

FORM G
BOARD OF REGENTS, STATE OF IOWA
PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE

Institution: Iowa State University
 Current Title of Program/Department: B.S. in Agriculture and Society
 Proposed Title of Program/Department: B.S. in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies
 Name of College: Agriculture and Life Sciences
 Approximate date to implement changes: June 2022
 Contact person: (name, telephone, e-mail): Dr. David Peters, 515-294-6303, dpeters@iastate.edu

Please do not use acronyms without defining them.

1. Describe reasons (justification) for the proposed changes.

Both students and alumni have expressed the need for changes in the current Agriculture and Society (AgSo) major. More students are interested in pursuing careers in agricultural policy. There is interest in having more policy-related courses, and for courses to provide more tangible job market skills. Students also see a critical need to change the name of the AgSo major, as it is often confusing to employers. To obtain more detailed information instead of anecdote, a web survey was administered to all 35 current students and 286 alumni with known email addresses in January and February 2021 (response rate of 71.4 percent for students and 30.4 percent for alumni).

In general, students are only moderately satisfied with the AgSo major. Only 39 percent were fully satisfied with courses and advising, indicating a need for improvement in this area. Nearly all students said the AgSo curriculum needs a new direction, with 63 percent favoring a policy focus and 27 percent a focus on agricultural communications or farming. Consistent with a focus on policy, 86 percent of students have some interest in a future career in agricultural or rural policy, with one-third indicating this as a primary career interest.

In addition, the Agriculture and Society name is very problematic with current students, with 91 percent saying the name of the degree needs to change. Alumni also tended to favor a name change, but less so than students. Recent graduates (since 2005) were 77 percent in favor of a new name, as were 66 percent of those who graduated between 1995 and 2004. By contrast, only 50 percent of older graduates (pre-1995) were supportive.

There is also a mismatch between career skills needed and the existing AgSo curriculum. Courses currently offered in the major primarily provide content in the sociology of agriculture and rural communities, with very little in the way of job skills needed by those pursuing a career in policy. The AgSo degree does not offer any courses that directly teach policy-related skills, an important gap in the existing curriculum. In short, the existing AgSo curriculum does not prepare students for a career in the agricultural or rural policy arena, which is a stated career goal of most students. The full needs assessment is presented at the end of Form G.

The faculty in the Department of Sociology voted 17-0 in favor of changing the name of the major to Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies following the April 14, 2021 faculty meeting.

2. How will the proposed change affect current students?

The needs assessment shows Agriculture and Society (AgSo) students are very supportive of the proposed name and curriculum changes. Our plan is to make the updated major open to students beginning in the fall term of 2022. We do not expect any disruptions in student degree progress. However, some current AgSo students have indicated the desire to switch to the new major when approved. This may require waivers for some courses.

3. If relevant, have accreditation requirements been addressed?

There are no issues with accreditation.

4. If relevant, describe program configuration changes that will accompany the proposed program or department name change, e.g., change in number of credit hours required, faculty appointments, etc.

The name change is driven by needed changes in the purpose and learning objectives of the major. Sociology faculty with appointments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are in the process of developing a new curriculum with new learning objectives and new courses. These changes are detailed at the end of Form G, but a short description presented below.

Agriculture is more than just farming; it is about food, energy, and conservation. Rural is more than just small towns; it is the linkages between cities, urban consumers, and the global economy. Our major prepares students to guide political and social decisions impacting agriculture and the well-being of rural communities. Students will learn about the social and policy dimensions of agriculture, and about strategies to promote rural resiliency and community vitality. Students will also learn how to lead and manage policy programs, and how to get diverse audiences to discuss controversial issues. The goal is to give students the tools to help rural people and places thrive in the 21st century. In short, our major is the people and policy side of agriculture. So whether students want to advocate for local producers, revitalize small towns, organize urban food networks, influence governmental affairs in D.C., or travel the world for international development, students will make a difference with a degree in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies.

