

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO
THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-019-256

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry – B.S. and M.S. Program Review

Academic Programs Committee – Date: 03/11/2026

Executive Committee – Date Received and Forwarded: 10/07/2026

Academic Senate – Date: 10/14/2026

First Reading

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry completed its external, internal, and self-program reviews in Spring 2025. The B.S. in Chemistry includes ACS, Biochemistry, and General Chemistry options, while the M.S. in Chemistry consists of a single Chemistry option. The review materials describe a student-focused department with a strong experiential-learning and research environment, supported by modern instrumentation and active faculty mentoring. The Committee subsequently met with Department Chair Dr. Barding in Spring 2026 to review progress on the assessment findings.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Deans and Associate Deans

Dr. Greg Barding, Chair, Chem and Biochemistry Department

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS

- Strong student support and culture: reviewers noted a positive and inclusive department culture, strong leadership, mentoring, research opportunities, and a learn-by-doing approach that supports career readiness.
- Academic and professional preparation: undergraduate students reported strong preparation for graduate study and the workforce, while graduate students benefit from research and teaching opportunities and can use the program to update professional skills.
- Faculty and research environment: the department has grown while retaining faculty, providing diverse research experiences and a collegial environment for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty.
- Instrumentation and program quality: the department maintains a broad range of modern instrumentation, encourages student research use of equipment, and renewed its American Chemical Society certification.

- Continuous improvement: the department has expanded tutoring and TA support, introduced majors-only sections in impacted courses, and continued laboratory improvements through grants and renovations.

SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES

- Laboratory and instructional space: reviewers identified limited office, classroom, and laboratory space, including inadequate ventilation and fume-hood capacity. Space limitations continue to constrain course offerings and safe supervision.
- Laboratory staffing and infrastructure: limited laboratory technician capacity, outdated environmental controls, limited eye washing stations, and aging infrastructure were identified as barriers to expanding laboratory offerings and maintaining safe facilities.
- Curriculum and course access: reviewers noted some undergraduate courses have high non-passing rates, and some have limited availability. The graduate program also has limited elective offerings and reliance on 4000-level courses.
- Advising and operational resources: centralized advising has created workload concerns, and the external review identified limited operational and research support resources.

DISCUSSION

The Committee's Spring 2026 discussion with Dr. Barding indicated continued progress in addressing the review findings. The department has continued updating laboratory instrumentation, completed renovation of one laboratory to expand fume-hood capacity, increased TA and tutoring support, and renewed its ACS certification. Enrollment was reported as steady, although additional growth would be constrained by available space. The department is working to address the high DFW courses via increased TAs and collaboration with LRC. To address course availability issues, the department has implemented the designation of majors-only courses to make sure that majors can enroll in these impacted courses. The Committee also recognized that several infrastructure and facilities issues require University-level support such as dealing with accidents in the lab after hours when the university health center is closed.

RECOMMENDATION

The Academic Programs Committee commends the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry for its continued attention to student success and program improvement. The Committee recommends continued University support for the department's facility and infrastructure needs, including additional laboratory and student space, modernization and maintenance of laboratory systems, and adequate laboratory staffing. The Committee further recommends continued coordination with appropriate University offices to address space, facilities, and equipment needs identified through the program review.