

Approved by the Board of Trustees
November 12, 2020

Board Meeting
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ESTABLISH THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN AGRONOMY, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, URBANA

Action: Establish the Bachelor of Science in Agronomy, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

Funding: The Department of Crop Sciences and College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences have considerable faculty, staff, and infrastructure to support this proposed program; the program is comprised of existing courses with appropriate capacity.

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Urbana-Champaign Senate recommends approval of a proposal from the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences to establish the Bachelor of Science in Agronomy.

The proposed Bachelor of Science in Agronomy incorporates coursework in crop sciences, plant biology, soil pest management, plant protection, environmental quality, and data analysis to provide a comprehensive education in agronomy which is the science of agricultural production. This interdisciplinary curriculum is expected to appeal to prospective students interested in acquiring employable skillsets in sustainable agriculture production solutions to address urgent global challenges to food security and environmental sustainability.

Along with the Bachelor of Science in Plant Biotechnology proposal from the Department of Crop Sciences that was approved by the Board of Trustees in March, 2020 and by the IBHE in September, 2020, the current proposal to establish the B.S. in Agronomy represents consolidation of the concentrations within the existing B.S. in Crop Sciences. Companion report items request the elimination via phasedown of the concentrations in Crops, Plant Protection, Plant Biotechnology and Molecular Biology, and Biological Sciences within the B.S. in Crop Sciences. Through the establishment of the B.S. in Plant Biotechnology and the proposed B.S. in Agronomy, these concentrations are essentially consolidated and elevated to two majors. This elevation will make the areas of study more visible to prospective students and to employers. This reorganization is in alignment with recommendations from a Department of Crop Sciences self-evaluation and external review. Those reviews determined a comprehensive offering of agronomy is lacking in the current undergraduate curricular structure. This is limiting student enrollment and disadvantages key employment opportunities. The establishment of the B.S. in Agronomy will enhance student identity, provide greater prominence to this area of diverse expertise in crop sciences, and address student needs while preparing them with skillsets for known employment opportunities in agriculture.

Current facilities, including library resources, are adequate to support the program. Capacity exists within departmental courses that will serve as core courses for the major. These courses already exist as part of the degree requirements for the current concentration structure in the B.S. in Crop Sciences. The Crops, Plant Protection, Plant Biotechnology and Molecular Biology, and Biological Sciences concentrations within the

Bachelor of Science in Crop Sciences will be phased out as students currently enrolled in the program graduate or transfer to the new degree program in Plant Biotechnology or to the proposed B.S. in Agronomy. The concentrations will be eliminated only when there are no longer any enrolled students.

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.