The curriculum offers the flexibility to accommodate the special interests and needs of each student. A specialization area outside the major is required. For example, the degree can be paired with agricultural business, political science, international studies, animal science or agronomy, sustainability, or even urban studies. Students will develop the necessary skills to become effective leaders in agriculture-related companies, non-profit associations and organizations, and state and local government agencies that work on issues related to agricultural, food and community.

5. If relevant, identify resources that will be needed in connection with the proposed program or department name change, e.g., facilities, faculty, funds, etc.

Program changes are not expected to have a major impact on resources within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) or ISU. There are three faculty members and a half-time lecturer devoted to CALs teaching in the Department of Sociology. There is a faculty search currently underway for a new Assistant Professor to teach in the major, with an expected start date of August 15, 2021. Other support provided by CALs is sufficient at the present time.

6. Is this intended to be a temporary or permanent change? If temporary, for how long?

The change in the name of the major will be permanent.

Attachments

Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies

Agriculture is more than just farming; it is about food, energy, and conservation. Rural is more than just small towns; it is the linkages between cities, urban consumers, and the global economy. Our major prepares students to guide political and social decisions impacting agriculture and the well-being of rural communities. Students will learn about the social and policy dimensions of agriculture, and about strategies to promote rural resiliency and community vitality. Students will also learn how to lead and manage policy programs, and how to get diverse audiences to discuss controversial issues. The goal is to give students the tools to help rural people and places thrive in the 21st century. In short, our major is the people and policy side of agriculture. So whether you want to advocate for local producers, revitalize small towns, organize urban food networks, influence governmental affairs in D.C., or travel the world for international development, you will make a difference with a degree in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies.

What career skills will I learn?

- Understanding the connections between agriculture, the environment, and rural communities
- Investigating how social, economic, and cultural systems affect decisions
- Analyzing information and recommending solutions to guide decisions
- Evaluating program and policy outcomes
- Communicating information and ideas to others to guide decisions
- Leading and managing policy programs
- Promoting civic engagement across diverse people and places

The Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies curriculum offers the flexibility to accommodate the special interests and needs of each student. A specialization area outside the major is required. For example, the degree can be paired with agricultural business, political science, international studies, animal science or agronomy, sustainability, or even urban studies. Students will develop the necessary skills to become effective leaders in agriculture-related companies, non-profit associations and organizations, and state and local government agencies that work on issues related to agricultural, food and community. Internships are an important part of the major. Graduates work as policy and legislative advisors, government affairs/relations specialists, extension educators, economic and community developers, researchers, and executive directors. They also work in agriculture and farmer relations, public information and communications, and in agriculture marketing and sales.



Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies Degree Requirements 2022-2023 Catalog

Student: _____

ISU Requirements

13 crs.

		Crs.	Term	Crs. Earned
Engl 150	Critical Thinking and Communication	3		
Engl 250	Written, Oral, Visual, & Electronic Communications	3		
Engl 302 or Engl 309	Business Communication or Proposal & Report Writing	3		
Lib 160	Information Literacy	1		
	U.S. Diversity. <i>Can be filled with major req. FSHN 242</i> http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/div-ip-guide/usdiversity-courses	3		
DUAL COUNT	International Perspectives. <i>Filled with major req. Soc 348 or 345</i> http://www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/div-ip-guide/IntlPerspectives-current	3	--	--

CALS Requirements

11 crs. *Math & Physical Sciences* <https://www.cals.iastate.edu/content/math-statistics-and-physical-sciences>

	Mathematics <i>Choose one course from Math 140*, 143, 145, 150*, 151, 160, 165</i>	3		
Stat 101 or Stat 104	Principles of Statistics or Intro to Statistics	3		
	Physical Sciences <i>Mteor 206 plus two 1 cr. courses OR Chem 163, 163L OR Geol 101, 101L</i>	5		

