

# BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT PLAN

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### 1) MISSION STATEMENT

Western Biology is a diverse and collegial community that fosters learning, growth, and student success through inquiry, discovery, and innovation in a working environment committed to mutual respect. We bring diverse perspectives together to bear on fundamental biological questions, and to train the next generation of biologists to understand, critically evaluate, and apply biological concepts to bear on the world's pressing challenges.

### 2) VISION STATEMENT

We push the boundaries of biological knowledge from the scale of molecules to ecosystems.

### 3) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Biology Department Plan outlines the shared purpose and path forward for the Biology Department at Western University for the next five years. The plan is composed of a set of goals grouped under four priority areas, identified through a stakeholder survey, Departmental retreat, and feedback from the Biology Planning Committee, in collaboration with Anne Becker from Climb Consulting. The four priority areas have goals intended to: (1) Advance excellence in research and scholarship, (2) Provide transformative experiential learning opportunities for our students and trainees, (3) Promote student success through innovative teaching and curriculum development, and (4) Ensure that Biology is a collegial, safe, equitable, diverse, and inclusive place to work and learn. These goals under these priorities are aligned with the mission and vision statements that reflect our shared underlying values. Working Groups composed of Departmental faculty, staff, and graduate student volunteers, chaired by members of the Executive Committee, worked together to identify Recommended Actions to be taken to help the Department attain the Goals.

## 4) OUR SHARED CORE VALUES

We will better steward our living and changing world through citizenship, learning, discovery, and innovation by living the following shared core values:

- Collaboration
- Excellence
- Curiosity
- Student Success
- Community
- Diversity
- Innovation
- Learning and Growth
- Respect

## 5) OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### 1. Advance excellence in research and scholarship

- Encourage and facilitate more opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary research partnerships.
- Revitalize and promote investment in maintaining and improving laboratories, equipment, infrastructure, and signature facilities that enable faculty, students, and staff to excel.
- Share impactful and inclusive stories of research success across the department, faculty, university, and the world.
- Recognize and promote the achievements of our academic community through internal and external awards and scholarship.
- Continue to build engaging relationships with community partners to produce local research related to what is happening in London and the region.
- Maintain high research quality and productivity.

### 2. Provide transformative experiential learning opportunities for our students and trainees

- Expand opportunities for students to actively participate in high-quality biology research projects.
- Increase student access to, and awareness of, self-directed, project-based, field, co-op and community engaged experiences that provide relevant, transferable skills for future endeavours.
- Recognize and celebrate students, and post-doctoral scholars for their achievements, such as those in research, teaching, mentoring, leadership, communications and outreach.
- Solicit, listen to, and act upon student and trainee feedback to create an engaging and supportive environment for collaboration, learning and discovery.

### **3. Promote student success through innovative teaching and curriculum development**

- Review and revise undergraduate and graduate programs and curriculum to reflect student and societal needs.
- Ensure students develop the creativity, critical thinking, subject matter expertise and transferable skills they will need to adapt and succeed in a changing world.
- Promote relevant professional development opportunities for faculty to explore and adopt pioneering teaching methods and evidence-based pedagogy.
- Support faculty to foster accessible and inclusive learning environments.
- Ensure that staff support for teaching and learning is allocated equitably, impactfully and efficiently.

### **4. Ensure that Biology is a collegial, safe, equitable, diverse, and inclusive place to work and learn.**

- Strengthen the department's sense of community and belonging, with more inclusive opportunities for collaborating, connecting, and engaging, and ensuring that we all work in an environment of mutual respect where our value is recognized.
- Continue to invest the time and effort needed to uplift Indigenous voices in Biology and to build meaningful relationships with the Indigenous communities with which we share the land.
- Continue to attract, retain, and empower exceptional faculty and staff that are representative of the diverse communities we serve and work with.
- Implement a targeted and multifaceted strategy to recruit and retain diverse, high performing, high potential biology students.
- Promote the conditions that foster mental, physical, and emotional health and resiliency for students, staff, and faculty.
- Ensure that faculty, staff, and students are trained in and committed to the principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID).
- Ensure that all members of Biology share a mutual respectful working and learning environment regardless of position, rank, or any other ground.