

# LONG SIGNATURE SHEET



**Proposal Number:** BIO 2-11-11  
**Proposal Title** Revisions to the degree requirements for the  
PhD program in biology  
**Originating Department** Biology  
**TYPE OF PROPOSAL:** UNDERGRADUATE \_\_\_\_\_ GRADUATE X UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Separate proposals sent to UCCC and Grad. Council)

DATE RECEIVED	DATE CONSIDERED	DATE FORWARDED	ACTION	SIGNATURES
3/3/11	3/3/11	3/18/11	Approved	<u>DEPARTMENT CHAIR</u> 
3/8/11	3/18/11	3/18/11	Approved	<u>COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR</u> 
3/25/11	3/25/11	3/25/11	Approved	<u>COLLEGE FACULTY CHAIR</u> 
3/29/11	4/4/11	4/6/11	Approved	<u>COLLEGE DEAN</u> 
			Approved	<u>UNDERGRADUATE COURSE &amp; CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR</u> (for undergraduate courses)
4-22-11	5-3-11	5-3-11	Approved	<u>GRADUATE COUNCIL CHAIR</u> (for graduate courses) 
			Approved	<u>FACULTY GOVERNANCE SECRETARY</u> (noting Faculty Council approval on Consent Calendar)
				<u>FACULTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u> (if decision is appealed)

**COPY  
MADE** 5-3-11  
 Grad School ap

BIO 2-11-11

**University of North Carolina at Charlotte****Revised Graduate Degree Requirements****Proposal from: Department of Biology****Title: *Revisions to the degree requirements for the PhD Program in Biology*****A. Proposal Summary and Catalog Copy****1. Summary**

The Department of Biology proposes two revisions to the degree requirements for the PhD program:

1) reduce the number of times doctoral students must take Interdisciplinary Colloquium (BIOL 8200) from four to two.

2) reduce the number of times doctoral students must take Seminar (BIOL 8201) from four to two.

**Please note:** the proposed revisions will change only the number of times students must take Interdisciplinary Colloquium and Seminar to satisfy degree requirements. These courses were approved when the doctoral program was established and no revisions are proposed for the course objectives, course content, instructional method, or means of student evaluation. Also, the total hours required for the degree (72) will not change.

**2. Proposed Catalog Copy*****Copy edits to show proposed changes to existing catalog copy*****Years ~~1-4~~ 1 & 2 :**

Interdisciplinary Colloquium; ~~4~~ 2 semester hours (1 hour per year). This course brings together faculty and students from the participating programs in an informal discussion of interdisciplinary research. (Fall semester only).

**Years ~~1-4~~ 1 & 2:**

Seminar; ~~4~~ 2 semester hours (1 hour per year). Formal student presentations of current literature topics in their area of study. (Spring semester only).

***Proposed new catalog copy*****Years 1 & 2:**

Interdisciplinary Colloquium; 2 semester hours (1 hour per year). This course brings together faculty and students from the participating programs in an informal discussion of interdisciplinary research. (Fall semester only).

**Years 1 & 2:**

Seminar; 2 semester hours (1 hour per year). Formal student presentations of current literature topics in their area of study. (Spring semester only).

**B. Justification****1. Identify the need addressed by the proposal and explain how the proposed action meets the need.**

The Department of Biology is currently reevaluating its doctoral degree requirements. At present, we require that all doctoral students take Interdisciplinary Colloquium (BIOL 8200) and Seminar (BIOL 8201) once each year during the first four years of the program, for a total of four required semesters of each course. During Fall 2010, the Biology Graduate Committee solicited input from the Graduate Faculty and doctoral students, which revealed a widespread opinion that existing requirements could be reduced without affecting student training.

The main objectives of Interdisciplinary Colloquium are to (1) expose doctoral students to the diversity of research programs associated with the program and (2) give 2<sup>nd</sup> year students opportunities to present their dissertation proposals in preparation for the Oral Candidacy Exam. The Oral Candidacy Exam must be completed during the 5<sup>th</sup> semester of the program, by which time doctoral students have taken Colloquium twice. Thus, two semesters of Interdisciplinary Colloquium is sufficient to accomplish the stated goals. The primary goal of Seminar is to train students to give oral presentations of the primary literature. As our doctoral program has matured, we have incorporated a variety of other opportunities for student presentations (e.g. many courses involve student presentations of the primary literature; all doctoral students are required to give a Departmental Seminar after their 2<sup>nd</sup> year; most labs hold weekly journal clubs during which students present articles from the primary literature; etc.). Thus, two semesters of Seminar are considered sufficient.

