



MEMORANDUM

March 12, 2010

To: Members of the Division of Science, Head Tutors, and Concentration Advisors

From: Jeremy Bloxham and the Student Advisory Board for Science (SABS)¹

Regarding: Undergraduate Science Experiences at Harvard College report.

In 2006, Vijay Yanamandala interviewed 40 students to understand the undergraduate experience for science concentrators at Harvard. The results were mixed. On one hand, the opportunity for students to work with world renowned scientists was clearly beneficial. On the other hand, the process that one had to endure to make this happen was discouraging. The result was a set of reasonable, economical recommendations.

In 2009 a follow-up study was conducted by the Student Advisory Board for Science (SABS), under the direction of the Dean of Science, Jeremy Bloxham. The goal was to determine, quantitatively and qualitatively, if, in light of the 2006 study, an undergraduate's experience in the sciences had improved, and if there were additional recommendations to consider.

We are pleased to present to the Harvard community the 2009 report on *Undergraduate Science Experiences at Harvard College* (attached). Over 400 students were surveyed and the results demonstrate that while we might have more work to do, we have also made significant progress towards improving the undergraduate experience in the sciences. Highlights of particular significance are as follows:

Students indicated that the lack of responsiveness from faculty regarding inquiries for research opportunities has *decreased* by thirty-seven percent. Moreover, over fifty percent of these students conducted research in labs; sixty percent agreed that finding research opportunities was "easy;" and sixty-two percent agreed that ample research opportunities are available. Furthermore, eighty percent of the students surveyed agreed that the experiences are important to their science education.

Students no longer feel that they receive little or no encouragement from faculty or advisors to conduct research during their undergraduate experience. In fact, sixty percent of those surveyed indicated that they have received advice and encouragement to seek out and conduct research during their undergraduate careers. However, twenty-one percent of those conducting research found it increasingly difficult to identify funding for research-related endeavors.

We look forward to your feedback regarding the Report

¹ SABS members include Roger Batt, Yakov Berenshteyn, Shiv Gaglani, Krzysztof Kozak, Karen Aline McKinnon, Daniel Oh, Horia Mihail Teodorescu.