

May 27, 2004

To: TFK, TWR, DJK
Re: Biochem 501
Cc: Linda Gatzke
From: RMM

This is simply an FYI. Prof. Bill Reznikoff called me early in the month expressing some concern about the preparation of CBE students for Biochem 501. The gist of the conversation was (a) that CBE students who take Biochem 501 without adequate preparation in biology were at a disadvantage relative to other students, and (b) that the difference in preparation between CBE and non-CBE students may grow as more CBE students take the course as a requirement rather than as an elective.

The graph below compares the grades of ChE/CBE students in Biochem 501 over the past 5 semesters (data collected by Linda) to the “expected” grades (provided by Prof. Reznikoff based on a typical grade distribution for all students in Biochem 501). The total number of ChE/CBE students varies between 16-22. There were 17 for Spring 2004. (I deleted students who received grades of “S’.) From the graph we see that the ChE/CBE student is less likely to get an A or AB, and more likely to get a BC or C, relative to the entire population. The most recent semester is much worse than previous semesters. The average GPA of the group of students who took Biochem 501 in Spring 2004 was 3.05, so it is not a particularly weak (or strong) group. By and large the students in Biochem 501 in Spring 04 are under the “old” curriculum, and taking the course by choice and not by requirement.

We will continue to monitor this situation as we phase in the changes to the biology requirement that were instituted officially in January 2004.

