To the Curriculum Council:

Here are our responses to the questions raised by the Curriculum Council regarding CPS #85162 – Change Degree Program Title B.S. in Forest Management to B.S. in Forestry with Forest Management Option and Forest Operations Management Option and Terminate Degree Program B.S. in Forest Operations Management.

First, we wish to clarify a few points.

This proposal is simply to rename the Forest Management degree, terminate the Forest Operations Management degree, and replace the current seven FM options with two Forestry options. I presume that approval of CPS #85162 will allow only those actions.

We are, at the same time, submitting Category II proposals for a set of curriculum changes that are necessary to implement the new options and revise two other programs in the FERM Department [see proposals 85411, 85412, and 85509]. The additional proposed changes include moving to a professional school model for the newly renamed Forestry degree and for our Forest Engineering and Forest Engineering/Civil Engineering degree programs. These, in turn, are accompanied by a set of minor changes in individual courses (renaming, shifting content, renumbering), and a few new courses including Field School and Cooperative Education. I believe that we could implement the name change without the professional schools, but not vice versa.

We were advised to note the entire suite of changes in this proposal, CPS #85162 for transparency – so that you would be aware that the various proposals are connected and because it will be far more efficient for us to implement the whole package at once, rather than in a piecemeal fashion. Unfortunately, the current web based proposal system doesn’t link the actual curriculum proposals of the new options to this proposal in such a way that they would be considered as a package. This appears to have led to some confusion. And we may have inadvertently added to the confusion by including descriptions of additional changes that we hope to make, but that we are not formally proposing at this time. The development of Ecampus courses to facilitate access to the forestry-specific freshman and sophomore courses falls in that category.

Taken together, the proposed changes do not amount to a major change in the content of our curricula. Some courses are combined for efficiency—resulting in fewer total courses. The field school is new as is the optional cooperative work experience. Courses that had been required in options are now listed as a set of restricted electives in the Forest Management option. Some courses are being renumbered to the 200-level, but these are courses that are taken in the sophomore year in our current curricula. I am attaching a side-by-side layouts for the current and the proposed curricula so that you can see that the changes are, indeed, minor. The biggest changes are (1) scheduling of courses to accommodate the optional cooperative work experience, (2) admission procedure for the professional school, (3) the new field school, and (4) standardizing the capstone courses so that they can be shared across the degrees and options. I hope this helps.

Responses questions from Ben Tribelhorn:
During our meeting on Friday, Dianna Fisher our representative from Ecampus pointed out that for any courses to be offered through this program they need to be approved via the RFP process. “Generally, Ecampus awards $5000 to graduate level courses or courses that are part of a full online degree program not to lower division skills courses when developing for online. More information about can be found here: [http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/faculty/rfpinstructions.htm](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/faculty/rfpinstructions.htm) My suggestion is that they remove the items that are specific to moving courses or parts of their program online via Ecampus until they engage in conversations with Ecampus about the possibilities.”

Our plans are to offer selected courses that are not currently available at most community colleges through Ecampus so that students from many, but not all, community colleges can prepare for the Professional Program in Forestry while in residence at a community college. We included a discussion of those plans in this proposal for a degree name change in the interest of providing a broader understanding of the direction that we are going. When we get ready to develop an Ecampus course, we will consult with Ecampus staff.

Ecampus courses already exist for several of our required freshman and junior forestry courses: FOR 111, FOR 141/241, FOR 240, and SOIL 205. The courses we hope to develop in the future include: FE 208, FE 209, FE 257, and FOR 251. This is tentative and we have purposefully not listed specific courses in the proposal since we are not proposing them at this time. It is not our intention to provide a complete Ecampus pathway into our professional school but, instead, to supplement typical Community College curricula with forestry-specific Ecampus courses where they are not available. In fact, there are suitable substitutes for some of these courses at many community colleges – e.g. GIS, soils, surveying – that we currently, and will continue to, accept. Our overriding objective here is flexibility and access to our programs. We believe this objective is consistent with the Governor’s goal of increasing access to higher education.

Thank you for directing us to the Ecampus website for information regarding financial support for Ecampus courses. We included development and delivery of these courses in our budget so that you would know that we are aware that costs exist. We could remove any Ecampus material from the budget, but we’d prefer not to have to send this back through the budget committee, if possible. In any case, we do plan to go forward in the future with these courses with or without Ecampus financial support because we believe it will increase access to, and success in, our programs as noted above.

Regarding the move in the direction of a “2 + 2” possibility for Comm College students, we need clarification over what’s being offered on campus, given the statement in the proposal that it all will be offered on campus, but that we have a 2 + 2 model and that some classes are going to be offered through Ecampus. (Also we couldn’t find this course in the system: FOR 221 Forest Biometrics and Analysis (#85365, proposed new)).

All of the required courses in the proposed pre-professional program are currently, and will continue to be, offered on-campus. The community college pathway is intended to be a parallel pathway to the on-campus pathway. The curriculum, which falls under a separate proposal [category II, #85411], includes
courses in the first two years that are commonly offered at most community colleges in Oregon. We intend to develop Ecampus versions for a subset of courses specific to forestry that are currently offered only at Mt. Hood Community College and Central Oregon Community College (see above). Our plan is to offer these courses through Ecampus so that community college students from a broader array [but not all] of community colleges can advance through the first two years of the program while attending community college and thereby enjoying the lower cost associated with community college courses for most of their first two years. Where suitable substitutes exist, we will accept them instead of Ecampus. That is, the only students who will be required to take Ecampus courses as part of their first two years are students who would not currently have access to our program without relocating to MHCC, CCOC, or OSU.