Students who have completed two semesters of each course may continue to enroll if they wish; however, further enrollment will no longer be required. Reducing the number of times PhD students must take Interdisciplinary Colloquium and Seminar will allow them to take more elective hours in their particular areas of interest, which will contribute to greater depth and breadth of biological knowledge.

**2. Discuss prerequisites/corequisites for courses including class standing.**

No revisions are proposed for the prerequisites/corequisites for Interdisciplinary Colloquium or Seminar. All students enrolling in the courses must have graduate standing in the PhD Program in Biology.

**3. Demonstrate that course numbering is consistent with the level of academic advancement of students for whom it is intended.**

The course numbering for Interdisciplinary Colloquium (BIOL 8200) and Seminar (BIOL 8201) was approved when the PhD in Biology was established and is consistent with current university catalogs. Both courses are numbered at the 8000-level because they are offered only to doctoral students. No revisions to the course numberings are proposed.

**4. In general, how will this proposal improve the scope, quality and/or efficiency of programs and/or instruction?**

Reducing the number of times doctoral students must take Interdisciplinary Colloquium and Seminar will enhance the quality of their training, because it will free up hours that can be used to take elective courses or devoted to the dissertation research. The current requirement that each course be taken four times is widely regarded by faculty and students as “overkill”, resulting in redundancy and inefficiency. Furthermore, in recent years the Department of Biology has had to cancel 8000-level courses due to low enrollment. This has resulted in part because our students must enroll in either Colloquium or Seminar each semester during the first four years of the program, which limits the time they have to take other courses. Reducing the requirements for Colloquium and Seminar will improve our ability to offer other courses, which will benefit the training of our students and enhance timely progression towards the degree.

### C. Impact

**1. What group(s) of students will be served by this proposal? Describe how you determined which students will be served.**

Interdisciplinary Colloquium and Seminar are designed to serve doctoral students in biology. Students must be admitted into the PhD in Biology program before they can enroll in the courses. All biology doctoral students will be required to take each course twice during the first two years of the program.

**2. What effect will this proposal have on existing courses and curricula?**

*a. When and how often will the added course be taught?*

No changes are proposed for the course offerings. Interdisciplinary Colloquium will continued to be offered every Fall semester; Seminar every Spring semester.

*b. How will the content and/or frequency of offering of other courses be affected.*

Both courses are existing, required classes for the doctoral degree. Thus, we do not anticipate that reducing the number of times they are taken will have any effect on the content of other courses. However, reducing the number of times each course must be taken will free up hours that can be filled with elective courses, which will increase the likelihood that these classes will have sufficient enrollments.

*c. What is the anticipated enrollment in the courses added?*

No courses will be added. We propose only to reduce the number of times each course must be taken from 4 to 2. At present, we require that all students take each course 4 times, which results in enrollments of 12-15 students in each class. If doctoral students must take each course only twice, this should reduce enrollment to 6-8 students each semester, which will allow more time for individual student presentations in both classes.

*d. How will enrollment in other courses be affected? How did you determine this?*

Enrollment in other courses, especially elective courses, should increase, because students will have additional hours to devote to formal classes. The Department of Biology typically offers three or four 8000-level elective courses each semester. We typically have 20-25 doctoral students each semester. We anticipate that the proposed changes will increase enrollment in each elective course by no more than 2-3 students each semester.

*e. If the course has been offered previously under special topics numbers, give details of experience including number of times taught and enrollment figures.*

Interdisciplinary Colloquium and Seminar have never been offered as special topics courses.

*f. Identify other areas of catalog copy that would be affected, e.g., curriculum outlines, requirements for degree, etc.*

No changes are proposed for course content or course description. We proposed only to change the number of times each course is required to be taken. Thus, the only change to catalog copy will occur under "requirements for degree", as indicated in **2. Proposed Catalog Copy**.

#### **D. RESOURCES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT PROPOSAL**

##### **1. Personnel**

###### *a. New faculty....*

No new faculty are required. Two current graduate faculty members teach the courses.

###### *b. Qualified faculty members interested in teaching the course.*

Interdisciplinary Colloquium: Dr. Stan Schneider  
Seminar: Dr. Mark Clemens

##### **2. Physical Facility**

None required beyond existing classrooms.

##### **3. Equipment and Supplies**

No additional equipment and supplies are required.

