

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO SUSPEND ADMISSIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTERS PROGRAM IN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to suspend admissions to the Professional Science Masters Program in Ecosystem Management in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed suspension of admissions will provide an opportunity for faculty to reallocate resources. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. The proposed action addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities to “provide educational excellence and impact as well as economic development and vitality” and Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive.”

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of program.** The program prepares students for career opportunities in conservation and restoration-related businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Emphasis is placed on blending ecosystem analysis, management and restoration skills with an understanding of conservation policy, and includes a team project and an internship experience. Admission is restricted to students with a grade point average of 3.00 or higher and a bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree in biology, ecology, or related field. Majors in agriculture, geography, and other related applied disciplines must have taken an introductory biology sequence to be considered for admission.
- ◇ **Development of program.** This program was approved by the Board of Regents in March 2006. The proposal indicated that the program would consist of three educational components – technical training in a particular area of science; instruction in business administration; and experiential learning through an internship experience. It provides education and training in ecosystem management and business with study in wildlife ecology, natural area management, and biodiversity. The program does not require completion of a master’s thesis. The program was expected to have an enrollment of eight students after five years.

The university indicated that numerous Iowa companies had expressed interest in the program, as a source of interns, future employees, and ongoing university-industry relationships. Program graduates were expected to be well-suited for managerial-track and leadership positions with technology-based companies and industries, as well as research agencies and laboratories.

- ◇ **Reason for proposed suspension of admissions.** During the past five years, there have been numerous applicants for the program; however, during the past three years, no students have enrolled in the program. The suspension will allow for better planning for the reallocation of faculty time, effort, and departmental funds that previously have supported the program.
- ◇ **Effect of proposed suspension on current students.** There are no students enrolled in the program; therefore, accommodations are not necessary.

- ◇ Effect on cost savings and resource allocations. Some courses were offered exclusively for the students in the program. Therefore, the lab courses that were unique to this program will not be offered during the suspension period and the funding for supplies and equipment for those courses will not be needed. The funds will be used for the teaching laboratories in the undergraduate and graduate programs.
- ◇ Five-year trend of applications, enrollments, and graduates in the program.

2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
A	E	G	A	E	G	A	E	G	A	E	G	A	E	G
11	6	6	8	6	6	4	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0

- ◇ Availability of program in state. There are no similar one-year graduate programs in Iowa.
- ◇ Proposed period of suspension of admissions. A three-year suspension of admissions will allow the College to determine the long-term need for this program.
- ◇ Effect on workforce. No impact on the workforce is expected. The workforce demand for such a program would appear to be minimal because there have been few students who have enrolled in and graduated from the program.
- ◇ Program impact on other programs. There is no anticipated impact on other programs because there are no students currently enrolled in the program.
- ◇ Anticipated impact on minorities and women. The impact is expected to be negligible.
- ◇ Anticipated reduction in resources. No reduction in faculty, staff, or facilities is anticipated. Faculty assigned to this program have been re-assigned. One faculty member who taught courses in the program is now the Director of the Tallgrass Prairie Center. Other faculty who taught courses specific to this program are now teaching courses taught by faculty who have retired.
- ◇ Additional information. The suspension of the program will have minimal effect due to the small number of students who pursued this degree option during the past five years and the fact that there are no students currently enrolled in the program. The time and effort related to offering the program can now be reallocated to building the undergraduate curriculum and the Master of Science program.
- ◇ Date of implementation. Suspension of admissions to the programs will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog.