

Approved by the Board of Trustees
March 11, 2021

Board Meeting
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ELIMINATE THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICS, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL
ARTS AND SCIENCES, URBANA

Action: Eliminate the Bachelor of Science in Physics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Funding: No funding impact is expected, as this proposal does not change class sizes, student-faculty ratios, or other metrics.

The Chancellor, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois System with the advice of the Urbana-Champaign Senate recommends approval of a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to eliminate via phasedown the Bachelor of Science in Physics.

This proposal to eliminate via phasedown the Bachelor of Science in Physics (B.S. in Physics) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) is part of a larger restructuring of undergraduate physics education at the university. As described in companion proposals, there are currently multiple undergraduate physics programs: the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences in Physics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (BALAS in Physics), which includes the Physics Teaching concentration; the Bachelor of Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (B.S. in Physics); and the Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics in the Grainger College of Engineering. The BSLAS in Physics and B.S. in Physics in the College of LAS are

essentially the same degree as the Engineering Physics degree in the Grainger College of Engineering. The B.S. in Physics, Teaching Concentration, has recently had low enrollment, and the option of pursuing the B.S. in Engineering Physics with a Secondary Education minor already exists and will continue to exist. With the related companion proposals, this proposal seeks consolidation of these existing physics programs into a single undergraduate degree to be named the Bachelor of Science in Physics, which will be administratively housed in the Department of Physics in the Grainger College of Engineering. The phasedown of the existing physics programs in LAS is a cooperative administrative effort between the colleges of LAS and Grainger Engineering. The consolidation plan, resulting in a single, renamed undergraduate physics degree, will reduce student, parent, and recruiter confusion, provide more cohesive student support, improve the student experience, and streamline operations in the Department of Physics.

The phasedown plan is to set admission targets to zero beginning with the Fall 2022 admissions cycle. Continuing undergraduate students will not have the option of declaring a major in Physics in LAS starting in Fall 2021. Students currently enrolled in the B.S. in Physics in LAS will be able to complete their degree program.

The Department of Physics is currently housed in the Grainger College of Engineering; the consolidation plan does not change that structure. There will be no changes to faculty resources, as there are no changes to class sizes or student-to-faculty ratios. There will be no changes to unit resources such as support for student advising and job placement, as these functions are already handled for the existing undergraduate physics programs by the Department of Physics in the Grainger College of Engineering.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.