

Highs and Lows of an Interdepartmental Undergraduate MathBio Program

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Abstract: With the publication of Bio 2010, many felt that adapting undergraduate curricula to accommodate that report's recommendations would yield easy fruits. Faculty at Truman State University energetically pursued external funding that allowed them to establish a research-focused training program in mathematical biology. The program used the University's residential nature to build a year-round community of talented undergraduates and creative faculty. They 'build' products that result in presentations (poster and oral) at professional meetings and publications in peer-reviewed journals. The program also motivates students to pursue interdisciplinary graduate degree programs and related positions in industry.

However, the founders of the program have not seen it bear easy fruits. Students don't recruit themselves to the program. This talk will outline the challenges faced by Truman's efforts to create and sustain an interdisciplinary program in mathematical biology. It will also sketch the ways it has inspired other departments to pursue interdisciplinary opportunities in STEM and STEM talent expansion efforts.
