

## MEMORANDUM

TO: C. Michelle Piskulich, Associate Provost

FROM: Dr. Gwendolyn Thompson McMillon, Chairperson  
Senate Budget Review Committee

SUBJECT: Biomedical Proposal

DATE: April 7, 2011

The Senate Budget Review Committee has carefully reviewed the Bachelor of Science Degree in Biomedical Science proposal, and it is our unanimous opinion that the budget portion of the proposal is incomplete, lacks crucial numbers, overestimates revenue and underestimates expenses, that the Biomedical Program largely duplicates and will adversely impact several existing programs, and thus the SBRC does not recommend that it be approved as proposed.

It is the responsibility of the Senate Budget Review Committee to examine budget issues that will impact the university. A major part of the SBRC charge is to thoroughly examine and determine the feasibility of proposed budgets, and investigate how proposed programs will affect existing programs. As we face economic uncertainty, with potential cutbacks in support, it is imperative that new programs increase university revenue and that proposed budgets explicitly and accurately estimate all expenses and sources of revenue.

Based on the information provided in the Biomedical Science proposal, letters from the directors of existing programs, and other information forwarded to the SBRC, it is questionable that the program will achieve the high revenue forecast in the proposal. It appears that students are much more likely to come from other, existing programs within OU instead of from outside Oakland. If this is the case, the estimated revenue is grossly overstated.

The expenses of the proposed program are exceptionally high. The proposal specifies four new faculty lines in order to meet the competency requirements of the program. The proposed budget appears to be at least \$55,000 short on lab start up costs for each new faculty hired, and the cost of specialized classrooms for the program was omitted.

In addition to limited revenue and high expenses, it appears that the Biomedical Program will adversely affect several existing programs within OU. Letters from the Biochemistry Program and the School of Health Sciences indicate real concerns that the proposed Biomedical Program will duplicate course offerings and lead to loss of enrollment in the existing programs. It was also a concern that the Biomedical Program may be privileged over existing programs because funding for recruitment would be available to the new program, while the existing programs lack recruitment resources and are, in fact, being asked to identify ways to make additional cuts to their programs. Coordination and collaboration with existing programs is essential in order to provide the most beneficial and cost-effective academic opportunities for our students.

Without a letter from Dean Sudol, the SBRC is unsure of his support or non-support of the Biomedical Sciences proposal, which is especially critical at this time of economic uncertainty. Furthermore, the Senate Budget Review Committee concurs with the Senate Planning Review Committee on several matters addressed in their report to the University Senate concerning the Biomedical Proposal:

*Substantial resources are requested for this program. In addition to the need for four new faculty lines, with the normal requirements for laboratory support for each faculty member, two staff are also requested, additional laboratory space, and a specialized, interactive classroom. While Senate Budget will focus on the budgetary issues, it is important to mention that Dr. Dvir told SPRC that each new biology faculty member is offered at a minimum \$175,000 to set up their lab. When you add this cost to the cost of the new classroom, salaries for the four faculty and the two new staff, this proposal will cost in excess of one million dollars. The budget included with the proposal only included \$120,000 in lab support for each faculty member, but this contradicts what SPRC was told by the biology faculty during our meeting with them.*

*Hiring four new faculty for biology will be made at the cost of the other sciences. Dr. Art Bull reported two concerns with this proposal. First, the requested resources will mean that Chemistry will suffer losses. Secondly, this proposal will probably cause more of a redistribution of students as opposed to attracting a huge group of new students. The Biochemistry major will suffer as a result of this new major, if implemented. Dr. Bull also reported that students who graduate with a biochemistry major can get a job without going to graduate school. SPRC asked Dr. Bull if the issue of resources was not a concern, would he still have reservations about this major? He responded that he would because the degree students get in biology will require that they go to graduate school. He stated that having a "Plan B" for these majors is critical.*

*In addition to resources, the lack of sufficient collaboration is also an issue. While representatives from the Department of Biological Sciences consulted with other Departments in the CAS, they did not consult with the School of Health Sciences. Dr. Lynne Williams met with SPRC and expressed strong concern about this proposal. It is the position of the SHS that many of the courses being proposed for this curriculum are already being offered by the SHS and therefore this proposal represents considerable duplication of courses. She also expressed concern that this was a missed opportunity for the two units to work together. Like Dr. Bull, she is concerned that by virtue of the name of this degree, students will automatically assume that the B.S. in biomedical sciences is the preferred route for medical school when that is not in fact, the case.*

*Given the current budgetary concerns and the amount of money needed for this proposal, it is particularly disturbing that there is no letter of support from Dean Sudol. Without such a letter, we would urge the Senate to be cautious in giving support to this proposal.*

In conclusion, SBRC is unanimous in recommending that the Biomedical Science program not be approved as currently proposed. The SBRC looks forward to a review of a revised proposal that completely and properly addresses the many concerns raised in the review process.