

ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY



University Curriculum Committee

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TO: Daniel Holland, Chairperson, Academic Senate
FROM: Jean Standard, Chair, University Curriculum Committee *JMS*
RE: Executive Summary of Proposal for New Major in Molecular and Cellular Biology

The University Curriculum Committee has approved and is forwarding for Academic Senate consideration the attached School of Biological Sciences proposal for a new degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology.

This program is one of two programs being proposed to replace the current Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) degree program, offered by both the School of Biological Sciences and the Department of Chemistry. The Molecular and Cellular Biology major within Biological Sciences will replace the existing Molecular Biology Sequence in the BMB program. Parallel with this proposal, the Department of Chemistry is proposing a separate Biochemistry major. Thus, in essence, the existing BMB program will be split into two new majors, housed in the respective units, and the shared BMB major will be phased out.

The School of Biological Sciences provided a substantial rationale for proposing the new major:

- The BMB major is in high demand, and this demand exceeds the capacity of the shared program, which does not have a dedicated support staff or facilities.
- By splitting the BMB major into two majors, they hope to offer more comprehensive support to the students in this field.
- The proposed Major in Molecular and Cellular Biology is a variation on the existing Molecular Biology Sequence within the BMB major, which reenrolls 27 students (as of January, 2011).
- The requirements for the proposed major are intermediate between those of the existing Biology major and the Molecular Biology Sequence. Thus, they expect that the new major will attract an enrollment equal to all 27 current students and half of the 64 general BMB students and about one third to one half of the approximately 460 non-education Biology majors, for a total of approximately 250 students.
- They envision that the new major will attract some additional students to Illinois State who are looking specifically for a molecular and cellular biology major coupled with strong undergraduate research.

In conjunction with this proposal, the School of Biological Sciences and the Department of Chemistry have submitted a proposal to delete the Major in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Resources will be provided to continue to support the students currently enrolled in the BMB program; however the goal is for the new Major in Molecular and Cellular Biology, along with the new Major in Biochemistry proposed by the Department of Chemistry, to replace the BMB program.

The University Curriculum Committee supports the proposal to add the new B.S. Degree in Molecular and Cellular Biology.

Enclosures