

ESTABLISH PHYSICS, ASTROPHYSICS EMPHASIS MAJOR – LIBERAL ARTS
REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

The Department of Physics requests approval to establish a new major emphasis in Physics, Astrophysics emphasis, major - Liberal Arts. Students in the Physics major have regularly requested an Astrophysics option. The new emphasis will allow students with interest in careers in astronomy/astrophysics or graduate study in the field to gain a broad background in relevant coursework. Establishing an emphasis will improve advising, as a pathway to astrophysics will be clear to students. This emphasis will not significantly change the courses offered or pathways for physics majors, but rather will codify a specific area of interest for students.

Points Discussed by Committee:

1. Benefits current students by providing guidance for those with interest in this area
2. Potential for extra scrutiny from UW System as low-enrolled program
3. Other programs offering this degree/emphasis

Pros of Recommendation:

New emphasis is available to physics majors. No additional resources are needed to deliver the new emphasis. Students will have a better idea of relevant coursework to take if they have interest in astrophysics/astronomy, which will reduce advising demands in the department. UW-System only looks at titled majors, not emphases, so no concern about scrutiny from System for low enrollment. UW-Madison is the only other institution to offer a degree in Astrophysics, so this may be a recruiting tool for UWEC.

Cons of Recommendation:

None

Technology/Human Resource Impact:

Reduced demand on advising resources. No technology impact.

Committee Recommendation:

The committee approved the establishment of a new emphasis in Physics, Astrophysics Emphasis, Major - Liberal Arts.

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MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

by a vote of 7 for to 0 against on December 13, 2022 (Date)

Recommends that:

The department of Physics establish a new emphasis, Astrophysics Emphasis, Major – Liberal Arts,
starting 2023-2024 AY:

Implementation Date: 23/24 catalog

Signed: _____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office