

**Proposal to Eliminate the Master of Science in Natural Sciences (MSNS)
Program**

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CGS Agenda Item: 19-24
Effective Immediately

The MSNS program was designed to advance the professional and personal competencies and scholarship of science teachers in the disciplines of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth Science and Physics. Courses specifically designed for in-service teachers were available primarily during the summer term, though other advanced undergraduate and graduate level courses were available during the fall and spring semesters. Students completed coursework in the scientific core followed by a minimum of 12 semester hours of discipline-specific coursework. Students could opt for a thesis or non-thesis option.

Since 2009, enrollment numbers for the program have decreased steadily as this table indicates:

<u>Academic Year</u>	<u>Number of Students Enrolled</u>
2008	36
2009	39
2010	35
2011	30
2012	26
2013	15
2014	11
2015	12
2016	4
2017	1
2018	0

While the program was very successful in training science teachers for 18 years (the program launched in summer 1999), the final MSNS degree was awarded in August 2017 and there have been no additional students admitted to the program since that time. Changes in the secondary education landscape in Illinois played a large role in the declining program interest as did the growth of online options for graduate study by in-service teachers.

In consultation with Graduate School Dean Ryan Hendrickson and the department chairs of the participating departments, Gary Bulla (Biological Sciences), Rebecca Peebles (Chemistry & Biochemistry), Diane Burns (Geology/Geography) and Steve Daniels (Physics), it was decided that the current MSNS program is no longer viable from a programmatic or financial standpoint and should be eliminated from the catalog. Termination of the program will not lead to the elimination of faculty or administrative positions.