

Program Elimination Proposal: B.S. in Forest Ecosystem Science.

Summary: The B.S. degree in Forest Ecosystem Science (FES) is offered through the School of Forest Resources (SFR). This degree was one of five separate degree programs offered by the School. Enrollment in FES has been low. NSFA suspended the degree in 2010. Students with an interest in the science of forest ecosystems can pursue one of several alternatives including a B.S. degree in Forestry, a B.S. degree in the interdisciplinary Ecology and Environmental Science (EES) program, or a B.S. / B.A. degree in Biology with a concentration in Ecology. NSFA proposes to eliminate the B.S. degree in Forest Ecosystem Science.

Rationale for elimination of program: The B.S. degree in Forest Ecosystem Science is one of five separate degree programs offered by the School of Forest Resources; the others being Forestry, Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Forest Operations Science and Wood Science and Technology. The variety of degrees reflects the fact that two departments merged less than five years ago to form the School of Forest Resources and both former units had separate degree programs. The FES degree program has been characterized by low enrollment. Enrollment over the past seven years averaged <14 students and remained fairly steady. Since AY 05-06, we have typically conferred three degrees per year (Table 1. Five year summary of enrollment and degrees conferred).

Table 1. BS Degree in Forest Ecosystem Science: Enrollment in program and number of degrees conferred annually from AY 2005 – 2006 to present:

<u>Academic year</u>	<u>Fall enrollment count</u>	<u>No. degrees conferred</u>
AY 2005	12	2
AY 2006	14	2
AY 2007	17	6
AY 2008	14	3
AY 2009	15	2
AY 2010	14	2
AY 2011	8	3
Five year average	13.4	2.9

It is difficult to justify offering a separate degree option for this small number of students. Therefore, we propose to eliminate the B.S. in FES. Students with an interest in forest ecosystem science will be counseled to pursue options in Forestry, Biology with a concentration in Ecology or the interdisciplinary Ecology and Environmental Science program.

Relationship of the program elimination to institutional mission: The FES concentration is a partner to the long established Forestry Program at the University of Maine. While the Forestry Program focuses on the management of forests, the FES concentration in EES emphasizes the biology and conservation of forest ecosystems from the molecular to the biosphere level. Other program options include the declaration of academic minors in such areas as biology, botany, environmental management & policy, fisheries, forest products, forest recreation management, geological sciences, plant science, soil science, surveying, or zoology.

Elimination of the B.S. degree will not impact our current efforts in forestry research or public service. The University maintains active research programs in forest resources.

Assignment of faculty upon the elimination of degree program: Faculty having expertise in forest ecosystem science will continue to deliver courses on this topic. These courses contribute to the fulfillment of degree requirements in the other degree programs within the School of Forest Resources and also contribute to the Ecology and Environmental Science interdisciplinary degree program. Suspension of the B.S. degree in Forest Ecosystem Science is not linked to the elimination of any current personnel.

Impact of the program elimination on students: Students currently enrolled in the B.S. in Forest Ecosystem Science will have the option of completing their degree program. Alternatively, these students could pursue degrees options in Forestry, Biology with a concentration in Ecology or the interdisciplinary Ecology and Environmental Science program.

Timetable for program elimination: We wish to eliminate the B. S. in Forest Ecosystem Science degree program at the conclusion of the 2012-2013 academic year.

Input obtained from meeting and discussion with the appropriate faculty and AFUM: The faculty of SFR has been concerned with the low enrollment in several of their B.S. degree programs. They reviewed their degree programs and merged their five B.S. degree programs into three majors: Forestry; Parks, Recreation & Tourism; and Forest Operations, Bioproducts & Bioenergy. The curricula for all three new majors were reviewed by members of the forest products sector, approved by the SFR faculty, and the University of Maine.

Plans to suspend the FES degree was supported by AFUM representatives and the UM Faculty Senate. The degree elimination proposal was submitted to AFUM on September 28, 2012 for comment. No response was received during the subsequent 4 weeks; suggesting no adverse reaction to this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward N. Ashworth
Dean, Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture
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