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INTEGRATING THE UWSP NATURAL RESOURCES CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT: Following an intensive five-year program of curriculum review and strategic planning, the College of Natural Resources (CNR) at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point (UWSP) has initiated a planned six-year revision of its undergraduate curricula in natural resource management. It is our belief that such revision is necessary for our graduates to have the attributes and capabilities necessary to meet the future challenges of long-term, landscape scale, ecosystem management planning. To meet these challenges, significant change is needed in the pedagogical and technological infrastructure of undergraduate natural resource education. The goal of this revision is to develop programs that will prepare young professionals to comprehend and apply sound interdisciplinary approaches to solving resource management problems, now and in the future, while at the same time providing the technical competencies required by the vast array of employers of our graduates.

The first phase of the six-year revision (years one to three) will focus on the development and implementation of a revised interdisciplinary introductory core curriculum. This curriculum will focus on 1) the need for an ecological basis as a unifying framework, 2) the need for more integration of the various resource management disciplines, 3) the need for a better understanding of human dimensions in resource management, and 4) the need for improved communications skills for resource management professionals. The objectives of this phase are 1) to collaborate with educational experts to define a long-term strategy for undergraduate education; 2) to provide faculty training and develop the technological and pedagogical infrastructure to support these programs; 3) to implement and evaluate the interdisciplinary core curriculum and new instructional approaches, including applications of educational technologies; and 4) to develop a plan for the second phase of the revision project (years four to six).

The second phase of this project will focus on the revision of the CNR's required field studies program and the expansion of the integration of the CNR's upper division curricula in Forestry, Resource Management, Soils, Water, and Wildlife. The goals of this effort are the same as phase one, with specific objectives to be defined by the phase one process.