

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

MEMO

To: Faculty Senate

From: Colby Kervick, Co-Chair Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

Date: 5/4/2023

Re: Approval of a proposal from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for a new minor in
Equine Studies

The CAC approved a proposal for a new undergraduate minor in Equine Studies from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at our May 4, 2023, meeting. No public comments were received during the 30-day circulation. The new minor will be administered by the Department of Animal and Veterinary Sciences in CALS and will be offered starting in Fall 2023 if approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees.

Program Description and Rationale

With a focus on equine health and disease, industry, and management, students completing the minor will gain a foundation in working with and caring for horses across disciplines, breeds, and location. The minor will require 15 credits of course work in Animal and Veterinary Sciences (ASCI) and will be available to all students in all majors (including ASCI majors). Currently the Department has two primary faculty members (Dr. Jenny Wilkinson and Chrissy Rohan) teaching in the equine focus area who contribute to the 14 equine-focused courses presently being offered, many of which make use of the UVM Miller Farm on Spear Street in South Burlington, which includes the Ellen A. Hardacre Equine Center. Each academic year, five to six teaching horses are housed at the horse barn allowing equine-interested students to gain hands-on experience handling and caring for these horses in an educational environment.

Justification and Evidence for Demand

The equine industry in Vermont continues to grow with over forty barns in Chittenden County alone. A recent survey found that 20 – 25% of the ASCI majors identify as equine-focused but are currently without a mechanism to demonstrate this focus. The Equine Studies minor does not overlap significantly with the ASCI major requirements, allowing majors to also complete an Equine Studies minor. This would allow students to demonstrate their foci to potential employers as many current majors go on to work as equine veterinarians and technicians, trainers, instructors, barn managers, and nutritionists.

Relationship to Existing Programs

Besides a similarity to the current Animal Science Minor (detailed below), no other similar minors exist at the University. The current Animal Science Minor requires ASCI 1000, nine credits at the 2000 level or above, and three additional credits at any level (ASCI 1000 – 4000). Students can complete both minors as long as no more than two required/eligible courses overlap; for example, students could not count ASCI 2480 and ASCI 3490 for both minors' requirements. Students will work with ASCI faculty advisors to prevent overlapping more than two courses. ASCI majors may complete an Equine Studies minor with the provision that no more than two courses can overlap to satisfy both major and minor requirements.

Curriculum

The new Equine Minor requires 15 credits as described below:

6 credits of required courses (see table below)

6 credits of elective courses from the list of equine focused courses (see table below)

3 credits at any level (ASCI 1000 – 4000) of equine focused courses

The nine credits in equine focused courses allows flexibility in choosing courses that meet student interests, for example equine health and disease and/or equine industry and management.

Required Courses (6 credits)

Number	Name	Credits
ASCI 1400	Intro to the Horse	3
ASCI 2480	Horse Health and Disease	3

Equine Focused Elective Courses (6 credits)

Number	Name	Credits
ASCI 2240	Forage and Pasture Mgmt	4
ASCI 2400	Equus	Up to 4
ASCI 2410	Intermediate Horseback Riding	1
ASCI 2420	Equine Training Techniques	3
ASCI 2430	Equine Instructing Techniques	2
ASCI 2450	Horse Barn Coop Exec Committee	1
ASCI 2470	Equine Enterprise Management	3
ASCI 3160	Topics in Applied Reproduction: Equine	1
ASCI 3400	Equus Advising	Up to 4
ASCI 3470	Equine Industry Issues	3
ASCI 3480	Clinical Topics in Equine Med & Surg	3
ASCI 3490	Lameness in Horses	4

Admission Requirements and Process

All undergraduate students, regardless of major, are eligible for the Equine Studies Minor. The minor will have no prerequisites and there are no eligibility restrictions.

Anticipated Enrollment and Impact on Current Programs

A small, but significant, increase in enrollment is expected in the equine courses with the creation of this minor. In courses that do not include a large hands-on component with horses, enrollment capacity will be increased to meet this demand. In courses that require extensive hands-on work with horses, such as ASCI 2420 Equine Training Techniques and ASCI 3480 Clinical Topics in Equine Med & Surg, the current enrollment limits cannot be exceeded for safety reasons. If hands-on courses become a bottleneck, the Department indicated that they would consider offering these courses more often to meet the demand.

Advising

Advising for minors will be handled by the home department of the student. Dr. Jenny Wilkinson will be the Program Director.

Assessment Plan

This Minor has three specific outcomes. Upon completion, students should have:

1. Learned both theoretical and practical knowledge of the equine industry including management of horses and facilities.
2. Developed foundational skills in horse handling, behavior, health assessment, and nutrition.
3. Applied knowledge to active situations in the horse barn; for example, assisted in hands-on examination(s), management of an ill horse, and/or development and implementation of barn protocols.

The assessment plan for the Minor will take four years to roll out fully. Full assessment will involve:

- In even-numbered years (beginning in 2024): direct assessment via a sampling of case studies from

courses to evaluate student performance in aim 1.

- In odd-numbered years (beginning in 2025): direct assessment via a sampling of case studies from courses to evaluate student performance in aims 2 and 3.
- Annually (beginning in 2026): indirect assessment via an exit survey completed by students finishing the Minor.

Every year the Equine Studies Minor Program Director will review assessment results from the previous assessment and present them to departmental faculty for discussion of potential revisions to the Minor.

Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget

There are no anticipated new faculty or staff appointments associated with this minor, nor are there any anticipated costs associated with the creation of this minor.

Evidence of Support

Letters were obtained from:

- Dr. Sabrina Greenwood, Chair ASCI Curriculum Committee
- CALS Curriculum Committee
- Dean Leslie Parise, CALS

Summary

Currently there is no mechanism to demonstrate to employers that graduates have a strong foundation in equine health and disease and/or equine industry and management. With a quarter of just the ASCI majors alone having a strong interest in equine issues, we suspect this will become a very popular minor across campus. There were no comments received during the public comment period and we have confirmed the accuracy of our report with Feng-Qi Zhao, Chair of the Department of Animal & Veterinary Sciences. For these reasons, the CAC supports the creation of an Equine Studies Minor to start in the Fall of 2023 with the approval of the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees.