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

Utah State University

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Institution Submitting Request: Utah State University

Program Title: Wildlife Science

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

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

Classification of Instruction Program Code¹: 03.0601

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):

- [X] 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.

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 Wildlife Science to Wildlife 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

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.

Utah State University offers a BS in Wildlife Science. Though wildlife 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 Wildlife Science BS degree to Wildlife Ecology and Management to reflect these changes. The wildlife profession is increasingly incorporating ecological principles, with sustainability, wildlife and fisheries habitat conservation, water quality issues, and dealing with climate change and its effects on habitat becoming management priorities. Similarly, employers of graduates from wildlife-oriented programs increasingly value ecological experience and expertise in students, and students are increasingly interested in ecological perspectives. Students in the Wildlife Science major have traditionally come to the field because of their interest in hunting and fishing, but incoming students are increasingly ecologically oriented. The Utah State University Wildland Resources Department offers a BS degree in Wildlife Science that, over the past two decades or so has become increasingly focused on wildlife ecology, but the current degree name does not reflect this focus. It is felt that by adding the word “Ecology” to this degree name it 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 be reaffirming the fundamental focus on training students to be wildlife managers. Having the students receive a BS in Wildlife Ecology and Management will make it clear for both students and future employers the degree’s focus and content. Also, if the proposed name changes for the Forestry and Rangeland Resources BS degrees to Forest Ecology and Management and Rangeland Ecology and Management are approved, the names of all three degrees will be similar and may make degree marketing more straightforward.

Through informal discussions among faculty and students in WILD, both of these advantages have become apparent. A recent poll of the faculty showed that 100% of those who expressed an opinion (two-thirds responded) support this change. Polled students 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/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?

This change is consistent with the mission of USU as the state’s land grant university. No significant
institutional impact is anticipated.

**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.