The proposal number for FOR 221 has been withdrawn, and the course replaced by Stat 201[refer to proposal #85411].

Given the increased density of pre-professional courses and the required cohort sequencing, it is not clear that many students will be able to complete this program in 4 years. Is there a way to offer more flexibility in the pro-school model to enable students to be more successful at completing the program in that time frame? Looking at the current Majors in FOM and FM, some of these pre-professional courses are on the timeline for the Junior year. Do students typically take these earlier than the current suggested schedule?

Our degrees are currently quite dense – not only in the freshman and sophomore years, but in the junior and senior years as well – and students may have difficulty completing them in four years as they exist. In fact, our forest management degree program has been reduced over the years from 205 in the 1980’s to its current 180 credits at some loss in both depth and breadth of the educational experience.

For those who are completing the courses on campus – our current and proposed programs are much the same in terms of course loads in the first two years. We have attached copies of advising guidelines for each so that you can see how they line up. As it stands, students who enter the junior year without fully completing the first two years of courses are at a disadvantage because they will be missing prerequisites and/or will be unprepared in other ways. There is, in fact, very little flexibility to adapt to failure in the second two years because we only offer single sections of key courses and courses are sequenced so that they must, for the most part, be taken in order. We believe that students are more likely to be stalled in their junior and senior years due to lack of complete preparation than for any other reason; once they fail a course, it is very hard to catch up.

Therefore, we believe that the structure of a professional school with admission standards will improve the ability of our students to complete their junior and senior years in two years (or 3 if they opt for the cooperative education program or take the FE/CE double degree). We believe that access to Ecampus courses while at community college, along with improved advising linkages between us and community colleges, will improve the ability of transfer students (currently
60-70% of our student population) to arrive at OSU with the full set of courses completed. As it is, transfer students often require either a year of “prep” before entering their junior year or additional years in the upper-division portion of their degree due to lack of preparation.

There is a bigger campus-wide issue at play here for students who are on-campus. Few first year students can schedule the required cross-campus classes in the terms that they must be taken in order to complete the first two years in two years because the University does not provide sufficient seats in the classes scheduled in a manner that makes them available to the students. This is something that we, in Forestry, cannot remedy, but we believe that by reinforcing alternative pathways into our professional school, we are doing something positive to alleviate this bottleneck. Once in the junior year, we can control access to courses in the College of Forestry and adapt to changing enrollment. We liaison with Civil Engineering for our FE and FE/CE students and that has worked well for us so far.

Do you anticipate a jump in enrollment in Forest Operations Management? If yes, we’d like to see a liaison with the College of Business affirming their support so we can be confident that students will continue to get ready access to their required courses.

As a reminder, this proposal is for a name change. The curriculum proposal [#85411], which includes the incorporation of the Forest Operations Management option in the BS in Forestry degree, included COB liaison – they did not respond. At your suggestion, we followed up with Jim Coakley and he confirmed that COB would continue to provide access to business courses for students in the FOM option (see attached email).

For background, the FOM degree was first implemented in AY 2006/7. Total enrollment and graduation numbers since then has been:

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As you can see, we are not talking about large numbers. In fact, one of the motivations for this proposal is that FOM is not big enough to continue as a stand-alone degree program. While we would like to see additional growth in the FOM option (that is one of our objectives—to grow our programs), we seem to be on a stable trajectory at the moment.

Responses to questions from Robert Iltis:

1. Is there any program comparable with ours in the state? The committee thought that there was not, but wanted to check with those who would know. If there is, administrators higher up the approval chain will want to see evidence of liaison. If no such programs exist, just let us know.
You are correct. Our program is unique in OUS and in the Pacific Northwest. The following is a list of all the forestry programs in the western U.S. I think it is safe to say that the program at OSU is the most comprehensive with respect to professional forestry education.

- Department of Forest Sciences, University of Alaska Fairbanks
- School of Forestry, Northern Arizona University
- Department of Forestry and Wildland Resources, Humboldt State University
- College of Natural Resources, University of California, Berkeley
- Department of Forest, Rangeland, and Watershed Stewardship, Colorado State University
- College of Natural Resources, Department of Forest Ecology and Biogeosciences, University of Idaho
- College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana
- College of Forestry, Oregon State University
- Department of Wildland Resources, Utah State University
- School of Environment and Forest Sciences, University of Washington
- Department of Natural Resources Management, California Polytechnic State University

2. Gary Beach pointed out that articulation agreements with Community Colleges impacted by the change will need to be in place, or renewed. A note in the document saying that you are getting those articulation agreements in place will probably be what's necessary for the approval process; we shouldn't have to wait for the agreements themselves. The note will acknowledge awareness of the issue. If you have questions, I suggest you call Gary. I've sent him a copy of this note.

We have longstanding articulation agreements for individual courses in our programs. We are very close to an articulation agreement for the proposed pre-professional program with Central Oregon Community College. We are actively working with Mount Hood, Chemeketa, and Green River (in Washington) Community Colleges. We have preliminary contacts with Tillamook Bay Community College. We will continue to develop those relationships once the program is approved.