

FORM G
BOARD OF REGENTS, STATE OF IOWA
PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT CHANGE

Institution: Iowa State University

Program/Department Proposing Change: Department of Geological and Atmospheric Sciences

Change Being Proposed (e.g. name change, degree type, administrative structure): Department of the Earth, Atmosphere, and Climate

Name of College: Liberal Arts and Sciences

Approximate date to implement changes: Month 08 Year 2023

Contact person: (name, telephone, and e-mail) Kristie Franz, 515-294-1837, kfranz@iastate.edu

Please do not use acronyms without defining them.

1. Describe reasons for the proposed changes.

The proposed name change better reflects the work of the department and updates the name in ways consistent with national trends in the earth sciences. It also helps the department position itself as part of the leading edge of departments featuring climate science as a key part of its identity. These changes will make the work of the department clearer to students, funding agencies and other stakeholders. The name change is supported by students who responded to a survey and by faculty who voted 16-3 in favor of changing the name via an anonymous survey following more than a year of discussion.

Most important, this change better reflects the curricular opportunities that exist in the department, and contains key words that are more familiar to today's students; many studied Earth Science in high school and are familiar with the word "atmosphere" as well as the complexities and importance of understanding our dynamic climate. Using these key terms will simplify and clarify marketing efforts by using vocabulary recognizable to today's prospective students.

In Fall 2022, the Department of Geological and Atmospheric Sciences launched a new BS major in Climate Science, becoming one of the few departments nation-wide to offer an interdisciplinary climate science degree that will prepare students for emerging demands in the job market. The new department name will highlight climate as being a top area of study and research within our department. Interest and opportunities in climate science are growing and adding "climate" to our Departmental name will assist prospective students in finding and identifying Iowa State as a place to study that topic

This name change is consistent with recent changes at a handful of other universities such as:

- The School of Earth and Climate Sciences at The University of Maine
- Department of Earth and Climate Sciences, at Tufts University
- Department of Earth and Climate Sciences, Bates College
- Department of Soil, Water, and Climate, University of Minnesota
- Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering, University of Michigan
- Department of Meteorology and Climate Science at San José State University

Here in Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa has a department of Earth & Environmental Sciences and offers majors in Earth Science, Earth Science Teaching, and Environmental Science. At the University of Iowa, the department is called Earth and Environmental Sciences and offers majors in Geoscience

and Environmental Sciences. At Iowa State the Department of Geological and Atmospheric Sciences offers majors in Earth Science, Meteorology, Geology, and Climate Science. At ISU the Environmental Science major is a cross-disciplinary studies program coordinated within the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology.

The Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences at the University of Northern Iowa responded to our outreach stating, "The College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences has no objections. In fact, the name change makes sense to us given the direction the fields in the department are moving." The Executive Vice President and Provost at the University of Iowa also responded that they have no objections to this name change.

2. How will the proposed change affect current students?

As a department name change, there will be no effect on current students in terms of their degree progression or major designation. Incorporating the familiar terms Earth, Atmosphere and Climate into the department title will help current and future students understand what they will study as part of this department.

3. If relevant, have accreditation requirements been addressed?

There are no accreditation issues.

4. If relevant, describe program configuration changes that will accompany the proposed program or change, e.g., change in number of credit hours required, faculty appointments, etc.

There will be no program configuration changes.

5. If relevant, identify resources that will be needed in connection with the proposed program or department change, e.g., facilities, faculty, funds, etc.

No major costs will be incurred beyond the time needed to update university records, systems, websites and catalog as well as internal departmental documents to reflect the name change. Signage on the Departmental office door will be changed.

6. Is this intended to be a temporary or permanent change? If temporary, for how long?

This is a permanent change.

From: [Maroney, Cynthia](#)
To: [Franz, Kristie J \[GE AT\]](#)
Subject: GEAT Name Change Letter of Support
Date: Friday, August 11, 2023 2:20:09 PM

Dear Dr. Franz,

I am writing in support of the proposed name change for the department from the Department of Geological and Atmospheric Sciences to the Department of the Earth, Atmosphere, and Climate. I am currently employed at HDR as a Water Resources Engineer and located in the Des Moines, Iowa office. My work is focused on the sustainable use of groundwater throughout the nation. This involves understanding of hydrogeology, groundwater modeling, and impacts of overuse of groundwater including the connection with land subsidence. Sustainable use of groundwater and climate change are intertwined.

I am a three times alumni of Iowa State University. I received my BS degree in Geology in 1986 and later earned my MS and PhD in Civil (Environmental) Engineering. There has always been a need for well-trained earth science professionals, and recently the need has outgrown the supply. At HDR, we are currently finding it difficult to hire new staff with geology and other environmental science related backgrounds. It is critical for the sustainability of the state of Iowa and for the nation that young people pursue the types of majors your department offers.

The new name is one-step towards getting more students to find, explore, and hopefully enroll in your department. The new name is more likely to attract students to your website and degree offerings because it contains terms like "earth" and "climate", which are more familiar than terms like "geological". Unfortunately, not all students equate geology with environmental work opportunities even though this is a standard and desirable pathway into the field. Further, the need for trained climate scientists will only continue to grow. Given the recent creation of the Climate Science degree, it seems critical that the word be added to your department name. Please update the name of the department to attract young people who are interested in protecting the earth and the environment.

Best Regards,

Cynthia Maroney, PhD, PE (Iowa), RG (Missouri)
Water Resources Engineer

HDR

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