3 crs. *Life Sciences* <https://www.cals.iastate.edu/student-services/life-science>

Biol 101 or Biol 211	Introductory Biology or Principles of Biology	3		
DUAL COUNT	Life Science Elective. <i>Filled with major req. Agron 181</i>	3	--	--

6 crs. *Ethics, Humanities, Social Sciences, Communications*

DUAL COUNT	Ethics. <i>Filled with major req. Soc 325</i> https://www.cals.iastate.edu/student-services/ethics	3	--	--
	Humanities https://www.cals.iastate.edu/student-services/humanities	3		
DUAL COUNT	Social Sciences. <i>Filled with major req. Soc 230</i> https://www.cals.iastate.edu/student-services/social-sciences	3	--	--
ComSt 214 or AgEdS 311	Professional Communication or Presentation & Sales Strategies for Agricultural Audiences	3		

Major Requirements

35 crs. Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies Core

		Crs.	Term	Crs. Earned
Soc 110	Orientation	1		
Soc 210*	Data Discovery and Visualization (New course)	2		
Soc 215*	Civic Engagement & Inclusion (New course)	2		
Soc 230	Rural America in Transition	3		
Soc 325	Agriculture in Society	3		
Soc 331* or Soc 345	Technology in Society (Renumber/rename Soc 415) or Population & Society	3		
Soc 348 or Soc 411	Global Poverty, Resources & Sustainable Development or Social Change in Developing Countries	3		
Soc 410*	Policy Analysis Methods (New course)	3		
Soc 415*	Policy & Program Evaluation in Agriculture (New course)	3		
Soc 416*	Organizational Leadership & Management (New course)	3		
Soc 425*	Agricultural Policy (New course)	3		
Soc 444 or Soc 449	Sociology of Food & Agricultural Systems (Dual-listed Soc 544) or Sociology of the Environment (Dual-listed Soc 549)	3		
Soc 430	Rural Development Policies and Strategies (Dual-listed Soc 530)	3		
Soc 492	Graduating Senior Survey	R		

12 crs. Social Science Foundation

Econ 101	Principles of Microeconomics	3		
Econ 235	Intro to Agricultural Markets	3		
Pol S 310	State & Local Government	3		
AgEdS 451	Agricultural Law	3		

11 crs. Agricultural Science Foundation

		Crs.	Term	Crs. Earned
Agron 180	Global Agriculture in a Changing World	3		
Agron 181	Intro to Crop Science	3		
An S 114	Survey of the Animal Industry	2		
FS HN 242 or Agron 342	The US Food System or World Food Issues: Past & Present	3		

Specialization and Electives

29 crs. Minor, Co-Major, and Electives.

<u>Required</u> Minor or co-Major (see list): _____	15	
<i>Recommended: Ag Business; Ag & Life Science Educ Communications Option; Agronomy; Animal Science; Global Resource Systems; International Ag; Leadership Studies; Political Science; Sociology; Sustainability</i>		

2 nd minor, co-major credits, or open electives	14	
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TOTAL CREDITS NEEDED FOR GRADUATION	120	
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Minimum of 120 non-duplicative credits needed to graduate.
 Only 65 cr. may be transferred from two-year institutions.
 Only 9 cr. graded P-NP for open electives.
 Minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA.

Specialization Areas

Chose ONE of the following options: (1) up to two minors; OR (2) one co-major

	Minor		Co-Major
	1 st	2 nd	
Recommended Areas			
Agricultural Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ag & Life Sci Educ – Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Global Resource Systems	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Political Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sociology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture			
Agricultural Studies	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal Science / Dairy Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agronomy / Seed Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Horticulture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International			
Global Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
International Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications			
Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journalism & Mass Comm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment and Sustainability			
Environmental Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
Food and Nutrition			
Food Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
Food and Society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
Diversity and Inclusion			
African & African Amer. Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
Amer. Indian Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
U.S. Latino Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--
Women & Gender Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Urban Communities			
Community & Regional Planning	--	--	<input type="checkbox"/>
Urban Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	--

