May 23, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: Craig Beyrouty
    Dean, College of Agricultural and Natural Resources

FROM: Elizabeth Beise
    Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs

SUBJECT: Proposal to Modify the Bachelor of Science in Plant Sciences - Plant Science Specialization (PCC Log No. 16062)

The proposal to modify the Bachelor of Science in Plant Sciences - Plant Science Specialization has been administratively approved. A copy of the proposal is attached.

The change is effective Fall 2017. Please ensure that the change is fully described in the Undergraduate Catalog and in all relevant descriptive materials.

MDC/
Enclosure

cc: Andrew Harris, Chair, Senate PCC Committee
    Barbara Gill, Office of Enrollment Management
    Reka Montfort, University Senate
    Chip Denman, Division of Information Technology
    Pam Phillips, Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment
    Anne Turkos, University Archives
    Linda Yokoi, Office of the Registrar
    Cynthia Stevens, Office of Undergraduate Studies
    Joseph Sullivan, College of Agricultural and Natural Resources
    Angus Murphy, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture
Currently, the Plant Science (PLSC) major consists of 4 areas of concentrations: Landscape Management, Plant Science, Turf and Golf Course Management, and Urban Forestry. The proposed action would eliminate the current confusion (both with current and incoming students and other academic units) associated with the concentration name being the same as the major name (ie. Plant Science major, Plant Science concentration) by changing the concentration name from Plant Science to Plant Biology.
Rationale and Justification for Changing the Plant Science Concentration to Plant Biology

The Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture offers undergraduate majors in Plant Science (PLSC), Agricultural Science and Technology (AGST), and Landscape Architecture (LARC). The PLSC major consists of 4 concentrations: Plant Science, Turf and Golf Course Management, Landscape Management, and Urban Forestry. The Plant Science concentration is designed to prepare students for graduate or professional schools and/or a career in research. This concentration provides a strong foundation for postgraduate education in many aspects of plant biology including biotechnology, breeding, conservation, ecology, genomics and plant protection. Areas of study include: urban ecology, forest ecology, wetland ecology, conservation biology, population biology, systematic taxonomy, agricultural ecology, fungal ecology, plant physiology, plant genetics, plant adaptation to climate change, developmental biology, crop improvement, mechanisms of plant pathogen interactions, virology, food safety and security.

The Department has identified the Plant Science concentration of the PLSC major as a focus area to improve student access to academic, government and industry careers. One of the challenges to the success of this concentration is the current name. Because the Plant Science concentration is biology focused, the current name (Plant Science major and Plant Science concentration) is routinely mentioned by prospective and current students as a major source of confusion. The name has also been proven to be confusing to other programs such as the Letters and Sciences program which directs students to degree-granting majors. Moreover, the current name also fails to convey the STEM nature of this concentration. Despite this confusion, the Plant Science concentration has experienced significant growth in student numbers over the past three years (Fig 1). This increase can partially be attributed to an increase in freshman students and transfers from other campus majors.

The Department feels that changing the concentration name from Plant Science to Plant Biology will eliminate confusion and enhance the identity of the program. This enhanced identity will translate into increase enrollment. Currently, no changes in the degree requirements or learning outcomes are proposed.
Appendix

Statement from Biology Program Chair Concerning Proposed Name Change for Plant Science Concentration to Plant Biology

Angus Murphy <asmurphy@umd.edu>  

Feb 7

to Bill, me

Thanks for the prompt response

On Feb 7, 2017 18:00, "Bill Fagan" <bfagan@umd.edu> wrote:
Hi Angus

Biology has no concerns about your proposed change of name to the concentration.

Angus Murphy <asmurphy@umd.edu>  

Feb 8

to me

Dear Mark
It appears that Bill and Bob think that their emails will suffice as communications of support
-------- Forwarded message --------
From: "Robert L. Infantino" <rinfanti@umd.edu>
Date: Feb 7, 2017 7:39 PM
Subject: Re: plant biology concentration
To: "Bill Fagan" <bfagan@umd.edu>
Cc: "Angus Murphy" <asmurphy@umd.edu>, "Reid S. Compton" <compton@umd.edu>

Joe Sullivan asked me about this after a meeting today and I said the same.  B

Sent from the bobiPhone