Washington State University

MAJOR CHANGE FORM -- REQUIREMENTS

(Submit original signed form and TEN copies to the Registrar’s Office, zip 1035.)

See https://www.ronet.wsu.edu/ROPubs/Apps/HomePage.ASP for this form.

*Submit an additional copy to the Faculty Senate Office, French Administration 338, zip 1038.

Department Name: School of Biological Sciences

1. CHECK PROPOSED CHANGES.
   *□ Change department/program name from ___________________________ to ___________________________
   *□ New degree or program in ___________________________
   *□ Change name of degree from Ph.D. Botany to Ph.D. Plant Biology
   *□ Drop degree or program in ___________________________
   *□ Extend existing degree or program to ___________________________ campus
   □ New Major in ___________________________
   □ Change name of Major from ___________________________ to ___________________________
   □ Revise Major requirements in ___________________________
   □ Drop Major in ___________________________
   □ Revise certification requirements for the Major in ___________________________
   □ New Option in ___________________________
   □ Revise requirements for the Option in ___________________________
   □ Drop Option in ___________________________
   □ New Minor in ___________________________
   □ Revise Minor requirements in ___________________________
   □ Drop Minor in ___________________________
   □ New Undergraduate Certificate in ___________________________
   □ Revise Undergraduate Certificate requirements in ___________________________
   □ Drop Undergraduate Certificate in ___________________________
   □ Other ___________________________

Effective term/year: Fall 2015

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<tr>
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2. GIVE REASONS FOR EACH REQUEST MARKED ABOVE. (Attach additional paper if necessary; see reverse side.) Please see attached.

4. SIGN AND DATE APPROVALS.

Chair Signature/date: ___________________________  Dean Signature/date: ___________________________

General Education Com/date: ___________________________  Catalog Subcom/date: ___________________________

Academic Affairs Com/date: ___________________________  Graduate Studies Com/date: ___________________________

Senate/Date: ___________________________
Degree Name Change Justification – PhD Botany to PhD Plant Biology

In the spring of 2012, the School of Biological Sciences faculty unanimously voted to change the name of the Ph.D. graduate degree in Botany to a PhD in Plant Biology. The reasoning behind this change was to more accurately reflect the integrative nature of modern plant biology research and thereby increase the effectiveness of graduate recruitment. To many, the term “botany” implies a more traditional training in plant sciences and may not represent the diversity of disciplines included under the modern definition of plant biological research. Additionally, it was noted that Internet search engines for graduate programs (e.g. www.stateuniversity.com, www.gradschools.com, www.princetonreview.com) do not always find Botany programs when students search with key terms such as ‘molecular plant biology’, ‘plant physiology’, ‘plant biochemistry’ or ‘plant metabolism’. In addition, a search of the 71 Universities comprising the list of American Association of Universities (AAUs) and WSU’s peer institutions showed that only 3 of these schools offered degrees in Botany. Of the remainder, the most commonly offered degrees were in Biology, EEB (ecology, evolution and behavior or an analog) and Plant Biology.

Furthermore, the plant scientists at Washington State University are among the most highly cited in the world, according to the ISI Highly Cited Researchers list, and WSU has one of the top plant graduate programs in the United States. It is noteworthy that the plant science faculty in SBS have contributed strongly to this notoriety, and would like to align their degree program with this recognition to enhance student recruitment into SBS’s Ph.D. program.

Finally, changing our Ph.D. degree name to Plant Biology will provide our graduates with additional flexibility in applying for jobs in the modern workforce, which including areas such as plant biotechnology, genomics, biogeochemistry, molecular biology that have been outside the traditional definition of a degree in botany.

Students currently enrolled in these programs will be given the option to complete their program under the previous program name (i.e., Botany) or switch to the new program name (i.e., Plant Biology). Curriculum Requirements for the PhD in Plant Biology will remain unchanged from the previous revisions that referred to a PhD in Botany, which was approved by the faculty senate in 2011.