Contact: Rachel Boon

REQUEST TO TERMINATE GRADUATE DEGREES IN BIOPHYSICS AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Committee Action Requested: Recommend to the Board approval of the request to terminate the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Biophysics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University.

The Council of Provosts and Board office staff reviewed the proposal and recommend approval.

Description of the program: The biophysics graduate program provides research training that merges physics, biology and chemistry, often directed at questions answered by structural biology.

Reason for proposed termination: The combination of skills defining biophysics was historically viewed as a distinct discipline. Over time, and with the progression of technology associated with structural biology, these skills have merged to become redundant with what most institutions would just call “biochemistry.” In fact, the curricular requirements for the biophysics graduate degrees are now completely redundant.

Effect on current students: The three students currently in the biophysics PhD program will be able to finish with the biophysics degree. There are no students in the MS program.

Enrollment and Completion Trends:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Majors	4	3	2	1	3
Graduates	0	1	2	0	1

Impact on resources: There will be little impact on future enrollment as any students interested in this research area could be accommodated by ISU’s Biochemistry MS and PhD programs. The faculty and staff serving the biochemistry and biophysics programs are the same so there will be no impact on cost savings, reallocations or changes to faculty or staff lines.

Impact on workforce: There will be no effect on workforce needs. Any employee needing this skill set would be equally served by a student with a biochemistry degree.

Alternative programs: Biochemistry MS and PhD programs at ISU are comparable.

Date of Implementation: Upon approval of the Board.