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EP.09.36
OCT 31 2008
OFFICE OF THE SENATE

PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL:

Transfer of the Horticulture Program, Faculty, and Staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences to the Department of Crop Sciences in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

SPONSORS:

Professor John A. Juvik, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, 307 ERML, 3-1966, juvik@illinois.edu

Professor Walter L. Hurley, Department of Animal Sciences, Chair of Horticulture - Crop Sciences Pre-Merger Committee, 430 ASL, 3-1327, wlhurley@illinois.edu

COLLEGE SPONSOR:

Dean Robert A. Easter, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, 122 Mumford Hall, 3-0460, reaster@illinois.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Request to the Senate: Transfer the Horticultural programs (HORT) currently housed in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES) to the Department of Crop Sciences (CPSC). Both NRES and CPSC are departments in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES).

The goal of the proposed transfer is to strengthen the HORT, CPSC, and NRES programs, as well as the College of ACES, and to better position each unit for sustaining long-term excellence.

There will be no immediate change in degree programs. The HORT program has its own rubric, course numbers and degree programs, and these will be maintained after transfer to CPSC.

All faculty in the HORT program have been invited to join the transferred program. Those HORT faculty who choose to remain in NRES may do so.

JUSTIFICATION:

This initiative is a faculty-driven process with the expectation that the transfer of HORT programs to CPSC will benefit all parties involved. The College of ACES will benefit through the synergy of program development and enhancement in the merged unit. This synergy should bring increased visibility of programs in HORT and other aspects of plant sciences and related

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areas to potential undergraduate and graduate students, to the stakeholders of the college, to the college's peer institutions and their faculty, and to the broader communities that support the college. A more focused mission of NRES, along with the opportunity to enlist appropriate leadership, will further strengthen the college, as well. A number of opportunities arising from the proposed merger have been identified for the respective units involved. Some of these are outlined here:

- Horticulture and CPSC share a common mission and have complementary programs that are already integrated. Both programs “develop and deliver educational and research programs that foster the creation and adoption of agricultural plant production systems that are profitable, environmentally sound, socially responsive, and sustainable.” Crop Science and HORT emphasize growing of crop plants in highly managed systems.
- Both disciplinary areas represent basic and applied plant sciences. Students and faculty of HORT and CPSC have similar disciplinary training.
- The transfer of HORT into CPSC will further enhance existing programs and provide unique opportunities for development of new and innovative programs that attract resources, develop interdisciplinary centers, and strengthen programs in research, teaching, and extension.
- Horticulture and CPSC majors have similar course requirements and types of courses (Appendix C). Both CPSC and the HORT have science options with an emphasis on basic plant sciences. It is common for students graduating from the CPSC or HORT programs to have similar careers and to be recruited by the same companies.
- The NRES department, post-HORT transfer, will work toward identifying a more unified departmental vision to facilitate curriculum development, hiring, and development of undergraduate and graduate recruitment strategies.
- A more focused NRES department would have the opportunity to attract skilled and effective departmental leadership that has the background, experience, and interests that overlap with a majority of the current and expected faculty.
- The NRES department, post-HORT transfer, will have the opportunity to more clearly define its role in research and education dealing with issues related to natural resources and the environment. A more recognizable departmental profile will enhance opportunities for development at a time when environmental concerns from natural resource use are gaining global attention.
- Combining HORT faculty and staff with CPSC would enhance horticulture's visibility to students, scientists, clientele, and the public. The ability of the public to identify horticultural programs at the University of Illinois is essential to the HORT program, as well as to the College of ACES.

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- The proposed transfer of HORT into CPSC would simplify and facilitate the search by clientele, including students, consumers, and other stakeholders, to find horticultural programs in ACES. Having an enhanced profile of these and other programs and activities also provides the opportunity to enlist additional stakeholder support.
- The education, research, and outreach programs of HORT will be more identifiable to students (both undergraduate and graduate), the university, and to their colleagues nationally.
- Transfer of HORT into CPSC will improve overall coordination of planning and delivery of extension and outreach programs. Currently HORT-related extension programs are spread between CPSC and NRES. Having HORT Extension in one unit would make it easier for clientele and off-campus extension personnel to obtain needed education and solutions to problems.
- Integration of HORT with CPSC could enhance efficiency and economy of on- and off-campus crop research operations due to similarities in facilities and equipment needs.
- The transfer of HORT into CPSC will strengthen the urban appeal of the department for recruiting new students from urban and suburban audiences.

Appendix A contains a series of Frequently Asked Questions that provide further information.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS:

In the fall of 2007, several faculty involved in HORT activities housed in the NRES approached the Dean of ACES to consider authorizing a transfer of HORT programs from NRES to CPSC. In response to that request, Dean Easter formed the Horticulture - Crop Sciences Pre-Merger Committee. This committee, Chaired by Professor Walter Hurley (Animal Sciences), included faculty representatives from the HORT program, CPSC and NRES. Committee ex officio members included the current heads of CPSC and NRES, and the Executive Assistant Dean for Administration for ACES. The committee was asked to evaluate the feasibility, potential merits, and disadvantages of such a transfer. The Committee met nine times beginning February 20 through April 24, 2008. The committee submitted a report to the Dean on April 21, 2008, concluding that the proposed transfer of HORT programs into CPSC provides an opportunity to strengthen the overall research, teaching, and outreach missions across a broad spectrum of activities of the College of ACES (Appendix D). The proposed transfer would involve up to 16 faculty, 15 academic professionals, several staff members, horticulture extension and undergraduate programs, three on- and two off-campus farm sites, and the University of Illinois Arboretum, responsibilities for which are currently housed in NRES.

