April 15, 2024

TO: Sang-Hee Lee, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division
FROM: Marcus Kaul, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine
SUBJECT: Campus Review - Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Genetics and Biotechnology (B.S. in Genetics and Biotechnology [GNBT])

Dear Sang-Hee,

The Committee reviewed the proposal for Bachelor of Science Degree Program in Genetics and Biotechnology (B.S. in Genetics and Biotechnology [GNBT]).

The Committee discussed the proposal of a BS degree meant to give undergrads an up-to-date education in the growing genetics/biotech industry. It combines areas into one degree program, instead of courses being scattered across different disciplines.

The Committee noted that the program overall seems timely given the growing importance of biotechnology in general. While some parts of the proposal appear to link the program to health sciences and thus could give the impression of being a link to premed requirements it seems tailored more for the biotech and genetics industry. The Committee is unclear if this major is indeed intended to also satisfy premed requirements and has some concern that it may give students the misconception that it is a premed-type program.

The Committee pointed out there is a sentence in the proposal about “healthcare-related grad programs” which implies that it completes premed requirements. The proposal calls this program a “health-care track”, but the Committee is conflicted with that label as they noted this program may be more appropriately labeled as “healthcare industry/biotech” not to be confused with a health/premed program.

The Committee found it troubling that the program only has a couple of healthcare upper-level requirements and seems a bit like misleading advertising. As the faculty of SOM, they agree that there must be thoughtful consideration about campus advertising health degrees when undergrads could think the program is linked to the SOM when in fact it is not. The healthcare track does not have many healthcare courses, it is only an A and B option with courses that do not seem of core relevance to healthcare. There should be education for healthcare in the upper divisions and most healthcare subjects are electives and the Committee thinks they should be requirements.

The Committee would like to know how this program ties to healthcare. There is a gap between what is offered as courses and what they claim for the program is. The Committee would like to know how the proposal defines healthcare and if it could include more healthcare courses as requirements, not electives.
The Committee would like to see the subject materials and how they define the content of healthcare courses in the degree program.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Marcus Kaul, PhD
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine