

Biotechnology Advisory Committee Meeting

April 23, 2021

Members in attendance: Ann Vogel (iBIO), Andy Howard (IIT), Dave Stenger (ADM), Kevin Li (Triton College), Jeff Janulis (Triton College), Gabriel Guzman (Triton College), Susan Rohde (Triton College), Beth Cliffel (Triton College), Jennifer Smith (Triton College)

- Welcome and Introduction of New Members
 - Ann Vogel is joining us from the Illinois Biotechnology Innovation Organization (iBIO); her role at this organization as the Senior VP of Charitable Programs allows her to focus on STEM education
 - Dave Stenger is the Global Quality Control Manager at Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) where he focuses on implementing practices for the optimization of the work being done at ADM
 - Sivakumar Ramu is the founder and president of Radiance Biosciences who was unavailable to join for this meeting
 - We welcome back Andy Howard and Jeff Janulis who have been dedicated members of the advisory board
- Program Update
 - We have 12 students preparing to graduate in May 2021
 - There was discussion regarding how many of these graduates intend to transfer vs how many would like to enter the workforce as soon as possible after graduation
 - Gabe identified 3 students who have interest in pursuing a 4-year degree once completing the program
 - Triton faculty will follow up with the students to get a clearer picture of their interests post-graduation
 - Andy described the initiatives at IIT to be more accepting of credits completed for IAI courses which should enhance the transfer process for our students
 - Kevin explained the connection to Purdue University Northwest; this relationship may benefit our students as they have a biotechnology program there
 - Currently, we have identified at least 32 students who have declared interest in pursuing the AAS degree in biotechnology
 - The tracking of students continues to be a challenge given that many students do not officially declare biotechnology as their major as well as the fact that there are many points of entry to the program
 - Sue discussed the challenges faced while trying to market the program during the pandemic; although our typical recruitment efforts of running in-class presentations and in-person information sessions have not occurred since the initial shut down last year, we continue to conduct virtual recruitment events
- Industry changes and potential new directions
 - Gabe explained that prior to the pandemic there was a boom in biotechnology, especially in life science, pharmaceutical and agriculture
 - Dave suggested that the lab skill sets have not changed significantly but with an emphasis on performance excellence, leadership skills and forward thinking are becoming increasingly important in new hires
 - Dave also explained the lack of skilled workers prepared for these entry-level positions
 - Ann described a shift in biotechnology companies towards an emphasis on making the workplace more accessible and equitable and putting diversity and inclusion at the forefront
 - Ann also described the extra challenges in finding internships in labs during the pandemic as many companies are working in a split shift format to reduce the density of people in their facilities
- Program of Study
 - Gabe explained how the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is going to require Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs like ours to develop a Program of Study (POS)

- The POS creates a bridge between high school, college and career for our students
- The due date for the POS application is July 2023, and while not necessary for us to continue the program would ensure our eligibility for Perkins funding and would make us more marketable for other sources of funding (e.g. NSF)
- There are two key components that we would need help from advisory board members as we prepare our POS application: Development and Engagement and Employer Informed Competencies and Skills
 - What we are asking from advisory board members is the following: letter of commitment, current labor market information, and providing opportunities for our students to engage in work-based learning
- Areas of strengthening/improvement
 - Internship opportunities are an important experience for students to feel integrated into the field so we want to prioritize these kinds of opportunities; internships are also a requirement for approval as a POS
 - Strengthening our relationships with HS partners to create a more seamless transition to our program and then eventually the workforce is also something we need to focus on
 - Recruitment efforts to reach non-traditional students is also an important future goal
- Areas of possible exploration and expansion
 - Andy suggested incorporating bioinformatics; this would create another pipeline for our students interested in earning a 4-year degree in bioinformatics and would require collaboration with CIS faculty

Minutes prepared by: Susan Rohde