Reasons to Choose Biology at UM-Flint

All of our students have the opportunity to become part of a community of scholars and to get to know their biology faculty personally through such events as our Student-Faculty Symbiosis gatherings. Students also are given opportunities to develop professional skills by participating in scientific meetings such as our “Cell-ebration” undergraduate symposium as well as multi-institutional forums of: Student Research Conference; Meeting of the Minds; and Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters. Every year, students are co-authors with faculty mentors in presentations at research conferences as well as co-authors on published research articles.

The biology department has degree programs with pre-professional concentrations designed to meet the needs of pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-physician assistant, pre-physical therapy and pre-veterinary students. A dedicated professional academic advisor as well as faculty advisors are available to help students make the most of their undergraduate education.

Of our four degree programs, two are considered “signature programs.” The Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Program provides students with hands-on experiences using the powerful research techniques that are driving today’s advances in all areas of biology, but especially biomedical sciences. The Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Program is considered a signature program based on the success of its alumni. Over 90% of students who have graduated from this program have gotten into their chosen career path (e.g. Ph.D. programs at prestigious graduate schools like Cornell, Case Western Reserve, Stanford, and UC Berkeley; medical school; dental school; or directly into the job market in biotech research or research assistant positions at major medical schools). Feedback from employers praised the skills and abilities of these UM-Flint Alumni!

Our other signature program is in Wildlife Biology, because of the undergraduate-research opportunities available to students. We have a very active group of wildlife biology faculty. Students have real opportunities to get involved in faculty research projects impacting Michigan and the wider Great Lakes region. Projects include studies of invasive fish, phylogenetic relationships of fish, feral hog research collaborations with MSU and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, ecological-system collaborations with GVSU, two Native American Tribes, Busch Gardens and the Detroit Zoo, community ecology and restoration biology involving studies of diversity and structure of native bee communities and surrounding plant communities, land use and management.

Wildlife biology is a continuously expanding field, in which individuals will have the opportunity to study the dynamics of animal and plant communities of terrestrial and aquatic environments. The program provides students with a rigorous curriculum designed to prepare them for a career in this exciting area of biology. Students in this program are exposed to wildlife management methods, field techniques and theoretical studies of wildlife species, populations and communities. Wildlife biologists will ultimately be responsible for the study and management of animal and plant populations within state, national and possibly international borders. Wildlife biologists may also be responsible for the study and management of non-game, endangered species or game animals and plants. This program is intended to prepare students for
entry-level positions with state and federal agencies and private companies, and for the pursuit of higher academic degrees.

The remaining two biology programs are the General Biology B.S. program and the Human Biology B.A. program. The General Biology program’s curriculum allows students the greatest flexibility in choosing their upper-level biology elective courses. The Human Biology program is designed to provide students with a background in human-related biology courses as the focus of a broad and liberal education and in preparation for entrance into a variety of professional programs for healthcare providers (physical therapist, physician assistant, physician or dentist).

Our recently renovated cadaver anatomy laboratory serves not only graduate students in physical therapy, nurse anesthesia and physician assistant programs, but also undergraduate students interested in a wide range of healthcare careers. Very few institutions offer students access to the unique experience of cadaver dissection courses. While these courses are not for everybody, seeing firsthand the anatomy of the human body can be an exciting experience.

--Dr. Myers
Professor and Chair of Biology (2009-2019)