The Biology Department will continue to explore and provide opportunities for our students to use their interest and knowledge of Biology in areas outside of the classroom with biology-related activities and events. Events such as the Biology Club, the Biology Journal Club, the Creek Restoration Project, the Greenhouse Renovation, the Wildflower Show, and the Science Garden provide invaluable opportunities to work with other students, faculty and community members. Funding of these projects will allow us to continue to offer and find new opportunities for our students.

Finally, as of right now, instructors in the Biology Department are required to bear a burden that undermines our ability to appropriately serve our students. Science instructors must teach 6 classes to fulfill their full-time load, often with double lecture sections, whereas, the majority of departments teach only 5 sections. This significantly cuts into the precious time we can spend serving students’ individual needs and fulfilling institutional responsibilities. Changing the laboratory load from .167 to .2 would allow Biology instructors to teach the more standard 5 classes and would significantly improve the quality of instruction and interaction with our students.

Student Equity and Institutional Benchmarking (Instructional/Curriculum)

This year we are continuing the process of setting institutional benchmarks to narrow the achievement gap, and, as a College community, we will continue the conversation of how to improve student equity College-wide. The goal of the student equity questions is to identify any significant differences in student achievement so we can explore ways to address them. In order to assist you, the Student Success Team has identified research based effective strategies as options from which to choose. You may also select other strategies. The menu of strategies identified by the Student Success Work Team can be found by navigating to: Student Success Strategies.

27. The course completion and course success rates for your program over the last five years are available broken down by different demographic categories in Canvas – Program Review – Data module in the spreadsheet: Five_year_course_data. What do you notice in this data?

The number of Biology degrees awarded varied from 13 in 2016 to 40 in 2014, despite the fact that the total number of students in our sections for majors has remained fairly steady. The sudden jump in numbers might merely suggest that there was an outlier year in which a higher-than-average number of students focused on completing the requirements for the major, not just completing pre-requisites for moving to their next academic program or next school.

The years to completion averaged about 3 years over the five years of data. One cohort took only 2.74 years, while the slowest cohort took 3.4 years. Compared to other science majors degree completion for Biology is almost always longer than Math, Physics or Chemistry. Many of the prerequisite courses in Biology must be taken in order, and
unless a student is adept at enrolling in the right courses at the right time and completing those courses on the first try, a dropped course can set a student back by a semester or more. The Biology Department is making the major courses available during summer and evening hours to help alleviate this scheduling issue and to provide students with more options for completing required courses.

Another reason for the relatively long years to completion may be that many Biology students aiming for the allied health fields are returning adults, juggling school enrollment with the other demands in their lives. In this regard, many Biology majors have more in common with students in Paralegal or Administration of Justice, which also have rather long years to completion averages.

28. How successful was your program in increasing the achievement rates in course completion and course success for Latino and African American students between the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years? If successful, please explain to what you owe your success. What do you plan to do to improve or continue to improve the achievement rates?

We were not able to extract this information from the files provided.

29. The data provided in Canvas – Program Review – Data module in the spreadsheet: Five_year_course_data includes the overall totals/percentages for the 2015/16 year. Between the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years the college goal is to increase by one percentage point in course completion and course success rates. Use the provided data to identify your new goal for next year. What actions is your program planning to take to help achieve this benchmark? How can your program partner with student support services such as the Office of Student Equity, the Student Success Team, Tutorial Services, etc. to achieve this goal?

Sixty-seven percent of Biology students are successful in their coursework. The State average is 70%. Over the years from 2013 - 2016, there has been a 1% increase in success each year. The department expects to maintain this trend by offering more variety in the courses and majors, by supporting tutoring, and by making high-demand courses available in evenings and summer to better meet the needs of working students.

The Biology ADT is expected to be available for students in the fall of 2017. The department is setting up a new AS degree in Ecology, Biodiversity and Conservation. New courses in climate change are in development.

Many of our students serve as tutors in Tutorial Services. Biology is now participating in the First Year Experience program.

Biology, has enhanced course offerings outside of peak times. Biology has set up a series of intensive summer sessions for Human Anatomy, Microbiology, and Human