

Program Rationale

The Astronomy Undergraduate Minor program maps easily from quarters to semesters. All the Astronomy courses are 5-credit hours and these transfer trivially to 3-credit hour semester courses

We have examined the proposed changes in Physics and Math (in which our students take prerequisites and minor courses), and our conversion plans are consistent with theirs.

The only change we propose is changing the name of the program from “Astronomy” to “Astrophysics”: this is a long-overdue change that better represents what our students are learning. “Astrophysics” is less likely to be misunderstood by prospective employers of our BS students; many people equate “astronomy” with star-gazing or astrophotography or, even worse, “astrology,” and this more accurate degree name will better serve our students who do not continue in the field.

The undergraduate major program was most recent revised in 1997, with the addition of Astronomy 681 and 682 to the major and minor programs.