

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY


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**Interoffice Communication**

Academic and Global Programs  
College of Agriculture and  
Life Sciences  
134 Curtiss Hall

**DATE:** September 9, 2013

**TO:** Graduate Catalog and Curriculum Committee

**FROM:**   
David Acker, Associate Dean, CALS

**SUBJECT:** Discontinuation of the Master of Agriculture Degree

This confirms the college's request to discontinue the Master of Agriculture degree program in Professional Agriculture. This proposal was initiated and prepared by the department of Agricultural Education and Studies and has the support of their faculty. They voted 7 – 0 in favor of discontinuation.

The CALS Dean's office also supports the discontinuation of this program. You will note that my name is listed as the administrator originating the proposal. The Department of Agricultural Education and Studies faculty included this element in the proposal in recognition that this program is a college-wide program. I want to thank the department for their leadership of this program on behalf of CALS and for preparing this proposal that protects students currently in the program.

The CALS Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee have supported this proposal. A vote was taken in CALS to determine the wishes of the entire faculty. The CALS faculty voted to support the proposal to discontinue the program. The vote was 114 in favor of discontinuation and 6 opposed.

## **The Proposal for Discontinuation**

### **1. Name of administrator, department or group originating the proposal. Include the name of contact person(s).**

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### **2. Name of the program.**

Master of Agriculture degree program with a major in Professional Agriculture

### **3. Name of the department(s) which administers the program.**

This is an interdepartmental program within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences that is currently administered by the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies.

### **4. Rationale for discontinuation.**

The Master of Agriculture program in Professional Agriculture began in 1981. It was designed for off-campus students interested in production agriculture and the businesses that serve production agriculture. The program was made available to students who wanted to pursue graduate study in agriculture without taking formal course work on campus.

In the early years of the program it was guided by a supervisory committee of faculty from departments across the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The program had a coordinator and a staff assigned to manage records and provide student support. This was the only distance learning program offered by the College.

Over time departments began to develop and support their own distance learning programs. They no longer provided representation to the professional agriculture supervisory committee and made fewer courses available to students in this program. There is no longer any staff dedicated to the program. Faculty and staff in Agricultural Education and Studies manage this interdepartmental college program as an add-on to their departmental responsibilities. The expertise of faculty in the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies is not compatible with administering a broad based technical agriculture degree program at the graduate level.

Today students have a wider range of program options to choose from. There are now masters programs available through distance learning in Agricultural Education, Agronomy, Community Development, Plant Breeding, and Seed Technology and Business. There is also a graduate certificate program in Food Safety and Defense. These programs are more compatible with the missions of the respective disciplines in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Because of the evolution in distance education programming in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, faculty in the department of Agricultural Education and Studies voted unanimously to no longer administer the program and to convey to the college administration their support in either reassigning the program to another department or in assisting the college administration in proposing discontinuation of the degree program. On January 11, 2013 Wendy Wintersteen indicated that the dean’s office supported the recommendation made by AGEDS faculty. No other department was interested in administering the program, so a committee of AGEDS faculty was asked to prepare this proposal.

**5. Availability of similar programs at other Regent's institutions.**

There are no similar programs at other Regent’s institutions.

**6. Enrollment data for current and previous four years.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Non-resident</b>	<b>International</b>
2008	19	8	11	1	14	5	
2009	18	7	11	1		18	
2010	17	12	5		13	4	1
2011	20	12	8		11	9	
2012	21	10	11		11	10	

**7. Information required by the Board of Regents:**

- a) **A survey of students currently enrolled in the program to determine the impact of the discontinuance on their academic plans.**

All 43 students who had been admitted to the Master of Agriculture Degree program in Professional Agriculture but had not yet graduated were surveyed during a three-week period in March 2013. This number was based on AGEDS departmental records. According to the Graduate College, there are currently 26 students in the professional agriculture program. The departmental records were used to make sure that no one with a stake in the program was left out of the survey. The graduate college record is a more accurate reflection of students currently in the program and is more consistent with the number of students who responded to the survey. The survey was conducted by e-mail. Nonrespondents were followed up two times.

**(i) Students who wish to complete the program.**

Students were asked “do you plan to complete the Master of Agriculture degree program?” Twenty-four (82.8%) students responded yes and four (14.3%) responded no.

**(ii) Students who wish to transfer to other programs at the same institution**

Students were asked “would you be interested in transferring to another degree program at Iowa State University?” Six (22.27%) students responded yes and twenty-one (77.8%) responded no.

**(iii) Students who wish to leave the institution.**

Students were asked “would you consider leaving Iowa State University?” Ten (37%) students responded yes and seventeen (63%) responded no.

**b) On the basis of the data collected, a projection of faculty and staff needed to accommodate student needs in order to maintain program quality, and both a time frame for, and the costs of, program phase-out.**

Faculty and staff who are currently serving students will continue to do so. As students graduate, faculty and staff will redirect their time toward other graduate degree programs within their respective departments. Students remaining in the program will have 5 years from the date that discontinuation is approved to complete their degree. There will be no additional costs associated with the phase-out.

**c) A description of the amount of money, if any, that would become available for redirection under the institution's strategic plan as a result of the discontinuance of a program.**

.25 FTE will be redirected to support expanding the M.S. degree program in Agricultural Education, including anticipated growth in student numbers associated with the addition of an industry option for that program.

**d) A description of the impact the discontinuance will have on other programs offered by and the overall mission of the institution.**

Discontinuance may lead to increased enrollments in more focused graduate degree programs available through departments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Distance students have more appropriate options available to meet their needs for graduate education in agriculture. Discontinuance would have no negative impact on the overall mission of Iowa State University.

**e) A description of the impact on minorities and on women.**

Approximately half of the students currently enrolled in the program are women. No minority students have been enrolled in the most recent three years. We do not believe that discontinuance would have a negative impact on minorities and women.

**f) A description of the potential faculty and staff reductions or reassignments that would result from the discontinuance.**

No faculty and staff reductions would result from discontinuation. However, faculty and staff would be able to devote additional time to delivering the newer more focused distance degree programs in agriculture that are more consistent with their departmental missions.

**g) A description of how existing facilities and equipment freed by the discontinuance would be utilized.**

No facilities or equipment would be freed up by the discontinuation.