Educational Policies Committee Program Proposal, College of Natural Resources, January 20, 2017 - Forest Ecology and Management

Utah State University

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Institution Submitting Request: Utah State University

Program Title: Forestry

Sponsoring School, College, or Division: Quinney College of Natural Resources

Sponsoring Academic Department(s) or Unit(s): Wildland Resources

Classification of Instruction Program Code1: 03.0502

Min/Max Credit Hours for Full Program Required: 120 / 120

Proposed Effective Term for Program Change2: Fall 2017

Institutional Board of Trustees’ Approval Date: 01/06/2017

Award Type: BS

Program Change Type (check all that apply):

- [ ] Name Change of Existing Program
- [ ] Program Restructure with or without Consolidation
- [ ] Program Transfer to a new academic department or unit
- [ ] Program Suspension
- [ ] Program Discontinuation
- [ ] Reinstatement of Previously Suspended Program
- [ ] Out of Service Area Delivery Program

Chief Academic Officer (or Designee) Signature:

I, the Chief Academic Officer or Designee, certify that all required institutional approvals have been obtained prior to submitting this request to the Office of the Commissioner.

Laurens H. Smith Date: January 4, 2017

I understand that checking this box constitutes my legal signature.

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2 “Proposed Effective Term” refers to term when change to program is published. For Suspensions and Discontinuations, “effective term” refers to the term the program will suspend admissions.
Section I: The Request

Utah State University requests approval to change the name of the Bachelor of Science in Forestry to Forest Ecology and Management effective Fall 2017. This action was approved by the institutional Board of Trustees on January 6, 2017.

Section II: Program Proposal

Program Change Description/Rationale

Utah State University offers a BS in Forestry. Though forest management is still much of the focus for the degree, over the last two decades what is taught in that degree and what the students learn has become very ecologically focused. The Wildland Resources Department (WILD) therefore proposes to change the name of the Forestry BS degree to Forest Ecology and Management to reflect these changes. The forestry profession is increasingly incorporating ecological principles, with sustainability, wildlife and fisheries habitat conservation, water quality issues, and carbon sequestration becoming management priorities. Similarly, forestry-related employers increasingly value ecological experience and expertise in students, and students are increasingly interested in ecological perspectives. For example, beginning in 2012, the USDA Forest Service is required to include substantive assessment of “ecological integrity” of forest ecosystems in their management plans. The Utah State University Wildland Resources Department offers a BS degree in Forestry that, over the past two decades or so has become increasingly focused on forest ecology, but the current degree name does not reflect this focus. It is felt that by adding the word “Ecology” to this degree name will more accurately describe the nature of the degree, and also may attract more students who are interested in studying ecology. This addition also may be a benefit when students are looking for employment, since some prospective employers may be looking for a student with an ecology background. Also by adding the word “Management” to the degree name it will reaffirm the fundamental focus on training students to be forest land managers. Having students receive a BS in Forest Ecology and Management will make it clear for both students and future employers the degree’s focus and content. This name change may result in increased enrollment, which would be good since enrollment in the major, though it has increased in the last several years, is smaller than liked and smaller than can be handled (40 as of September 2016). It is felt that the job market can handle increased graduates in forestry, since nearly every student who graduates with a BS in Forestry from USU gets a job in their field or continues on to graduate school. Through informal discussions among faculty and students in WILD, both of these advantages have become apparent. A recent poll of faculty showed that 100% of those who expressed an opinion (two-thirds responded) support this change. Students were in an introduction to natural resources class a few years ago and they felt good about having the word ecology in a degree name.

Consistency with Institutional Mission/Institutional Impact

Explain how the action is consistent with the institution's Regent-approved mission, roles, and goals. Institutional mission and roles may be found at higheredutah.org/policies/policyr312/. Indicate if the program will be delivered outside of designated service area; provide justification. Service areas are defined in higheredutah.org/policies/policyr315/. Will faculty or staff structures be impacted by the proposed change?

This change is consistent with the mission of USU as the state's land grant university. No significant
institutional impact is anticipated, though over time the enrollment in the forestry major may increase but, as mentioned above, this would be good.

**Finances**

*What costs or savings are anticipated from this change? If new funds are required to implement the change, indicate expected sources of funds. Describe any budgetary impact on other programs or units within the institution.*

No budgetary impacts are anticipated.