

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A PROGRAM NAME CHANGE AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY:
FROM Ph.D. PROGRAM IN AGRICULTURAL HISTORY AND RURAL STUDIES TO
Ph.D. PROGRAM IN RURAL, AGRICULTURAL, TECHNOLOGICAL, AND
ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY**

Action Requested: Consider recommending approval of the request by Iowa State University to change the name of the Ph.D. Program in Agricultural History and Rural Studies to the Ph.D. Program in Rural, Agricultural, Technological, and Environmental History in the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Executive Summary: The proposed program name change will strengthen the program by integrating the history of technology. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact” and Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and effective.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** This program is the only focused agricultural and rural history doctoral program in the U.S. which defines agricultural and rural history broadly. Students will choose a field in agricultural, rural, environmental, or technological history. Two additional fields will be in U.S. or European History. Students will choose a fourth field of study approved by the major professor which might contain an interdisciplinary perspective, such as sustainable agriculture, that broadens the student’s intellectual development.
- ◇ **Reason for proposed name change.** The proposed name change includes the reorganization of two Ph.D. programs into one program. The name change will integrate elements of the Ph.D. Program in History of Technology and Science which is proposed for termination (ESAC 8) and the current Ph.D. Program in Agricultural History and Rural Studies. The result of the integration will strengthen and improve the existing program and will reflect the needs and interests of students and the talents of the faculty.

Throughout world history, people have depended on rural and agricultural communities and the technologies developed and used by those communities to sustain lives. The integrated program will offer a scholarly community and learning environment dedicated to close examination of pervasive and enduring questions about basic aspects of human history. Such questions can be answered through the multi-faceted perspectives provided by rural, agricultural, technological, and environmental history. This grouping of historical issues reflects the developmental trajectory of rural and agricultural history. While early humans raised food and fiber by relatively simple means, changes in technology and human interaction with the environment have linked these fields to each other. Bringing these fields together will result in a dynamic learning experience that leads to comparative and transnational analysis shaped by a broad range of methods drawn from the humanities and social/physical sciences. The objective of the program is to produce students who are excellent researchers and engaging teachers, capable of succeeding in a broad variety of professional positions, in academia and elsewhere.

The department's graduate focus on agricultural and rural history will continue, as will its focus on the history of technology. The history of science will be dropped from the department based on budgetary realities and the retirement of its last historian of science in December 2013. The department's three historians of technology will transition into the integrated program. This proposed change also reflects ongoing practices in the department. In the last decade, 10 students have written doctoral dissertations that incorporated rural/agricultural history with the history of technology. A similar number of students have integrated rural and agricultural history with environmental history, which is the study of how humans have interacted with the natural world over time.

- ◇ Comparable name at other institutions. The existing program is unique in the state. The University of Iowa has a general Ph.D. program in history and supports this program name change. The only similar programs are at Kansas State University (Agricultural and Environmental History) and Mississippi State University (History of Agriculture, Science, and Environment of the South).
- ◇ Consistency with accreditation requirements. This program is not accredited.
- ◇ Effect on program configuration. The program will remain a 72 credit hour Ph.D. program. There will be a slight change in students' fields of study, but it is sufficiently similar to the current requirements that it is not expected to negatively affect continuing students in the program. The changes draw on the current resources and strengths of the History Department.

The proposed name change will provide a broad perspective related to job market considerations. Employment opportunities in history will be enhanced for students with such preparation. All dissertations will contain a component related to broadly defined rural and agricultural history.

- ◇ Effect on students. Current students and those already admitted to the program will have the option of retaining the current program title (Agricultural History and Rural Studies) or changing to the proposed name (Rural, Agricultural, Technological and Environmental History) without affecting their coursework. All students admitted after October 2014 will be admitted to the Rural, Agricultural, Technological and Environmental History Program. Existing students will not be negatively affected by proposed program configurations.
- ◇ Effect on resources. No new costs will be incurred with the proposed name change. The department's graduate focus on agricultural and rural history will continue as well as its focus on the history of technology. The department does not anticipate the need for additional faculty specific to this program in the foreseeable future.
- ◇ Proposed name consistent with College mission. The proposed name change will support the University's land grant mission to study agriculture, rural communities, and technology. It will help to provide the historical context for the University's commitment to leadership in "developing more sustainable ways to produce and deliver safe and nutritious food, water, materials, and energy; integrate the protection of plant, animal, and human health; and care for our environment." The program will also meet the College's mission to "develop and support distinctive graduate programs that enhance the land grant, science and technology mission of the University."

- ◇ Date of implementation. The proposed program name change will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog. The anticipated implementation date is Spring 2015.