Respondent 14 Interview 1

Mon, 3/15 12:40PM • 5:40

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

plant, students, ecology, botanical, work, MSc, botany, concepts, generally, zoological, honors, oversubscribed, issue, numerology, degrees, curriculum, combination, department, call, science

**SPEAKERS**

Megan Roberts, Respondent 14

**Megan Roberts 00:01**

Okay, here we go. Um, okay, so I'm just going to tell you a little bit about my project just to be a bit of background. So, we're recurriculating our first-year plant science modules. And so, there's obviously a team of staff that are doing that. But it's also falling under a part of my MSc. And I'm basically doing like the theoretical overview of that for my MSc. So yeah, that's basically what my project is about. And I just have a couple of questions that I want to ask you can sort of discuss them and then yeah.

**Respondent 14 00:48**

Perfect. Now that sounds good. When are you? Or when is the university planning to start using the new curriculum?

**Megan Roberts 00:56**

We're hoping for next year, beginning of next year. But it'll I think it'll probably be more like a phasing in of it, as opposed to right from the beginning of next year, just starting with the new curriculum.

**Respondent 14 01:12**

Okay, great. (Audio missing) I don't think that it influenced my answers too much, because I used to work in just four botany departments.

**Megan Roberts 01:29**

Yeah, I don't think that will be too much of an issue. Okay. Okay. So just for my record, can you just state your area of research or area of expertise that you work in?

**Respondent 14 01:50**

Okay, so I have a PhD in mangrove ecology. And so, I have focused my primary work is on estuarine plants. So, between mangrove ecology and estuarine ecology is where my expertise sits. And then more recently, I have started working on both the botanical as well as the zoological side. So, there's a very strong ecological push to my research.

**Megan Roberts 02:22**

Wonderful, thank you. So, my first question for you is plant blindness or a lack of interest in plants problem in your institution?

**Respondent 14 02:38**

So, at the moment, we, I wouldn't say that there is a that it's a problem. Our class sizes at a first-year level are usually between about 50 and 70. And then they, as one gets to third year, and our third-year classes, usually around 30. That could be because it's a joint botany zoology course. But the number of students that go into honors doing botanical work is usually about equal to the number of students doing zoological work. And then quite a few of our students are interested in ecology. So, at the at our institution, I think we always have a good level of interest. I think it's about moderate. I definitely wouldn't call it a problem. Yeah.

**Megan Roberts 03:35**

And then that sort of follows on to my next question, which is, do you have issues getting your students to enroll for your plant science degrees?

**Respondent 14 03:47**

Okay, so yeah, so we don't really have a pure Plant Sciences degree. It's called biodiversity and conservation biology. But, but again, I wouldn't say that we have too many issues. So, we are generally oversubscribed. When it comes to honors applications, for example, at our first-year level, we teach a service course. So, the total number of students that's from what we call BCB is usually quite small because we are teaching to about 550 students from across the university in the first semester, and then that drops to about 350 in the second semester. So generally, we don't have an issue with our degrees. And I think generally we are a little bit over subscribed.

**Megan Roberts 04:42**

That's good to hear. Okay, my following question is, do you think a first-year plant science module should have a narrow approach covering a few concepts in detail or a broad approach touching on multiple concepts within the field.

**Respondent 14 05:07**

And so, when I looked at two combinations of A and B, I would say that it's a it should be a combination of the two. I think that from the first lot there are some very important aspects