

**Curricular Affairs Committee
of the Faculty Senate**

MEMO

To: The UVM Faculty Senate
From: Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair
Date: February 1, 2018
Re: Items approved by the Curricular Affairs Committee that do not require a Faculty Senate vote

Request to Eliminate Concentrations in the Plant Biology Major

The Department of Plant Biology in the College of Agriculture and Life Science submitted a request to remove the three existing concentrations from the Plant Biology major.

Plant Biology currently requires all majors to choose one of three concentrations – General Plant Biology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology of Plants, or Plant Molecular Biology. Given that plant biology, like many areas of study, is becoming more interdisciplinary and the increasing overlap between fields within the discipline, the department feels that these concentrations are no longer appropriate. Additionally, Plant Biology is a small department with a modest number of majors, and thus it does not seem beneficial to further divide the students. The new requirements for the Plant Biology major eliminate the concentrations and consist of a core set of required courses designed to ensure that students receive broad training in plant biology and a set of flexible elective options, chosen to represent the student's interests within the field. Because the set of requirements combines required courses and elective options available within the three former concentrations, the changes do not represent a significant change to the curriculum.

The concentration eliminations and re-adjustments to the course requirements were approved by the Plant Biology Department, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) curriculum committee, and the CALS faculty. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) offers a BA in Plant Biology, and the changes were also approved by the CAS curriculum committee and faculty. A proposal to change the BA degree to a BS in Plant Biology in CAS was circulated recently and is currently under review by the CAC.