##### **4. Computer**

No additional computing resources are required.

##### **5. Audio**

No equipment or services will be needed from Media Services

## 6. Other Resources

None

## 7. Sources of Funding

No new funding required.

## **E. CONSULTATION WITH THE LIBRARY AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS/UNITS**

### 1. Library Consultation

Not required (see attached email from Dr. Rob McGregor).

### 2. Consultation with Other Departments and Units

No other departments and units are affected by the proposed changes, because they will apply only to students enrolled in the PhD in Biology program. Faculty from other departments can participate in the Biology PhD program and serve as advisors for students. However, all students admitted into the program must follow the Biology PhD program requirements, even if their major advisor resides in a participating department. As a result, the proposed changes do not directly affect the policies or students of any other department or unit. Nevertheless, the Department of Biology has a Doctoral Advisory Panel composed of faculty representatives from participating units. The function of the Advisory Panel is to provide input to the Biology Graduate Committee about doctoral program matters. The members of the Advisory Panel (Dr. Jerry Troutman, Chemistry; Dr. Farah Bahrani, CMC; Dr. Helen Hilger, Civil & Environmental Engineering; Dr. Mitch Cordova, Kinesiology; Dr. Andrew Harver, Public Health Sciences; Dr. Diane Brockman, Anthropology; and Dr. Irina Nesmelova, Physics and Optical Sciences) were informed of the proposed changes on Feb. 21, 2011. Four member of the Advisory Panel responded (CMC; Kinesiology; Anthropology; Physics) and all supported the proposed changes.

## **F. INITIATION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL**

### 1. Originating Unit

The Biology Graduate Faculty approved the proposed changes on Feb. 11, 2011. The proposal to reduce the number of times doctoral students must take Interdisciplinary Colloquium from 4 to 2 passed unanimously. The proposal to reduce the number of times students must take Seminar passed with 16 vote in favor and 5 opposed.

### 2. Other Considering Units

Not applicable (see E-2)

## **G. Attachements**

### 1. *Consultation with other units*

Copies of the email responses received from the Doctoral Advisory Panel are attached.

## 2. *Course syllabus*

Because Interdisciplinary Colloquium and Seminar are existing courses and no changes are proposed for course content, we were informed that we did not need to submit course syllabi (see attached email from Dr Rob McGregor).

## Schneider, Stan

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**From:** McGregor, Rob  
**Sent:** Monday, February 14, 2011 2:55 PM  
**To:** Schneider, Stan  
**Subject:** RE: RE: curricular changes

Stan,

I think these are easy enough by email.

(1) I suggest a track-changes version of the catalog copy. This makes it quite easy to see how the new requirements differ from the old requirements. You might also include a clean copy of the revision as an attachment.

(2) For these changes, there is no need to submit sample syllabi and library consultations.

Let me know if you have other questions.

Thanks!

Rob

Rob Roy McGregor  
Professor of Economics  
Coordinator of MS in Economics Program  
Department of Economics  
UNC Charlotte  
9201 University City Boulevard  
Charlotte, NC 28223  
Phone 704-687-7639  
Fax 704-687-6442

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**From:** Schneider, Stan  
**Sent:** Monday, February 14, 2011 12:41 PM  
**To:** McGregor, Rob  
**Subject:** RE: RE: curricular changes

Rob,

Thanks for the information. I have several questions (it might be easier for me to call you; just let me know):

1. Because we are proposing to revise the degree requirements for our PhD program, do I need to list the existing catalog copy and then present the revised form, or should I present only the revised catalog copy?
2. We are proposing to change only the number of times students are required to two courses (Seminar; Colloquium). These courses were approved when we established our doctoral program and nothing will be



## Schneider, Stan

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**From:** Brockman, Diane  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2011 11:40 AM  
**To:** Schneider, Stan; Troutman, Jerry; 'Bahrani-Mougeot, Farah K'; Harver, Andrew; Hilger, Helene; Nesmelova, Irina; Cordova, Mitch  
**Subject:** RE: RE: changes to PhD in Biology Curriculum

Greetings Stan,

These changes to the Biology graduate curriculum appear reasonable and appropriate for all the reasons you articulate below. While I cannot speak to the excessiveness of current requirements, I fully support adjustments to the curriculum that allow students to take more electives thus increasing the depth and breadth of their training.

