

MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS

LEVEL I REQUEST FORM

Item No.:	135-2012+R0507	Date of Meeting:	May 30– June 1, 2007
Institution:	Montana State University – Bozeman		
Program Title:	Termination of Agricultural Operations Technology Major and Rename “Division of Agricultural Education/Agricultural Operations Technology” to the “Division of Agricultural Education”		

Level I proposals are those that may be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education or the Commissioner’s designee. The approval of such proposals will be conveyed to the Board of Regents at the next regular meeting of the board. The institution must file the request with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education by means of a memo to the Deputy Commissioner.

A. Level I action requested (check all that apply): Level I proposals include campus initiatives typically characterized by (a) minimal costs; (b) clear adherence to approved campus mission; and (c) the absence of significant programmatic impact on other institutions within the Montana University System and Community Colleges.

- 1. Re-titling existing majors, minors, options and certificates; (e.g. from B.S. in Mechanized Agriculture to B.S. in Agricultural Operations Technology);
- 2. Eliminating existing majors, minors, options and certificates via a Program Termination Checklist;
- 3. Adding new minors or certificates where there is a major;
- 4. Adding new minors or certificates where there is an option in a major;
- 5. Departmental mergers and name changes;
- 6. Program revisions; and
- 7. Distance delivery of previously authorized degree programs.

B. Level I with Level II documentation: With Level II documentation circulated to all campus chief academic officers in advance, the Commissioner or designee may propose additional items for inclusion in the Level I process. For these items to move forward, the Commissioner or designee must reach consensus with the chief academic officers. When consensus is not achieved, the Commissioner or designee will move the item to the Level II review process.

- 1. Options within an existing major or degree;
- 2. Eliminating organizational units within larger institutions such as departments, divisions and colleges or schools *with the exception of the five Colleges of Technology where changes require Board action;*
- 3. Consolidating existing programs and/or degrees.

C. Temporary Certificate or A.A.S. degree programs: Certificate or Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs may be submitted as Level I proposals, with memo and backup documentation, when they are offered in cooperation with and/or at the request of private or

public sector partners and the decision point to offer the program is not consistent with the regular Board of Regents program approval process. Level I approval for programs under this provision will be limited to two years. Continuation of a program beyond the two years will require the normal program approval process as Level II Proposals.

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All other Certificate or Associate Degree programs may be placed on submission at any Board of Regents meeting. They will be placed on action agendas at subsequent meetings. All campuses agree to insure that all other campuses receive program information well in advance of submission.

Specify Request:

Montana State University – Bozeman seeks approval from the Montana Board of Regents to terminate the Agricultural Operations Technology major. With the phase-out of the AOT curriculum, we further seek permission to formally change the name of the division from the “Division of Agricultural Education/Agricultural Operations Technology” to the “Division of Agricultural Education”.

See attached termination checklist.

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The Division of Agricultural Education/Agricultural Operations Technology (AgEd/AOT) seeks permission to phase out of the Agricultural Operations Technology (AOT) curriculum over the next few years, beginning immediately. As a result, the Division will go from offering two major degrees (one in Agricultural Education and one in Agricultural Operations Technology) to offering only the single degree in Agricultural Education.

Program Termination checklist:

Phase 1

1. Dr. Blair Stringam, the only faculty member of the Division of Agricultural Education/Agricultural Operations Technology (AgEd/AOT) dedicated solely to instructing AOT classes, abruptly resigned his faculty position at Montana State University in the middle of August, 2006. Approximately 29 students enrolled in the AOT curriculum were directly impacted by this resignation and an additional 50 or so students in the Ag Ed curriculum were indirectly impacted. Dr. Stringam's Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 classes have been instructed by a combination of adjunct faculty and the two regular AgEd faculty (Drs. Marty Frick and Carl Igo) on an overload basis. This is not a sustainable approach or a quality approach.

In early September 2006 the Associate Dean instructed the MSU Registrar's office to close the AOT curriculum to all new majors until its future could be decided. The message was also relayed to the Director of Admission at that time.

Dr. Stringam's resignation precipitated an opportunity for College of Agriculture administration and faculty to evaluate the future of the AOT curriculum, which had long suffered from a chronic shortage of equipment, space, funding, and faculty. During the evaluation process the Associate Dean for Academic Programs in the College of Agriculture requested that all AOT students meet with him at noon on 24 October 2006 in 325 Leon Johnson Hall, for an update on the evaluation process. Of the approximately 29 students involved in the program, about 22 were present at the meeting, at which time the Associate Dean outlined the situation and the difficulties it had created and suggested that students reflect upon their ultimate career goal and change their major IF feasible. No student was asked to leave the AOT curriculum. Since the College of Agriculture is committed to matriculation of students enrolled in a major, the point was clarified that if students chose to remain in the AOT curriculum the College would commit to offering the required courses. However, in the event that suitable instructors could not be found for some courses, said students should understand that they may be forced to substitute similar courses or that some required courses may be waived. A letter reiterating what transpired at the meeting of the 24th was dated 25 October 2006 and sent to the address of record of all AOT students. Several concerned parents talked to the Dean and the Associate Dean about their concerns, which have been addressed.

In January, 2007 AOT students were again reminded of the situation and were issued individually their own revised DA-1 (a schedule of courses used internally in the College of Agriculture) that indicated, in red, courses they still needed to take and the suggested semester in which they should take them to facilitate their graduating on time and to reduce the number of semesters in which ad hoc instructors for the AOT courses must be found. They were informed by memo dated 24 January 2007 that they must see their advisor, who will explain the process and asked to co-sign with their advisor a form indicating that they understood the situation and the process involved in seeing them through to graduation. Of the 29 or so students who were asked to make appointments and review the issue with their advisors, approximately 5 did not respond and 2 met with the advisor, but refused to sign the form.

Following a lengthy evaluation of the AOT curriculum, and in light of its chronic difficulties, the Dean and Associate Dean, with the consent and approval of the Ag Ed faculty, decided to seek permission to begin phasing out the curriculum and to terminate it as soon as the last AOT major

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graduates or transfers out of the curriculum. Students were asked to attend a meeting at 4 pm on 7 March, 2007 in Cheever Hall, at which time the Associate Dean, the Dean, and the Ag Ed faculty presented the case and announced the plan to seek permission to phase out of AOT. Again, it was reiterated to the students that whoever wishes to graduate in the AOT curriculum will be allowed to do so. It is the intention of the College of Agriculture to make the Stringam position an Ag Ed position, thus increasing the number of faculty in the viable Ag Ed program from 2 to 3.

With the phase-out of the AOT curriculum the name of the division will formally change from the "Division of Agricultural Education/Agricultural Operations Technology" to the "Division of Agricultural Education".

2. Because of the resignation of the sole faculty member in the AOT curriculum there are no AOT faculty to notify of the impending change.
3. This was completed January to March, 2007. See item #1 above.
4. Faculty Council was notified of the AOT phase-out by memo 9 April 2007.
5. Montana State University has no faculty union.
6. The AOT curriculum has no public advisory committee.
7. This memo serves as Notice of Intent.

Phase II

8. The Division of Agricultural Education/Agricultural Operations Technology has informed Admissions and Enrollment Services about the proposed phase out of the AOT curriculum by memo 9 April 2007. That office will communicate the phase out to feeder schools and high schools when the decision is finalized. The Division and the College of Agriculture will be updating their websites to reflect the phase-out decision.
9. Following formal acceptance of this proposal, new catalog copy will be submitted for immediate publication in the on-line catalog and for print publication in the 2008-2010 catalog. Students have been notified that they can continue with their present AOT enrollment through completion of their program (See item #1 above)