

Department of Plant Biology
Exit Interview
Undergraduate Students
Data from Fall '03 – Spring '06 graduates (n=32)

Rating Scale: E=excellent, G/VG=good/very good, A=adequate, NI=needs improvement

1. Courses Taken and Rating

Course	Rating			
	E	G/VG	A	NI
101-Perspectives on Botany	8	12	6	1
102-Introduction to research * No longer required	4	1	6	1
200-Plant Life	18	2		
213-Plants & Civilization	12	2		
215-Medicinal Plants	7	7	1	
220-Local flora	10	4		1
222-Kingdom of Fungi	8	1		1
250-Plant biology	2	2	1	2
277-Space biology	4		2	
295D-Plants in folklore, myth, & religion	4			
321-Whole plant physiology	3	1		
360-Introduction to Ecology	5	9		
400-Plant structure and diversity	5	2	1	1
403-Systematic botany	2	3		
405-Wetland flora				
414-Cell biology	1		4	
421-Plant physiology	7	5	1	
445 - Paleobotany	2			
480-Introduction to plant biotechnology	1			
565-Plant community ecology	2			

2. Quality of Advising

Advisor	Rating			
	E	G /VG	A	NI
Van Dyke	23	3	2	1

3. Quality of Teaching experience (if applicable)

Courses	Rating			
BO200, BO222	E 6	G/VG 2	A	NI
<p>Comments :</p> <p>I taught for a year and I loved it; it was such a great experience.</p> <p>I loved TA'ing. I learned so much and it helped me with my speaking.</p> <p>Very valuable experience; I learned a lot</p> <p>[Teaching] helped shape my ideas for my own future teaching career.</p>				

4. Quality of Research experience (if applicable)

Labs	Rating			
Allen/CMIF Boss Blum Davies Krings/Herbarium Thompson Xiang Plant Pathology lab Entomology lab Off-campus research - Industry	E 15	G/VG 2	A 1	NI
<p>Comments:</p> <p>[Conducting research] was one of my most informative experiences. It was extremely practical. I learned so much more about the research process, and can now say I have some hands-on background in botany.</p> <p>I loved my research experience. I learned a great deal, met many interesting people, and feel like I will be prepared for graduate school.</p> <p>The research freedom built into the curriculum is great for allowing students to explore different research interests.</p> <p>You get out what you put in, and my failure at NC State was not being pro-active about asking active research professors about working in their lab.</p> <p>[This was] the most important class/activity for me in Botany. It gave me applicable experience.</p>				

Comments on Research Experience, cont.

I learned a lot and am glad the options were so flexible.

The year I spent working in [the] lab has been great help in getting me a job, especially since a large majority of the botany jobs are lab jobs. Thankfully, my current job also incorporates some field work.

I learned a lot especially how to do an independent research project.

I learned every technique I wanted to learn and realized that [research in this field] was what I wanted to do.

My project was a really cool concept. Too bad we didn't get the results we hoped for, but I learned a lot anyway.

5. How well did your experiences in the Botany Department prepare you for your future?

Rating			
E	G/VG	A	NI
13	13	2	1
Comments: <p>This was a great major for me to switch to and teachers and advisors made it easy for the adjustment from Engineering. Labs and projects provided good experience for working with people and presentations.</p> <p>Looking back I wish I would have taken more Botany classes. It doesn't feel like enough. However, most of the classes I did take were very beneficial and I feel will help me in botany forever. I think I have a good general overview of the field. I really enjoyed all of my professors in the department. They did a great job of keeping me interested in the field.</p> <p>It's hard to have a really positive outlook on my college experience for such an unknown and intimidating future. My classes were great. I learned a lot even though some were repetitive. I failed myself by not participating in rigorous research activities and communicating with more faculty members.</p> <p>I feel very prepared for graduate school thanks to the Botany Dept.</p> <p>My advisor was a very helpful resource, and I learned many important tools to use in the real world by teaching.</p> <p>The opportunity to use research credits toward my degree was invaluable as it helped me figure out what I wanted to do, where I wanted my career to go, and develop skills/experience beyond gardening.</p>			

Comments on preparation for the future, cont.

Botany gave me a more rounded approach to plant biology and science. I have worked largely outside the department but still seek out Botany faculty for advice.

