

ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY



University Curriculum Committee

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February 5, 2007

TO: Lane Crothers, Chair, Academic Senate

FROM: Mary Elaine Califf, Chairperson, University Curriculum Committee

RE: Executive Summary of Proposal from Department of Technology

The University Curriculum Committee has approved and is forwarding for Academic Senate review the attached proposal to add a new program and two new sequences, the Major in Renewable Energy, B.S., Technical Sequence and Economics and Public Policy Sequence to the Department of Technology curriculum.

The following is a brief summary of the proposal and the University Curriculum Committee discussion at the meeting on January 31, 2007:

- The Departments of Technology (which will administer), Agriculture, and Economics joined together to create and propose a new Major in Renewable Energy with two new sequences, one emphasizing technical issues, and one emphasizing economics/policy issues.
- They expect 50–60 students in the major by 2011.
- Their justification is the need for new workers as the alternative energy sector of the economy grows.
- A \$990,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy has supported the effort to create this new program, and an outside advisory committee has provided input on the content.
- They have created four new courses, one each in Agriculture and Economics, and two in Technology. Technology indicated they will need one new tenure-track faculty position. Milner has pledged to support the new program with expenditures of up to \$5,000 toward new materials.
- The reviewers asked if one added faculty position in Technology would be enough with the addition of the new courses, and the potential need to add five or more sections for existing courses. The Department of Technology expects that one new faculty would be sufficient. They said that the College of Applied Science and Technology is fully behind the new major and are quite sure that the resources will follow. The new position, while not number one on their list, will be one of the top priorities and they are committed to seeking more resources if it comes to that. In addition, there is quite a bit of overlap with what Technology already does and existing faculty will teach some sections of one of the new courses.
- The “Financial Implications Form” that was provided with the proposal indicated that at least \$6,000 annually in Technology funds would be allocated to this program after the grant

funding ended. The UCC was concerned that without an increase in the department's annual budget, the resources would have to come from internal reallocation.

Technology answered that this amount was a "small part of their annual budget," and that they do not think the reallocation will negatively impact other departments. They also anticipate that activities associated with the proposed Center for Renewable Energy will provide additional resources for the program.

- The reviewers asked if the additional students would put a burden on academic advisement in Technology. This possibility had been discussed by the proposers, and one solution was to shift some of the advisement burden to the Department of Agriculture.
- The Renewable Energy program proposers believe that the opportunity to be "way out front of a national trend" outweighs any concerns. The program proposal has gone through and has been approved by several committees and two colleges. All have asked these same questions; the resources issue has been the topic of conversation from the beginning.
- The reviewers also noted that the assumption is that a fairly small number of students will be in the major. With the many new ethanol/biodelisel plants and wind farms coming on-line or proposed, and the global warming debate, not to mention President Bush talking about renewable energy, they wondered whether the enrollment estimates may be low. The proposers said that there is a plan to set the enrollment limit to 60 students, which should alleviate the concern about growing too fast for available resources. A future increase in the enrollment cap has also been discussed by the proposers in the event that the program becomes more popular than anticipated. If that were to occur, then additional resources would have to be identified to support the program expansion.
- One last note from one of the proposers was that they heard from an outside source that this program is the first of its kind in the nation.

The University Curriculum Committee, the College of Applied Science and Technology, and the College of Arts and Sciences are fully in support of adding the new Major in Renewable Energy and the two new sequences.