

The Horticulture and Crop Science Department (HCS) Department is proposing a name change to Plant Sciences (PLSC) Department. Per the procedure outlined on the [Academic Programs & Planning policy page](#) (informed by AS-328-89), please see the attached pdf which contains the following:

1. Email recommendation/endorsement from the CAFES dean, page 2
2. Original proposal, pages 3-6
3. Email recommendation/endorsement from the Academic Senate College Caucus, page 7
4. Email recommendation/endorsement from BIO department chair, page 8



MEMORANDUM

March 22, 2022

TO: Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore, Provost

FROM: Andrew Thulin, Dean,

College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

COPIES:

SUBJECT: Proposal Support: Department Name Change

I have received a memo and proposal from Dr. Scott Steinmaus, department head, requesting to change the Horticulture and Crop Science Department name to Plant Sciences. The CAFES Caucus and the CAFES Management Team (Council) have both provided their unanimous support for the proposal. These documents and an indication of support from the Biological Sciences Department are attached.

The Horticulture and Crop Science Department has embarked upon careful consideration of the proposed name change with input from industry, their advisory council, and a market analysis by Hanover Research. **Plant Sciences** better reflects the interests of prospective students, programs at competitor institutions, and the department's academic programs. Therefore, I fully support the proposal.

The bottom of this memo has a location for you to indicate by signature and date if you approve the proposal following a recommendation from your Council. The Academic Senate plans to have the consent agenda available on March 29 for the Senators with any objections provided by EOD on April 5.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important evolution of our program.

Memorandum

To: Andy Thulin, CAFES Dean
From: Scott Steinmaus Dept Head HCS
(ssteinma@calpoly.edu)
(on behalf of the tenured and tenure track faculty)



Date: March 12, 2022
Files: Cal_Poly_letterhead MEMO Plant Sciences name change.docx; Department Name Change Proposal Plant Sciences.docx

Copies: Jim Prince, CAFES Associate Dean; Cath Kleier, CAFES Associate Dean; Angela Standifer, Academic Programs and Planning, (astandif@calpoly.edu); Bruno Giberti, Academic Programs and Planning (bgiberti@calpoly).

Subject: PROPOSAL TO CHANGE DEPARTMENT NAME

Dear Dean Thulin,

The purpose of this memorandum is to request your approval to change the Department name from "Horticulture and Crop Sciences" to "Plant Sciences". As you are aware we have begun the formal process of changing the Program name from "Agricultural and Environmental Plant Sciences" to "Plant Sciences". Full details of our justification for a Department name change can be found in the attached file, "Name Change Proposal Plant Sciences.docx". In it you will find a similar justification for changing the Department name as we put forward for the Program name change. In summary, the change is justified by extensive research and inquiry including a market analysis that assessed prospective student interests, predominant employment opportunities for our graduates, the simplicity and consistency of a common name for both the Department and the Program, self-reflection of our purpose and mission during our Program Review, and a survey of peer and aspirational Departments around the country with a similar mission and vision whose names are also "Plant Sciences".

You will receive recommendations on the request from the College Council and the Academic Senate college caucus. Then you will add your own recommendations, and send the request with recommendations to the Provost/Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (academicaffairs@calpoly.edu) with copies to Ms. Standifer (astandif@calpoly.edu) and Dr. Giberti (bgiberti@calpoly). Please let me know if you require additional information or have any questions.

The Horticulture and Crop Science Department (HCS) was formed in January 2002 as a result of the merger of two long-standing units, the Crop Science and the Environmental Horticultural Science Departments. At that time, there were four majors: Crop Science, Environmental Horticulture Science, Fruit Science, and Plant Protection Science. These were reconstructed into a single major, Agricultural and Environmental Plant Sciences (AEPS), following an intensive self-study and marketing survey in 2008. However, the Department name remained Horticulture and Crop Science. This has been a source of confusion and distraction for prospective students, as well as on- and off-campus stakeholders. We have initiated the process for a Program name change from “Agricultural and Environmental Plant Sciences” to “Plant Sciences” following extensive research, reflection, and outreach based on the focus of our curriculum and the trends within the agricultural and horticultural industries. We propose a common name for both the Program degree and the Department to add consistency and to bring our Department more in line with the trends occurring in similar programs and departments around the country. The name, Plant Sciences, is more reflective of how our students are taught. Further, the name is more attractive and understandable to prospective students, their parents, future employers of our graduates, and outside industry supporters.

The justification for a program name change is based on how we educate students. Our curriculum is designed to train Plant Scientists who use their education to make informed decisions regarding sustainable farming or horticultural practices that maximize plant production while minimizing economic, environmental and social impacts. They are “service” providers who are managers themselves or provide recommendations to top managers in the areas of plant breeding and physiology, soil and growth media fertility, and pest management. Their job duties require that they balance time outdoors or in controlled plant growth environments as well as indoors in a laboratory or office. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (USBLS) does not have a single category of occupation that captures exactly the predominant occupations of our graduates. The occupations of our graduates lie between the categories, “Soil and Plant Scientists” and “Farmers, Ranchers and Other Agricultural Managers” ([US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019](#)).

As the latest available US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates for top-employing occupations for workers with an agricultural degree, we should be emphasizing the “science” component of the program as those occupations (e.g. Plant and Soil Sciences) have a projected 7% increase in demand for 2019-2029, and they require a Bachelor’s degree (see USBLS link cited above). On the other hand, some occupations described by the USBLS as “agriculture” (e.g. certain farm and ranch occupations) have a 6% decrease in demand projected for the same time period and only require a high school diploma. Students graduating from our program need a Bachelor’s degree that will prepare them for a career specifically in the formal plant sciences as decision-makers, leaders and innovators, not a career in the general agricultural realm that only requires a high school diploma. Furthermore, during student recruiting sessions with high school students across the state, the single most common question from those students was whether they needed an agricultural background to fit into our program. Changing the name of our Program and Department will help us to broaden our recruitment of applicants by clarifying that a background in agriculture is not required for students to be successful in our degree program and their careers.

