

Post-mortem - Bioagricultural Sciences undergraduate major

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This is based, for the most part, on interviews with faculty who were active in undergraduate instruction during the time that this major was housed in the department of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management. These include Whitney Cranshaw, Tom Holtzer, Bill Jacobi, Boris Kondratieff and Elaine Roberts.

The transfer of the major from the Dean's office to the department was part of a package of "incentives" for the merger of Entomology with Plant Pathology and Weed Science which took place in **year**. At the time of the transfer, the major did not meet the CCHE graduation rate requirements (10 per year) and was given one of the five campus-wide temporary exemptions to allow time to recruit sufficient students.

Three concentrations (agricultural biotechnology, entomology and plant health - see Appendix A for course requirements) within the major were developed and recruiting efforts targeting current and future biology majors were initiated. The number of majors increased as a result, peaking at about 30 students. While this was substantially more than when the major was housed in the Dean's office, it was only about half of what would be needed for a viable major according to CCHE standards. The Provost decided that sufficient time to establish the major had passed and that the exemption was needed elsewhere in the university. The last academic year for the major was 2002-2003.

Interviewees suggested several possible explanations for the failure to attract a viable number of students and the resulting loss of the major.

- The differences and advantages between this major and others such as biology were not clear to potential students.
- The major lacked name recognition.
- The major had a history of under performance and low enrollments, prior to its transfer to the department.
- Faculty did not feel connected to the major.
- Sufficient faculty effort was not available for recruiting, retention and teaching. It was suggested that 3-4 faculty who were passionate about the major and its students would have been necessary to be successful.
- Course requirements were developed from available classes. New classes tailored to the needs of the major were not developed.

After the major was lost, the department looked for new ways to remain a "player" in undergraduate instruction. This was accomplished through large courses such as AGRI 116, BSPM 102, and LIFE 102, and other courses serving the needs of majors in CAS and elsewhere.