Proposal to Revise the Biosciences Curriculum at Rice

Summary

The Departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) and Biochemistry and Cell Biology (BCB) are proposing a number of revisions to the biosciences curriculum, which includes the creation of a new major, a BA degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, as well as new minors in both departments. This proposal is made in the context of larger revisions in the existing biosciences curriculum. Currently there are four majors that have all been jointly managed by BCB and EEB (Fig. 1). The two Departments have very different cultures and objectives for the degree programs and the consequence has been that curriculum development has been in gridlock leading to frustration in both departments for a number of years. Under this plan, the department-specific degrees will be returned to the control of the individual departments. The creation of a new BA degree in EEB will create a full set of parallel degrees in both disciplines. In summary, the proposal calls for

1. making some minor revisions to the requirements for the existing BA in BCB, BS in BCB, and BS in EEB
2. creating a new BA in EEB
3. leaving the content of the BA in Biological Sciences unchanged and having it continue to be jointly administered by BCB and EEB
4. retiring the BIOS code and replacing it with a department specific codes (BIOC for BCB and EBIO for EEB)
5. changing the oversight of the BCB and EEB degrees to the BCB and EEB departments, respectively
6. creating minors for each department

The changes proposed by EEB and BCB are strongly endorsed by the Dean’s Office and are expected to lead to more flexibility and opportunities for biosciences majors as well as allowing for improved management of the various degrees.