Best,  
Diane Brockman

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**From:** Schneider, Stan  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2011 4:08 PM  
**To:** Troutman, Jerry; 'Bahrani-Mougeot, Farah K'; Harver, Andrew; Brockman, Diane; Hilger, Helene; Nesmelova, Irina; Cordova, Mitch  
**Subject:** RE: changes to PhD in Biology Curriculum

Dear Doctoral Advisory Committee members:

On Feb. 11, 2011, the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Biology approved the following changes to the required curriculum for the PhD in Biology program:

1. **The number of times doctoral students must take Interdisciplinary Colloquium (BIOL 8200) is reduced from 4 to 2.**
2. **The number of times doctoral students must take Seminar (BIOL 8201) is reduced from 4 to 2.**

**Rationale:** Currently, all students in the PhD in Biology program are required to take Colloquium and Seminar once each year during the first four years of the program, for a total of four times for each course. The Department of Biology is in the process of reevaluating its doctoral curriculum and discussions with the Graduate Faculty and doctoral students revealed a widespread opinion that the requirements were excessive, and that taking each course twice would provide students with the training we want them to have. Reducing the number of times each course must be taken will also free up hours that students can devote to elective courses, thereby increasing the depth and breadth of their training.

I must submit a curriculum proposal to the Graduate Council to enact the approved changes. I would like to give the participating units an opportunity to provide input, which will be included in the curriculum proposal as "consultation with other units."

If you would like to provide comments, please get them to me by **Friday, Feb. 25, 2011.**

Thank you and please let me know if you have questions. Stan

Dr. Stan Schneider  
Graduate Coordinator  
Department of Biology  
University of North Carolina  
Charlotte, NC 28223  
Phone: 704-687-8527

## Schneider, Stan

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**From:** Bahrani-Mougeot, Farah K [Farah.Bahrani-Mougeot@carolinashealthcare.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 23, 2011 2:05 PM  
**To:** Schneider, Stan  
**Subject:** RE: changes to PhD in Biology Curriculum and team taught course

Dear Stan,

I asked the opinion of most of the Grad faculty and students here and they are all in favor of the proposed changes. some questions came up: 1) Would the students have to take the 2 seminars and colloquiums in the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 years of the program or they can pick any 2 years? 2) How many elective courses and equivalent to how many credits they have to take to replace the 2 seminars and colloquiums? 3) Do they have the option of taking 4 seminars and 4 colloquiums as before?

In another note, and as a couple of students brought it back to my attention, we would still like to offer a team-thought course for the PhD students. Is that still an option for us? If so, could that course be used as one of the electives to replace seminars/colloquiums? And if yes, what level course and how many credits does it have to be? Can we plan the course for the next spring?

Thank you,

Farah

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**From:** Schneider, Stan [mailto:sschnedr@uncc.edu]

**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2011 4:08 PM

**To:** Troutman, Jerry; Bahrani-Mougeot, Farah K; Harver, Andrew; Brockman, Diane; Hilger, Helene; Nesmelova, Irina; Cordova, Mitch

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## **Schneider, Stan**

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**From:** Nesmelova, Irina  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2011 10:46 AM  
**To:** Schneider, Stan  
**Subject:** RE: RE: changes to PhD in Biology Curriculum

Dear Dr. Schneider,

These changes seem reasonable and to the students benefit, because they will allow to increase the number of electives for students to take.

Irina Nesmelova.

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**From:** Schneider, Stan  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2011 4:08 PM  
**To:** Troutman, Jerry; 'Bahrani-Mougeot, Farah K'; Harver, Andrew; Brockman, Diane; Hilger, Helene; Nesmelova, Irina; Cordova, Mitch  
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Dr. Stan Schneider  
Graduate Coordinator  
Department of Biology  
University of North Carolina  
Charlotte, NC 28223  
Phone: 704-687-8527

## Schneider, Stan

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**From:** Cordova, Mitch  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 26, 2011 11:03 AM  
**To:** Schneider, Stan; Troutman, Jerry; 'Bahrani-Mougeot, Farah K'; Harver, Andrew; Brockman, Diane; Hilger, Helene; Nesmelova, Irina  
**Subject:** RE: RE: changes to PhD in Biology Curriculum

Hi Stan,

The changes proposed to the Doctoral Program curriculum appear logical and reasonable to me. Thank you for sharing this.

- Mitch

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**Mitchell L. Cordova | Professor & Chairperson**  
UNC Charlotte | Department of Kinesiology  
9201 University City Blvd. | Charlotte, NC 28223  
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