



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Chair, Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

October 17, 2023

Dear Chair and Members of the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee:

On August 31, 2023, the Natural and Mathematical Sciences Subcommittee reviewed a request from the Department of Physics to revise the BS Physics major program. The proposed revision removes the current focuses of the undergraduate Physics major.

The department notes that current focuses do not appear on student transcripts, and were intended to help students choose electives. However, the department has identified several negative consequences arising from this structure. First, the department argues that the focuses can negatively affect student decision-making, such that, for example, students take the 'Advanced Physics' focus because of the name, rather than its alignment with career plans. Second, the focuses give the impression of a lack of flexibility regarding electives. Third, the focuses can lead to student confusion about degree audit reports and the name of the major. The department further notes that the proposed change to remove focuses will align the Physics BS with the structure of undergraduate physics degrees awarded at most peer Big Ten institutions.

The NMS Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the request with two contingencies and one recommendation. A revised submission addressing these contingencies and recommendation was reviewed and approved by Ian Hamilton, Chair of the Natural and Mathematical Sciences Subcommittee, on October 11, 2023. The proposal is now advanced to the ASCC with a motion to approve.

Sincerely,

Ian Hamilton
Professor
Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology
Department of Mathematics
Chair, ASCC Natural and Mathematical Sciences Subcommittee