, 1.4; two Plant Pathology M.S. Entomology students, 1.4; two Entomology Ph.D.s, 1.3; two Plant Pathology Ph.D.s, 1.6.

Our graduates are generally pleased with the support services offered in the Department and for the most part, elsewhere in the University. Three students indicated problems dealing with the record-keeping system of the Graduate College, but admitted that the staff members there were friendly and that they were eventually properly served. When asked about the quality of courses in other departments, the most common courses receiving negative ratings were STAT 5013 and 5023, although this varied with the instructor. These are two key service courses that all of our graduate students take to help them in analyses of these research data. From our standpoint, these need to be classes in biometrics that cover theory as well as relevant applications for statistics to experimentation in biological and agricultural systems. Several students expressed concern over a loss of faculty positions in the department that affect graduate courses, specifically Insect Toxicology and Insect Physiology. These are core courses for graduate training in Entomology, and their loss will result in an impact on our Entomology graduate programs if they are not filled in the near future. Some students expressed interest in having a course in grant-writing, which was discontinued several years ago due to resignation of the faculty member teaching it.

All graduates from this assessment period were placed in a professional position relevant to their OSU experience. The one B.S. student is in a graduate entomology program at Purdue University. Of the M.S. graduates, one has a research technician position in our department, another took a pest management position in industry, a third accepted a commission as a medical entomologist in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, and the remaining three are pursuing Ph.D. degrees in relevant fields. Both Ph.D. graduate were employed as postdoctoral researchers at other academic/research institutions.

Uses of Assessment Results

We use responses from exit interviews, together with results from the OSU Student Survey of Instruction, each year to aid faculty in revisions and updating of their course materials. Since a major revision of the departmental curriculum was completed over the past five years, we do not foresee substantial changes in course material outside of yearly revisions done by most faculty on an individual basis.

Plans have been implemented to develop a new undergraduate internship program within the department, and this initiative grew directly out of past assessment exercises with undergraduates. One aspect of our department that distinguishes it from others is the opportunity that undergraduates have for participation in faculty research programs. In order to promote these experiences we encourage students to enroll in either ENTO 4800, Undergraduate Traineeship, or PLP 4400, Undergraduate Research, for 1-3 credits as an internship in a faculty program for which there is a defined objective, executable practice, and a delivered product at the end of the semester. We currently have several students enrolled in these courses who are also working in faculty research programs. Our next step will be to make a formal addition to our option sheet that places the undergraduate internship as one of the major requirement or controlled electives. In our graduate programs we recently lowered the minimum coursework credit hour requirements for Ph.D. degrees to reflect the predominantly research-based programs in our department. Most of our Ph.D. candidates already have an M.S. in either Entomology or Plant Pathology, and thus have taken all required core courses in those fields as well as other specialty courses. These changes were a direct result of several years of assessment reviews as well as a response to perceptions of the type of professional training needed by our Ph.D.s for success after graduate school. Our curriculum committee will consider resurrecting a graduate course in grant-writing, or perhaps to having the subject of grant-writing covered in ENTO/PLP 5992 Career Skills and Professionalism.