



University Council

February 9, 2024

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2023-2024

Susan Sanchez, Chair

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Public Health – Tamora Callands

Social Work – Harold Briggs

Veterinary Medicine – Shannon Hostetter

Graduate School – Rodney Mauricio

Ex-Officio – Provost S. Jack Hu

Undergraduate Student Representative – Gabriella Lewis

Graduate Student Representative – Kelsey Wohlford

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Odum School of Ecology to deactivate the major in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.) will be an agenda item for the February 16, 2024, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu

Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR DEACTIVATION OR TERMINATION OF AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Date: September 8, 2023

School/College: Odum School of Ecology

Department/Division: Odum School of Ecology

Program (Major and Degree): Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.)

Which campus(es) offer this program? Athens

Deactivation or Termination? Deactivation

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2024

Last date students will be admitted to this program: Fall 2023

Last date students will graduate from this program: Fall 2025

Program Abstract:

The M.S. degree in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (ICAS) aims to train the next generation of conservation professionals. The ICAS curriculum addresses complex environmental challenges in real-world collaborative contexts. By integrating scientific training into real-world, multi-stakeholder contexts, the program prepares graduates for influential positions in conservation organizations, international non-profits, governmental agencies, and the private sector, or for pursuing Ph.D. degrees in ecology, conservation, and sustainability-related fields.

1. State the reasons for deactivating the program, and provide copies of any relevant documents.

This is part of a larger proposal to shift from two master's programs, Ecology (M.S) and Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.), to a single program, Ecology (M.S., M.S. Non-Thesis) with an optional Area of Emphasis in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability. Combining these two programs will streamline and maximize the use of resources within the School of Ecology.

Furthermore, the new Area of Emphasis in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability under Ecology (M.S., M.S. Non-Thesis) may be more appealing to students because it recognizes training in both ecology as well as integrative conservation and sustainability. The current Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.) does not include the term "ecology." In a Fall 2023 survey, a majority of the current ICAS students indicated they would prefer an Ecology (M.S.) degree with an Area of Emphasis in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability over an M.S. with the ICAS label.* Those who supported the name change mentioned the desire to be more inclusive of "ecology," while still recognizing ICAS.

- Six of seven ICAS students responded; 5 preferred "Ecology with an Area of Emphasis in ICAS; 1 had no preference; and 1 preferred the current name).

2. What will be done to minimize the impact of the deactivation of the program upon the personal and professional lives of the faculty and staff involved? Include specific information on: a) how faculty and staff will be notified of the deactivation, and b) how faculty and staff will be reallocated.

Current students will be able to finish their degrees. All relevant courses will continue to be taught by Ecology faculty. Because the program content will continue to be offered as an area of emphasis, there will be no impact on faculty or staff.

- a) Ecology faculty voted 28-0-1 (yes-no-abstain) on the proposal at their annual faculty retreat on August 25, 2023. Faculty, staff, and students have already been notified through a school-wide listserv of this proposal and will be notified again upon approval. The School of Ecology website also will be updated.
- b) Reallocation will not be necessary.

3. What will be done to ensure that deactivation of the program does not weaken other programs (graduate, undergraduate, or professional) for which the department may be responsible?

The deactivation of the Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.) major, along with the creation of an Area of Emphasis in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability under the Ecology (M.S., M.S. Non-Thesis) degree, will ensure that the content is still offered and available to students while maximizing use of resources. Because of this, there should be no negative impact on faculty, students, or other programs.

4. State the plans for allowing students currently enrolled in the program to complete degree requirements, including specific information on: a) how students will be notified of the program deactivation, and b) how students will be advised on completing the program.

- a) Students currently enrolled in the program have been advised of this proposal. Current ICAS students were surveyed, and it is anticipated that some will opt to move to the Ecology (M.S.) program with the Area of Emphasis in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability. All students will be informed of the associated timeframe when deactivation is approved.
- b) Current students will continue to be advised by their faculty mentors. Required courses will still be available, ensuring that students complete their degrees in a timely manner. All current students are expected to complete the program or transition to the new program by the end of the two-year deactivation period. The final cohort matriculated in Fall 2023 and no new students will be accepted into the program.

5. What plans, if any, are there for subsequent reactivation of the deactivated program?

There are no plans to reactivate the program.

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Deactivate the major in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.)

Create an Area of Emphasis in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability under Ecology (M.S.)

College: Odum School of Ecology

Department: N/A

Proposed Effective Term: Fall 2024

School/College:

- Odum School of Ecology Dean, Dr. Mark Hunter, 9/8/2023
- Odum School of Ecology Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Pejman Rohani, 9/8/2023
- Graduate School Associate Dean, Dr. Anne Shaffer, 11/9/2023