The search term “plant science” has been shown to be a more common search term (keyword) than “agronomy” or “agricultural science” in a recent assessment performed by Hanover Research Associates ([Hanover Report 2021](#)). We have seriously considered Hanover’s highest ranked search term “environmental science” with a proposed department and program name such as, “environmental plant science”. This term puts a primary focus on natural ecosystems, and although we do cover some topics in these systems, it is not our primary focus. For example, habitat restoration or wildland conservation is covered as it pertains to the agricultural and natural interface and the quantification of ecosystems services now available to growers (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/emkts/?cid=nrcseprd1396024>). However, the term, “environmental plant sciences” alone would be confusing at best and misleading at worst, because it does not capture our agricultural and horticultural emphases. The name “Plant Biology” or “Botany” most often refers to programs that are focused on more basic plant research such as molecular biology, anatomy, taxonomy, evolution, and phylogeny. Even though we also include basic research in our curriculum, the terms “biology” and “botany” are misleading because they do not capture the more “applied” aspects of how we train our students.

The Hanover report confirms, for the most part, the trends indicated by the data from the USBLS. Occupations our graduates obtain are “services- based” in nature and provide expert recommendations to those directly growing food and ornamental plants. For example, our graduates are frequently employed as Pest Control Advisors and Certified Crop Advisors among other “services-based” occupations (see Hanover Report link cited above). The occupations specify an educational level that most frequently requires a Bachelor’s degree, as indicated in the parentheses next to each education level. The Hanover Report found that many programs that teach a similar curriculum from around the country are named or contain the name, “Plant Sciences”. Our own assessment of all college-level programs in the country that teach a similar curriculum to ours found that 56% of those programs had the term “Plant Sciences” in their name. Key institutions we consider “peer” institutions, whose program names are or include the name “Plant Sciences,” include Cal Poly Pomona, CSU Chico, and CSU Fresno ([US University Plant Science names](#)). Universities whose programs we might consider “aspirational” that include “Plant Sciences” in their name include Cornell University, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, and Purdue University.



CAL POLY

College of Agriculture, Food
& Environmental Sciences

Dean's Office

Office: 805-756-2161

Fax: 805-756-6577

cafes@calpoly.edu

cafes.calpoly.edu

To: Andrew Thulin, Dean

From: Bill Hendricks, CAFES College Council (Management Team)
Bill Hendricks

Subject: Horticulture and Crop Science Department Name Change Request

Date: March 21, 2022

The CAFES College Council (Management Team) has discussed, reviewed, and voted on the proposed Horticulture and Crop Science name change to Plant Sciences. The Council unanimously supports the proposal and applauds the department faculty and staff for their willingness to take this important step in their progression as an academic unit at Cal Poly.

Fw: response by CAFES caucus needed regarding department name change

Lauren C. Garner <lgarner@calpoly.edu>

Wed 3/16/2022 3:34 PM

To: Scott J. Steinmaus <ssteinma@calpoly.edu>

Cc: Nicole Lyons <nmylons@calpoly.edu>

Scott,

Per your request, I sent an email (below) to the CAFES caucus and can now report that the caucus has expressed unanimous support for the department name change.

Lauren

Dr. Lauren Garner
Professor
CAFES Caucus Chair
Horticulture and Crop Science Department
Cal Poly State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(she, her, hers)

From: Lauren C. Garner

Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 2:54 PM

To: Jean Catherine Dodson Peterson <jdodsonp@calpoly.edu>; Jerusha Greenwood <jbgreenw@calpoly.edu>;
Yiwen Chiu <yichiu@calpoly.edu>; Terry M. Lease <lease@calpoly.edu>; Angelos Sikalidis <asikalid@calpoly.edu>

Subject: response by CAFES caucus needed regarding department name change

Hello current CAFES Senators!

With apologies for reaching out to you during this busy time with a time-sensitive request....

As many of you know, my department is in the process of proposing a *department name change*. Part of **this process requires consultation** with the college caucus chair. As such, I am reaching out to the CAFES caucus for your support of this change. **The department name will be changed** from Horticulture and Crop Sciences **to Plant Sciences**. The proposal for that name change is attached but if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. The short version is that this new department name will match that of our proposed new program name.

Please "reply all" to let me know if I may state that the CAFES caucus supports the department changing to Plant Sciences.

Thank you!

Lauren

Dr. Lauren Garner
Professor
CAFES Caucus Chair
Horticulture and Crop Science Department

M e m o r a n d u m

To: Scott Steinmaus Dept Head HCS
From: Matt Ritter, Biological Sciences

Date: March 18, 2022

File:

Copies: Andy Thulin, Dean CAFES
Bill Hendricks, Assoc. Dean CAFES
Angela Standifer, Academic Programs and Planning
Bruno Giberti, Academic Programs and Planning

Subject: DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE

The Biological Sciences Department has received and reviewed the proposal for the Horticulture and Crop Science (HCS) Department to change their name to Plant Sciences (PLSC). I sent this to the botanists and other members of the department. I also had a discussion with Dean Wendt (Dean, COSAM) about it. From these discussions, it is clear that the Biology Department doesn't have a problem with this name change. We wish you the best of luck with this and look forward to continued collaboration.

