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College of Arts and Sciences

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To: ASC Curriculum Committee members

From: Dr. Matthew Saltzman, Director, School of Earth Sciences

Dear Curriculum Committee members:

I am writing in strong support of the proposal for a team-taught course in Planetary Science between the School of Earth Sciences and Department of Astronomy. The proposed, cross-listed EarthSci/Astro 5205 Planetary Science course will enhance the Earth Science program curriculum by creating opportunities for students to expand their Earth Science degree into the growing interdisciplinary field of planetary science. The course is designed to leverage the skillsets of Earth Science students to engage in cross-disciplinary teams exploring modern planetary science. This course will also engage students coming from other disciplines including Physics and Aerospace Engineering, and potentially even Microbiology (geomicrobiology) or other disciplines, who may seek opportunities in the field now or in the future.

This course will be a cornerstone of the soon-to-be proposed Planetary Science Certificate, which we expect to draw students into both Astrophysics and the Geophysics subprogram of Earth Sciences. It also helps to identify for students the many curricular pathways available at Ohio State to pursue interests in space exploration.

The course will be team taught in alternate spring semesters on a continuing basis, initially Spring 2021, team taught by Wendy Panero (Earth Sciences) and Ji Wang (Astronomy).

More broadly, I view this course as part of a longer-term effort to build stronger ties between Earth Sciences and Astronomy such that future hires who could contribute to this course and others in the Certificate in Planetary Science may be possible. Thus, having this course approved will potentially help us recruit future faculty and build synergies in this area of research that is well-funded by a broad range of agencies including NASA and NSF.

In summary I believe that the proposed, cross-listed EarthSci/Astro 5205 Planetary Science course between the School of Earth Sciences and Department of Astronomy will enhance our program and create a path for our students interested in this field. I therefore strongly support this effort.

Please let me know if any further information would be of help in your evaluation of this proposal.

Sincerely yours,



Matthew R. Saltzman

Professor and Director of the School of Earth Sciences