Queen’s University
Executive Summary of the Review of the Undergraduate Programs in Life Sciences and Biochemistry

In accordance with Queen’s University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), the life sciences and biochemistry undergraduate programs submitted a self-study in January 2014 to the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) to initiate the cyclical program review of the undergraduate programs in life sciences and biochemistry. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, library report and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Planning. Appendices to the self-study contained CVs for each full-time member in the departments which teach in the life sciences and biochemistry programs.

Five arm’s-length reviewers (Dr. John Baenziger, Professor and Graduate Program Director, University of Ottawa; Dr. William Baldridge, Professor and Head, Dalhousie University; Dr. Ross MacGillivray, Professor, University of British Columbia; Dr. Karen Mearow, Professor and Associate Dean, Memorial University of Newfoundland; and, Dr. Tom Hollenstein, Department of Psychology, Queen’s University) examined the materials and conducted a site visit on March 11 & 12, 2014. The site-visit included interviews with the Deputy Provost, Dean and Associate Deans of Arts and Science, Executive Vice-Dean and Associate Dean Faculty of Health Sciences and meetings with undergraduate students, librarians, cognate heads, staff and faculty.

In their report (April 11, 2014), the review team provided feedback that describes how the life sciences and biochemistry programs meet the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university’s mission and academic priorities. The review team noted that overall they were very impressed with both the academic quality of students and faculty/staff and the content of the delivered materials. They went on to say that both the life sciences and biochemistry undergraduate plans are excellent programs that aim to provide in-depth training for students in their respective fields. This training allows graduates of the programs to pursue a variety of careers in research or to attend professional schools.

The review team did report on a number of challenges including the need for: curriculum changes including modes of delivery; increased involvement of students in future curriculum issues; improved academic advising to ensure students make well-informed choices; a succession plan for faculty; a strategic plan; and, increased availability of experiential learning opportunities.

Based on all of the above documentation, a Final Assessment Report and an Implementation Plan were prepared by the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and approved by the Provost (October 8, 2014).

The undergraduate degree plans in life sciences and biochemistry have been approved to continue and are scheduled for their next review in eight years (2021-2022)

Prepared by the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)
October 3, 2014