Educational Policies Committee Program Proposal, College of Natural Resources, January 20, 2017 - Program Change for Geography

Utah State University

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Institution Submitting Request: Utah State University

Program Title: Geography (B.S.)

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

Sponsoring Academic Department(s) or Unit(s): Department of Environment and Society

Classification of Instruction Program Code1: 45.0799

Min/Max Credit Hours for Full Program Required: 62 / 62 /

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.
Program Change Description - Abbreviated Template

Section I: The Request

Utah State University requests approval to move the complete academic oversight of the Bachelor of Science in Geography to the Department of Environment and Society, discontinuing the physical geography emphasis in the Bachelor of Science in Geography, and also changing the name of the emphasis in Geographical Analysis and Bioregional Planning to Geographic Information Science 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

Present a brief program change description. Describe the institutional procedures used to arrive at a decision for the change. Briefly indicate why such a change should be initiated. State how the institution and the USHE benefit by the change.

The B.S. in Geography is being consolidated from a shared program in the Department of Watershed Science (WATS) and the Department of Environment and Society (ENVS) to being wholly administered in ENVS. WATS wishes to discontinue its role in administering the Geography B.S., thus ceding it to ENVS, and is discontinuing the Area of Emphasis in Physical Geography (for which WATS had primary responsibility), which has had low enrollments (less than 5 students each year since establishment in 2009, when the program moved from ENVS to a shared ENVS/WATS program and the current three areas of emphasis were instituted).

In addition, the Area of Emphasis in Geographical Analysis & Bioregional Planning is being renamed to Geographic Information Science. The MS degree in Bioregional Planning has been ceded to the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (approved by the Regents 4/1/16), thus the name of this area of emphasis is being renamed Geographic Information Science, as is consistent with modern terminology in the field and its use by peer institutions, and to better reflect required coursework (see next paragraph).

Changes in curricula for the Geography major (B.S.) and minor are moderate -- substantially less than 50%. These changes were developed by a committee of ENVS Faculty. ENVS faculty voted unanimously to adopt these changes at a formal faculty meeting in August 2016. For the Geographical Analysis and Bioregional Planning Emphasis, required coursework in planning moved to the emphasis electives, allowing students to pair the coursework in geographical analysis (more specifically, geographic information science) to a variety of areas of geographic application (versus only to planning).

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/policy312/. Indicate if the program will be delivered outside of designated service area; provide justification. Service areas are defined in higheredutah.org/policies/policy315/. Will faculty or staff structures be impacted by the proposed change?

A renamed emphasis in Geographic Information Science is needed to modernize the Geography program and make it consistent with new areas of expertise in ENVS and Utah State (e.g., a cluster hire in Data Science). This change will better meet the needs and career aspirations of students majoring in Geography. Renaming this emphasis is expected to facilitate attracting higher enrollment given the strong job market in GIS. The program transfer will result in organizational rationalization and greater efficiency, given the elimination of the Area of Emphasis in Physical Geography.

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 impact is expected from this change. Although the name change for one of the Areas of Emphasis should lead to increased enrollments in the program, the program has the ability to accommodate these additional students without a need for additional resources.