



Idaho State
UNIVERSITY

Department of Biological Sciences

Strategic Plan (FY2019-2024)

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Prepared by the Department of Biological Sciences Planning Committee

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Department

The Department of Biological Sciences (Biosciences) at Idaho State University consists of 43 faculty members (30 tenured or tenure-track professors, 9 lecturers, and 4 open lines for tenure-track faculty), serving over 500 undergraduate majors and 50 graduate students. In addition, Biosciences teaches thousands of student credit hours in service to other programs (nearly 70% of the department's total SCH productivity), mainly students receiving training in the health professions. The department has more than \$4M in competitive extramural funding, and publishes dozens of peer-reviewed publications every year (most including student co-authors).

1.2 Objectives of the Strategic Planning Process

The objectives of the strategic planning process were to:

- Create a five-year plan
- Create a new vision and mission
- Develop strategic goals and objectives
- Establish tasks that will help the department gain traction on achieving the goals.

1.3 Methodology

Using ISU's strategic planning model, administration, staff, and stakeholder representation started an honest, comprehensive dialogue to create a vision of its future. The new vision addresses the delivery of a superior product while shaping the future of ISU within the communities it serves in the intermountain west. The group transformed real and perceived weaknesses into opportunities into achievable but challenging goals and objectives by analyzing the Department's capability to grow and flourish. This living document is the first one of many steps to come to support the Department of Biological Sciences' ability to achieve its desired results by increasing the campus's ability to create positive change.

2. Organizational Profile

2.1 Vision

To inspire our students to wonder about the living world and strive to better understand it.

(What we are trying to accomplish or become.)

2.2 Mission

We are a community that advances understanding of the biological sciences through active discovery, learning and engagement with society.

(Who we are, and why we do what we do.)

2.3. Values

Diversity: *We reflect the aspirations, interests, and identities of our communities*

Community: *A culture of mutual trust, respect, accountability, and camaraderie*

Passion: *An enthusiastic dedication to our work*

Empowerment: *Helping individuals realize their talents and fulfill their potential*

Excellence: *An international reputation for innovative scholarship with regional impacts*

Sincerity: *Inspire confidence and reliability in ourselves and others*

3. Plan

For each, we use the following definitions:

- **Goal:** The goalpost or outcome. A brief title that describes what we are hoping to achieve. Goals are designed to be WIG: Wildly Important Goals, with profound and transformative outcomes when achieved.
- **Objective:** The measurable step required to achieve the goal, with a timeline of expected results. It is expected that these are SMART Objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- **Measures & target:** How we will define and measure our progress on the Objectives:
 - Lagging measures reflect the end Goal, and articulated with a target. Progress on the lagging measure is usually outside our control, depending on prior progress measured by the leading measures.
 - Leading measures reflect the sub-steps associated with the Objective. In most cases, we have control over the leading measures and concentrate our efforts there, with specific targets set as needed.
- **Tasks:** Specific jobs under our control and within our sphere of influence. Each is assigned to a committee, though there may be overlap. Each is also shepherded by a Champion, who is usually a member of the assigned committee.

3.1 Goal: Reward Success and Increase Diversity

Objective: Create a more diverse and engaged culture that encourages and rewards Bioscience faculty and staff for their contributions to the community.

Measures & targets:

Key lagging measures: a) departmental engagement (attendance at departmental events, like the holiday party, and contributions to committee activities); b) diversity of backgrounds and perspective among our faculty, staff, and students

Key leading measures: salary equity, policies and evaluation criteria that match our values

Tasks:

1. Salary equity plan (Keeley working with Planning Committee, partnering with Dean)
2. New building (Thomas, Aho, Anderson, and others)
3. Development of a hiring plan that fits our values and aspirations and that complements and builds on existing strengths (Thomas working with bioscience faculty)
4. New departmental workload policy that allows flexibility in workload assignment, allocation of effort towards areas of interest and expertise, and rewards contributions to departmental goals (Keeley working with Promotion & Evaluation Committee)
5. Other tasks created by departmental committees (with identified champion)

3.2 Goal: Grow Enrollment and Better Serve Our Students

Objective: By the end of AY 2023, Biosciences will increase the number of degrees awarded from BioSciences programs 25% by focusing on recruitment and retention initiatives and developing more effective relationships with other programs at ISU and beyond.

Measures & targets:

Key lagging measure & target: The number of degrees awarded by each of our undergrad and grad programs, increased to more than 92 undergraduate degrees awarded and 16 graduate degrees awarded annually by the end of AY 2024 (using 5-yr running average)

Other leading measures: Static enrollment, number of incoming students, number of transfer students, student retention (especially spring-to-fall)

Tasks:

1. Undergrad Retention: Give our students reasons to return next semester.
 - a. Increase the number of research opportunities (currently about 100 of our 500 students engage in some form of authentic research).
 - b. Develop Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) for ESPCoR (Loxterman working with Undergrad Education Committee).
 - c. Create student career training program (Pradhan working with Undergrad Education Committee).
 - d. Increased usage of funded field trips integrated into teaching labs (Champion working with Undergrad Education Committee).
2. Undergrad pipeline: Increase enrollment pipeline into our programs.
 - a. Establish blanket 2+2 articulation plans & agreements with CEI, CSI, and CWI covering all 7 majors & concentrations (Loxterman working with Undergrad Education Committee).
 - b. Make recruitment a department-wide effort (Thomas working with Outreach Committee).
3. Graduate retention:
 - a. Improved grad student experience and funding to support grad research (Baxter working with Graduate Education Committee).
4. Graduate pipeline:
 - a. Increase number of GTAs, GRAs, fellowships, and other lines of support for grad students (Champion working with Graduate Education Committee).
5. Other tasks created by departmental committees (with identified champion).

3.3 Goal: Realize Our Research Potential

Objective: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve the research environment, strategically deploy existing resources, and increase resources for scholarly research, leading to a 50% increase in extramural funding by AY2023.

Measures & targets:

Key lagging measure & target: *Extramural funding annual expenditure, increased to \$2.5M by AY 2024 (from \$1.1M in 2018)*

Other leading measures: *Numbers of grant applications and publications, especially those associated with collaborative projects*

Tasks:

1. Fund undergraduate research opportunities (Lohse & Finney, working with Research Committee)
2. Support grad students in summer (Lohse & Finney, working with Graduate Education and/or Research Committee)
3. Fund publication page costs and conference trips (Thomas working with Research Committee)
4. Other tasks created by departmental committees (with identified champion)

3.4 Goal: Be Visible and Engaged with Our Community

Objective: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve enhance our community engagement efforts with our partners to improve our reputation, recruitment, and resources; use these opportunities to promote our achievements and our people.

Measures & targets:

Key lagging measure & target: *Visibility (PR stories? Donations?). Number of community members reached by our engagement activities.*

Other leading measures: *Number of events, people interactions, community partnerships, visits to schools, etc.*

Tasks:

1. Create a comprehensive engagement plan, including reorganizing the Outreach & Engagement Committee (Thomas working with Outreach Committee)
2. STEM Community Engagement Chairs (Thomas and dean working with Planning and/or Outreach Committees)
3. Develop a robust and engaging seminar series (Hale working with and Outreach Committee)
4. Other tasks created by departmental committees (with identified champion)