I think the faculty as a whole is very helpful to undergrads. The department has many instructors with different concentrations, so you leave with a broad base of botany experience.

I learned to prepare lesson plans, interact with professors and other students, look at the world with a different perspective, and appreciate the role that plants have in our society. The botany department helped mold me to be a better person and to broaden my horizons.

A knowledge and background in the plant sciences is essential when working in any plant field, in my opinion. The department definitely provided [this] as well as helping me to learn about how to work with different people. The knowledge I gained helped me to understand how plants 'work' and to see how they impact people and cultures. Learning to work well with people and help other students was another important thing I will take with me.

I was informed of many opportunities through the [botany] club and through the professors. I am SO GLAD I participated in the research experience, and I feel like I grew well rounded because of the botany department.

The Botany department prepared me for my future in many ways, some positive and a few negative. My instruction has been excellent. The quality of teaching has been very valuable in broadening my understanding of the plant sciences. The faculty have always been courteous and professional, and most were very friendly.

I feel that I have received a great education from the Botany Dept. here at State. The program offers a wide variety of courses, and I wish that I had been able to take more courses. The Botany Department has definitely helped me prepare for my future.

I really feel that I learned a lot about plants, but I don't feel that I learned marketable skills for an actual job. I feel I would have been better suited with a botany minor rather than major. This is the reason I decided not to apply to the botany department for my master's.

Botany being a pure science gave me a good foundation to study other applied sciences that are related, like horticulture, crop science, etc. I feel prepared, but I did not rank [my experience] as excellent because there is so much flexibility in the botany curriculum. I think there could be a much greater emphasis on plants themselves. Identification courses and anatomy courses should really be required core courses for a botany major.

If I had taken the right courses (ones more related to a common thread instead of the random selection of knowledge that I had) I would feel more prepared. But I feel like a jack of all trades. I know enough of each thing to get by, but not to excel at any one area of botany.

6. What are your immediate plans after graduation?

Attend graduate school in fall – 10

Take time off/work part or full time and apply for graduate school for following year - 4

Academic/government research position - 4

Industry research position – 2

Teaching position – 1

Peace Corps - 1

Applying for positions - 6

7. What are your long-term plans?

Obtain MS or PhD/ seek employment in government, academia, or private sector - 14

Obtain advanced degree in pharmacy, work as pharmacist or conduct research – 4

Employment in the nursery/horticultural industry – 2

Obtain MBA for business development in industry – 1

Go to medical school – 1

Get degree in forensics and work for FBI – 1

Work in extension or for USDA-APHIS – 1

Career in research – 4

Career in teaching – 1

Find an interesting and rewarding job - 2

Other comments

I'm glad I added a Botany major!

I love the size and closeness of the Botany Department. The atmosphere created by faculty and staff is excellent for students seeking research opportunities, advice or a solid base for their degree. The looseness of the Botany curriculum has helped me gear my degree toward my interests and given me the freedom/time to work while going to school – research opportunities are key!

I wish I had transferred into the Botany Department sooner! The advisers and all of the faculty I have worked with have been amazingly supportive and knowledgeable. When I first spoke to [my advisor] about transferring, he sat and helped me figure out exactly what I already had credit for and what I still needed. Everyone that works in the department office has always been extremely friendly and helpful even when I have asked non-department-related questions. The quality of the botany courses I have taken at State has been at the very top of all of the courses I have had. Great teachers and great people in general – THANKS!

My greatest regret is that I did not familiarize myself with enough people within the Botany Department. I feel that I cheated myself by not taking more classes, and interacting with more professors. However, the aspect of the program I was involved with was extremely invigorating.

I love this department (especially the ice cream socials)!

Thanks for everything, I will always be proud to say that I obtained a BS in Botany from NC State.

I feel that senior mentors would be extremely beneficial to incoming freshman in our department. It is oftentimes hard to get a good opinion of a class when you ask a professor because they are usually friends with the teacher. Also, you can ask a senior what things they would have done differently, and how to best manage your classes, as well as inform you of various classes that are available to you that a freshman probably doesn't know about.

I had a great 5 years @ NC State. I hope that other students build and prosper from their experiences as I did.