In a meeting on October 15th, 2010 the Undergraduate Council (UGC) analyzed and discussed the CLS Program Review document submitted by the faculty of the CLS department. The UGC also reviewed letters from the Dean and Curriculum Committee of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). On November 12th, 2010 the UGC met for a question and answer meeting with Prof. Linda McCown, Director of the CLS department.

The CLS department has provided our students learning experiences that will result in the development of responsible, competent, entry-level professionals in clinical laboratory science. This is a unique degree which serves a market well as shown by the close to 100% job-placement of its graduates. Most other institutions do not offer a 4-year bachelor’s degree in CLS but instead offer a 2-year associate’s degree.

The CLS department has in place rigorous admission requirements for their students and a commendable balance of academic and clinical preparation in the curriculum. The department also has a computerized comprehensive examination given as a closure requirement. Results from this exam and from external certification exams are regularly analyzed and utilized for curricular revisions. Despite numerous efforts on the part of the department, the program is facing an attrition rate of 29%. CLS does face two factors that make it harder to reduce this attrition rate: one, they only have a fixed number of “spots” in their cohorts, and two, their graduates go on into medicine related fields, where “quality control” becomes an issue. The department could try to recruit more selectively to alleviate the attrition issue. The department deserves credit for its support of the general education and ECCE curriculum considering the heavy teaching load the faculty members have.

The CLS department was reaccredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science (NAACLS) in April 2009 for 7 years without a citation.

Based on the review of the written report and the question and answer session, the UGC makes the following recommendations:

- The UGC concurs with CLS and CLAS Curriculum Committee that the department requires more adequate and up-to-date library resources.
- CLS should persuade more students to take the certification exam.
- CLS should continue to explore opportunities to expand 2 + 2 agreements to increase the pool of prospective majors and increase the quality of the students in the major.
Current admissions criteria for the program require a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 (on a 4.0 scale). Given concerns about retention addressed in the CLAS Curriculum Committee letter and the dean’s letter, the UGC encourages CLS to consider raising the GPA required for admission.

CC:  LINDA MCCOWN, DIRECTOR, CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES
     JAMES ERMATINGER, DEAN, CLAS