

Academic Program Termination: Professional Science Masters (PSM) in Applied Systematics in Botany

BACKGROUND

Program Proposed Termination Date

Spring 2018

Program Description

PSM program in Applied Systematics in Botany, Graduate Major

Link to full Curriculum Proposal System entry:

<https://secure.oregonstate.edu/ap/cps/proposals/view/99765>

The proposal is to terminate the PSM in Applied Systematics in Botany degree. The PSM in Applied Systematics program was offered on-campus by Botany and Plant Pathology in the College of Agricultural Sciences. The objective of the PSM degree was to prepare science students to be able to function effectively in a variety of work environments.

At the time the PSM program was being created at OSU, there was a major nationwide effort to establish another graduate pathway for students in science using the Masters in Business Administration programs as a model. The Sloan Foundation was a major supporter of PSM program development. The PSM degree was designed as a non-thesis MS degree in which botanical science course work was complemented by special courses in business management, communications, and ethics. The final degree requirement was completion of a four to six month internship. Students wrote a technical paper based on their internship experience and presented it to their committee for approval. The program is proposed for termination for the combination of reasons described below.

Program Context

In 2003, a grant from the Sloan Foundation was used to establish four PSM degrees on campus. In 2012, the Deans of the College of Science (COS), College of Agricultural Sciences and the Graduate School discussed ways to develop greater funding for the PSM programs on campus. Through those discussions, it became clear that there was little support for maintaining the central administrative structure necessary to administer the PSM program. The decision was made that the individual PSM programs should be given the opportunity to determine which professional courses best suit their students and individual PSM degrees should be fully managed within their respective degree-granting department or program.

As part of the ongoing discussions of the program leadership in 2012, it became apparent that the PSM courses (PSM 513, 565, 566 and 567; PHL 547 and Comm 550) did not have enough students enrolled in the Ecampus courses to be self-supporting, and COS funds were no longer available to continue to pay instructors to offer these courses. These courses were the mainstay for the professional courses that PSM students needed to take, and there were no real alternatives for our students.

The program has not been continued due to this lack of funding for administration and low enrollment in the PSM core courses along with challenges in finding suitable internships for students without dedicated central support. Students already admitted to the MS/PSM or PSM

May 31 - June 1, 2018 Board of Trustees Meetings

program were retained and completed their degree. However, the last cohort of students admitted to the program was in 2013. There is currently no dedicated staff for the PSM program. The website for the PSM program was dismantled in 2016. The PSM professional courses are no longer offered. While PSM-specific courses are no longer taught, students interested in plant systematics and conservation can still obtain a standard Master's degree in this area.

Program Financials

There has been no financial support for PSM programs for several years.

RECOMMENDATION

All appropriate university committees and the OSU Faculty Senate have reviewed and support the proposed termination. The Provost recommends that the Academic Strategies Committee approve the termination of the PSM in Applied Systematics in Botany, effective Spring 2018, pending the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.