Approved by the Board of Trustees

March 17, 2022

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Board Meeting

March 17, 2022

## ESTABLISH THE SCHOOL OF INTEGRATED SCIENCES, SUSTAINABILITY, AND PUBLIC HEALTH, COLLEGE OF HEALTH, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY, SPRINGFIELD

**Action:** Establish the School of Integrated Sciences, Sustainability, and Public

Health, College of Health, Science, and Technology

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The Interim Chancellor, University of Illinois Springfield, and Vice President, University of Illinois System with the advice of the Springfield Senate recommends approval of a joint proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Public Affairs and Administration to establish the School of Integrated Sciences, Sustainability, and Public Health (ISP) within the College of Health, Science, and Technology (CHST).

Currently, the Departments of Biology and Chemistry are housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Departments of Environmental Studies and Public Health are housed in the College of Public Affairs and Administration. A component of the academic reorganization at the University of Illinois Springfield, this proposal seeks to move all four programs into a single administrative unit named the School of Integrated Sciences, Sustainability, and Public Health (ISP) which will be housed in the newly-formed science-oriented College of Health, Science, and Technology.

The mission of the ISP is to foster disciplinary training within an interdisciplinary framework. Specifically, the unit will provide faculty and students with the skills and perspectives necessary to address what are sometimes called “wicked problems” or “grand challenges,” including global environmental and public health issues. The school will bring together about 25 full-time faculty members from Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, and Public Health to provide instruction and work within and across disciplinary lines including conducting field and laboratory research that helps address public health and environmental problems.

Identifying and addressing such complex, global problems involves pulling understanding from various components of biological, physical, and social sciences to design and test solutions. Social scientists and natural scientists, from the interdisciplinary programs of Environmental Studies and Public Health, both examine human dimensions using qualitative and quantitative methods, and by framing contemporary social issues within political, economic, and/or ecological context.

Combining these units with existing university units is expected to create a rich, interdisciplinary teaching and research hub for studying multi-dimensional issues in all their complexity. It will also eliminate the barrier that has historically been present in having natural and physical sciences that address these issues in two different colleges.

By bringing together the Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, and Public Health departments, the new school will collectively house two minors, four undergraduate degrees, and six graduate certificates. The Department of Biology currently offers a Bachelor of Science and a minor in Biology; the Department of Chemistry currently offers a Bachelor of Science and a minor in Chemistry, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry. The Department of Environmental Studies currently offers a Bachelor of Arts and a minor in Environmental Studies, as well as a Master’s of Science in Environmental Studies and a graduate certificate in Geographic Information Systems. The Department of Public Health currently offers a Master of Public Health as well as five graduate certificates.

Consolidating these academic programs into a single unit is expected to have many benefits for students including expanded interdisciplinary curricular offerings and increased collaborative and experiential learning opportunities, which will assist students in becoming better trained to pursue careers or graduate school.

The establishment of the School will raise the profile of the programs, and enhance the marketing and promotion of each program, which is expected to lead to increased enrollments. In addition, bringing four undergraduate degree programs together may serve as a recruiting tool for the ISP graduate programs, as it is anticipated that exposure to the various fields, degrees, and certificate options within the school may compel some undergraduate students to continue their education in one of the graduate programs.

Finally, the school model will allow multiple programs to share facilities and resources, create collaborative lab spaces, and make maximum use of equipment utilized by faculty and students from the four programs.

Administrative Structure

To maintain distinction between the four programs of the proposed ISP, each program plans to have an Academic Program Coordinator who will report to a School Director. The school structure is expected to improve efficiencies in areas such as course scheduling, curriculum development, student internships, program recruitment, and faculty course assignment. The single unit structure will streamline the administrative functions of the programs and sustainability initiatives will be coordinated through this unit.

The creation of the ISP was voted on by the Curriculum Committees and faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Public Affairs and Administration and is supported by the Deans of both Colleges.

No additional funding is requested to establish the ISP. Additional costs associated with the formation of the School will be provided by cost-savings that result from the overall academic reorganization.

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 Interim 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 of Illinois System recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.