III. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

A. Describe planned procedures for evaluation of this program and its effectiveness in the first five years of the program, including admission and retention rates, program outcomes, assessments, placement of graduates, changes of job market need/demand, ex-student/graduate survey, or other procedures. How would evaluations be carried out?

TAMU initiated a Doctoral Program Review protocol several years ago. These reviews are conducted by a select group of well-known academicians and administrators from prestigious institutions as well as industry leaders. The reviews are undertaken on campus over a three or four day period. Prior to the reviews, extensive documentation collected through a department self-study is provided to the review team. This includes faculty CVs, teaching loads, budgets, extramural funding, faculty publications, graduate student qualifications, student time-in-residence, student retention, and student employment after graduation, among others. The self study as well as the review will also focus on specific student learning outcomes developed by the faculty emphasizing TAMU’s commitment to research, technology, diversity, and internationalization as defined by the University’s original Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). In addition, the faculty will assess their contribution and relationship within the context of the University’s Strategic Plan, Vision 2020. The reviewers supply to the dean or vice president an in-depth evaluation of the program in question, including suggestions for program improvement. A review of the graduate program including both the masters and doctoral levels, following the TAMU OGS protocol, will be undertaken at the end of the first five-year period of operation, under the supervision of the COPD and will be repeated every three years.

The graduate program will also be evaluated on an on-going basis by the MB IDP faculty at least annually and will be documented in the institutional effectiveness process. The institutional effectiveness process currently in place requires each degree program to identify at least 3-4 student learning outcomes, develop appropriate measures, report results annually, and determine any program modifications needed. In addition, the COPD will monitor admission, retention, and academic progress. Students will be interviewed upon completion of degree requirements to determine their future plans and how they perceive the program’s effectiveness. Further, many of the MB IDP faculty members have maintained contact with their former graduate students to inform them of potential jobs, monitor their employment, and learn if any changes in the degree program need to be effected. This informal system will be formalized with a program in which former students are contacted at two and five years post-graduation to determine what benefits they received from the degree, what suggestions they can make for further improvements in the program and to update their employment history since graduating.

The focus of the evaluation process is on assessing the marine biology programs by determining and documenting objective student learning outcomes for each program level within the themes of research, technology, diversity, and internationalization. The assessment shall indicate the extent to which the program has achieved its objectives and outcomes. These findings will provide an appreciation of the specific program planning, the decisions made to improve the program, what revisions, if any, to the MB IDP objectives have occurred to date, and the resources allocated and budget requests conducted to enhance the Program. The process will provide specific plans, goals and metrics. Once the program is approved, a working committee will be formulated to refine and update specific learning outcomes and measures.

This committee will be charged to clearly define the knowledge, skills, or attitudes that a student should have by graduation and answer the following questions:

1) How effective is our program in linking our research to our students’ learning?
2) How effective are our efforts to diversify our student learning community?
3) How effective are our efforts to ensure that our students have the technological expertise they need?
4) How effective are we in helping our students understand the reality of globalization?

Indirect measures will include:

- Student interviews upon completion of degree requirements
- Graduate surveys at minimum 2 and 5 years post graduation
- Development of a departmental database to track graduates
- Employer surveys
- Focus groups
Direct measures will include:

- Faculty assessment of student qualifying exams
- Internship evaluations
- Development and assessment of thesis/dissertation
- Demonstration of appropriate use of technology related to marine biology curriculum

In addition, the assessment process will address progress toward achievement of TAMU Vision 2020 goals as well as the goals for TAMUCC Momentum 2015, of strengthening graduate programs, enhancing the undergraduate academic experience, diversifying and globalizing, and increasing access to knowledge resources (research and technology).