

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Discontinue Undergraduate Major in Botany, Iowa State University
Date: June 7, 2004

Recommended Action:

Approve Iowa State University's request to discontinue the Undergraduate Major in Botany.


Executive Summary:

Result of a Reorganization The University is requesting approval to discontinue the Bachelor degree program in Botany. The request to discontinue is the result of the previously approved reorganization of the Biological Sciences at Iowa State – the Department of Botany was eliminated when the Departments of Genetics, Development and Cell Biology, and Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology were created.

Status of Current Students Currently enrolled students will be able to complete their degrees in Botany (with completion by no later than Summer of 2009). The University surveyed current students in the program about the effect of a discontinuation, and no concerns were expressed and no students indicated that they would transfer to other programs or leave Iowa State as a result.

Alternative Majors Students who would be interested in the Botany program will now enroll in an expanded Biology major, or in Genetics, depending on their interests and career goals; those who wish to focus on plant or fungal biology can very easily tailor their Biology degree to accomplish this goal.

Additional information on the proposed discontinuance is attached.


Robert J. Barak

Approved: 
Gregory S. Nichols

Proposal for Discontinuation of the Botany Degree

1. Name of administrator, department or group originating the proposal. Include the name of contact person(s).

This proposal is being submitted by the Biology Major Curriculum Committee, a joint committee including representatives from the Department of Genetics, Development, and Cell Biology (GDCB), and the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology (EEOB). The contact person is Dr. Jim Colbert (jicolber@iastate.edu)

2. Name of the Program.

Undergraduate Major in Botany

3. Name of the department(s) which administers the program.

The Departments of GDCB and EEOB

4. Rationale for discontinuation.

As of 1 July 2003, the Department of Botany and the Department of Zoology and Genetics ceased to exist on the Iowa State campus. This was part of a Regents approved reorganization of the Biological Sciences that resulted in the formation of two new departments, GDCB and EEOB. As part of the reorganization process, the faculties of the Botany and Zoology and Genetics departments voted to discontinue offering undergraduate degrees in Botany and Zoology after the current (2003-2005) catalog. Those students who would have majored in Botany or Zoology would now participate in an expanded Biology major, or in Genetics, depending on their interests and career goals.

5. Availability of similar programs at other Regent's institutions.

Undergraduate degrees in Botany are not available at other Regents institutions. However, the courses currently used by students studying plant and fungal biology will continue to be available through the expanded Biology degree.

6. Enrollment data for current and previous four years.

<u>Academic Year</u>	<u>Number of Students*</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Min**</u>
1999-2000	21	8	13	0
2000-2001	21	9	12	0
2001-2002	15	7	8	0
2002-2003	10	7	3	0
2003-2004	10	5	5	1

* Average of Fall and Spring enrollments for each academic year

** Minority data available only for Fall semester

7. Information required by the Board of Regents:

- a. A survey of students currently enrolled in a program to determine the impact of the discontinuance on their academic plans. The survey should attempt to identify students who wish (i) to complete the program; (ii) to transfer to other programs at the same institution; and (iii) leave the institution.

A letter was sent to current Botany majors on 26 November 2003 (copy of letter included below). These students will be able to complete their degrees in Botany. Of the responses received, no concerns were expressed and no students indicated that they would transfer to other programs or leave Iowa State as a result of this discontinuation.

- b. On the basis of the data collected, a projection of faculty and staff needed to accommodate student needs in order to maintain program quality, and both a time frame for, and the costs of, program phase-out.

The undergraduate degree in Botany is available in the current catalog, which is in force until July 2005. Therefore students could enter Iowa State with a major in Botany as late as Summer Session 2005. Technically, such students could complete degrees in Botany until the summer of 2009. However, we anticipate advising students to choose the Biology major beginning in Fall 2004. Courses and resources required for the Botany major will be used in the expanded Biology major. No additional costs to phase-out the Botany degree are anticipated.

- c. A description of the amount of money, if any, that would become available for redirection under the institution's strategic plan as a result of the discontinuance of a program.

We do not anticipate that any funds will be available for redirection as a result of discontinuing the Botany degree. The courses taught for this degree will continue to be taught for students majoring in Biology, who wish to focus their studies on plant or fungal biology.

- d. A description of the impact the discontinuance will have on other programs offered by and the overall mission of the institution.

Providing excellent undergraduate education in biological sciences is one of the primary missions of Iowa State University. We do not expect the discontinuation of the Botany degree to negatively affect this mission in any way. Students who wish to focus on plant or fungal biology can very easily tailor their Biology degree to accomplish this goal.

- e. A description of the impact on minorities and women.

We expect no negative impacts on minorities or women as a result of the discontinuation of the Botany degree. Although there is a substantial percentage of women (50% in 2003-2004) currently in the Botany major, these students will be able to complete a Botany degree if they wish. Future female students who may have chosen the Botany major will be able to study plant or fungal biology in the context of their Biology degree. The Biology major also has a high percentage of female students (62% in 2003-2004). There has been just one minority student in the Botany major during the past five years, for a maximum of 10% of the students. In the future, such students would major in Biology, which currently (Fall 2003) has 12% minority students, exceeding the ISU average of 8% minority students. We do not expect any decrease in opportunities available to minority students in the context of the Biology major.

- f. A description of the potential faculty and staff reductions or reassignments that would result from the discontinuance

Given that all the courses taught for the Botany degree will continue to be taught, and those students would have been Botany majors needing to be advised as Biology majors, we do not anticipate any reductions or reassignments of faculty or staff.

- g. A description of how existing facilities and equipment freed by the discontinuance would be utilized.

The facilities and equipment currently used in offering the Botany degree will be used in offering the expanded Biology degree, which will serve a larger number of students.