A summary of the committee's report was provided by the Dean to the faculty of the College of ACES with the opportunity for a two week comment period, as well as to the Departmental External Advisory committees of NRES and CPSC, and other stakeholders and professionals in public and private sectors of Illinois agriculture with the opportunity for feedback.

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Following the report comment period from College of ACES faculty, and during the final week of April, 2008, the NRES faculty (which includes 15 faculty involved in horticultural activities) voted in favor of this transfer, with 11 for and 4 opposed among HORT faculty that could be involved in the transfer, and 25 for and 14 opposed across all faculty in the NRES department. Two NRES faculty did not vote. In addition, HORT faculty were given the choice of transferring to CPSC or remaining in NRES, with 14 electing to transfer (Appendix B) and two electing to remain in NRES (one HORT faculty is a new hire who has opted to move to CPSC upon arrival on campus). In early May a vote was conducted in CPSC with 21 faculty in favor of the transfer and 3 opposed (of 31 eligible to vote). A vote of College faculty members was conducted online from August 19th to August 29th, 2008, with 113 in favor of the transfer and 8 opposed (of 216 eligible to vote).

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS: [also see Appendix A]

a. Additional staff and dollars needed

No new staff or significant financial investment is required to implement the proposed transfer. The anticipated level of budgetary and staff support for CPSC with the transfer of HORT is not more than support currently in place for the HORT programs housed in NRES. It is anticipated that there will be some College costs associated with the transition process, but these short-term costs should be offset by long-term increases in benefits and efficiencies. The long term benefits to both NRES and CPSC associated with increased state and national impact make justification for this transfer compelling.

b. Internal reallocations (e.g., change in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratio, etc.)

At least initially with the transfer of the HORT curriculum to CPSC, there will be no significant changes in class size, teaching loads or faculty-student ratios and the transfer will not impact on undergraduates currently enrolled in the program. Students in the NRES M.S. and Ph.D. program with HORT faculty advisors will be given the option of continuing in this program or transferring into the CPSC graduate program. The NRES extramural Master of Science program mainly has students interested in HORT, therefore, horticulture students in this program would transfer to CPSC. However, NRES would like to remain a part of that program and expand the number of students who have NRES interests. Both NRES and CPSC have off-campus MS programs. Administration of and course offerings in these MS programs would be simplified if HORT transfers into Crop Sciences.

c. Effect on course enrollment in other departments and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments

Since all HORT and CPSC courses will continue to be offered with the current rubrics we foresee no impact on course enrollments in other departments. All units in the College of ACES were consulted concerning the proposed transfer.

d. Impact on the University Library, computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.

It is anticipated that the proposed transfer will have no significant impact on the Library, computer and laboratory resources, or for other equipment. Future potential expansion of student numbers in HORT and CPSC courses will have negligible impact on those resources.

e. Space considerations

Administrative oversight for faculty offices, support staff offices, laboratories, and other facilities that are directly associated with the HORT program will be transferred to CPSC. Faculty will not be asked to move their offices or laboratories as a direct result of this transfer.

f. Budgetary considerations

Budgetary considerations directly related to the proposed transfer are minimal since no new staff or significant financial investment is required or requested to implement the proposed transfer. Faculty and staff salary lines that transfer from NRES to CPSC in the transfer process will be accompanied by the resources already budgeted and currently supporting those lines in NRES. Resources budgeted from gift, endowment, revolving, grant, or other sources associated with HORT faculty and programs will transfer from NRES to CPSC within the University accounting system as the implementation process proceeds. In addition, gains in efficiencies in resource management are expected to result from the transfer of HORT to CPSC, especially with respect to the organization of support staff, and the sharing of equipment and other resources at the on- and off-campus crop research operations.

GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION:

All HORT, NRES and CPSC courses will continue to be offered with the current rubrics. No changes are anticipated in the near-term for undergraduate course offerings or out-of-class learning opportunities and experiences. Neither the concentrations in the HORT or CPSC majors (Appendix C), nor the minors in the NRES or CPSC programs are expected to change. Transfer of the HORT to CPSC will expose undergraduates from both programs to a broader diversity of students and faculty who have similar fundamental interests that emphasize the growing of plants in highly managed systems. Future changes or reorganization in the CPSC undergraduate programs, after transfer and integration of the HORT programs, may be developed to address needs of the students and to take advantage of opportunities evolving from the synergy of HORT and CPSC faculty and programs.

CLEARANCES: (Clearances should include signatures [sponsor, department head, dean] and dates of approval)

Dean, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

2 Sep 08

Date

Associate Dean, Office of Research,

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

2 Sept 08

Date

Associate Dean, Office of Academic Programs,

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

9/2/08

Date

Associate Dean, Office of Extension and Outreach,

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

9/2/08

Date

Associate Dean, Graduate College

Oct. 29, 2008

Date

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STATEMENT FOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY CATALOG:

All HORT and CPSC courses will continue to be offered with the current rubrics. The HORT undergraduate program is currently listed separately from NRES programs. The only changes required to that program of study will be changing the name of the home department from NRES to CPSC. The description of the NRES graduate program of study will need to be revised to delete references to HORT-related areas. The description of the CPSC graduate program of study will need to be updated to include HORT-related areas and opportunities for study.

EFFECTIVE DATE: As soon as possible.

Full proposal available for
review in the Senate Office.