Core Course Descriptions

Soc 110 Orientation

- *1 cr. existing course.*

Soc 210 Data Discovery & Visualization

- *New 2 cr. course on how to manage data, create descriptive statistics, make charts and graphs in Excel, and other methods to visualize data. Primary training in Excel or Access.*

Soc 215 Civic Engagement & Inclusion

- *New 2 cr. course on group facilitation, focus group, and public participation skills. Includes identification of issues, prioritization, managing conflict and value differences, and understanding diversity issues in rural America.*

Soc 230 Rural America in Transition

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 325 Agriculture in Society

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 331 Technology in Society

- *Renaming/renumbering 3 cr. existing course Soc 415. Course on how technology is adopted and diffused in society, with emphasis on adoption models, public trust, social perceptions, and technology governance by various actors.*

Soc 345 Population & Society

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 348 Global Poverty, Resources & Sustainable Development

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 411 Social Change in Developing Countries

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 410 Policy Analysis Methods

- *New 3 cr. course on basic research concepts, applied statistical analysis (descriptives, MANCOVA, OLS regression), spatial analysis (GIS), and case study methods.*

Soc 415 Policy & Program Evaluation in Agriculture

- *New 3 cr. course on evaluation of public programs and policies, with emphasis on agricultural and rural contexts.*

Soc 416 Policy Leadership & Management

- *New 3 cr. course on organizational leadership, human resources, and budgeting for public programs.*

Soc 425 Agricultural Policy

- *New 3 cr. course on current Farm Bill policies in nutrition, commodity and conservation programs, crop insurance, rural development, trade, and other relevant sections. Discussion of previous Farm Bills and their creation.*

Soc 444/544 Sociology of Food & Agricultural Systems

- *Dual-list with 3 cr. existing course Soc 544.*

Soc 449/549 Sociology of the Environment

- *Dual-list with 3 cr. existing course Soc 549.*

Soc 430/530 Rural Development Policies & Strategies

- *Rename and dual-list with 3 cr. existing course Soc 530.*

Soc 492 Graduating Senior Survey

- *New R course on graduation, job searches, resume building, interviewing, and exit interviews.*

Soc 495 Agricultural & Rural Policy Domestic Travel Course

- *New 1-3 cr. repeatable domestic travel course. Bus tour through rural America with stops, arrive in DC for meetings, and travel back.*

Soc 496 Agricultural & Rural Policy International Travel Course

- *New 1-3 cr. repeatable international travel course. Security & rural development in Colombia. Arctic rural communities in Norway & Sweden. Rural communities in Poland. Rural development in Nepal & India.*

Soc 498 Agricultural & Rural Policy Experiential Learning

- *New 2-6 cr. repeatable internship or practicum. Supervised by faculty.*

Soc 499 Agricultural & Rural Policy Undergraduate Research

- *New 1-3 cr. repeatable research course for student-led or faculty-mentored research. Supervised by faculty.*

PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAM NAME CHANGE

Institution: Iowa State University
Current Program: B.S. in Agriculture and Society
Proposed Program: B.S. in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies
College: Agriculture and Life Sciences
Implementation Date: November 2021 in order to be in 2022-23 catalogue
Contact: Dr. David Peters, 515-294-6303, dpeters@iastate.edu

I. PROGRAM HISTORY

Rural sociology is an applied and problem-oriented field within the discipline of sociology, sharing common theories and methods, yet having a distinct provenance. Rural sociology (and agricultural economics) developed in response to problems with farm business and rural living that were identified by President T.R. Roosevelt's Country Life Commission in 1907. The rural sociology program has a long history at ISU, being one of the first programs in the nation. The research and extension programs were established in 1913 and 1922, respectively. Rural sociology courses were first taught in 1913 and academic programs soon followed, with the M.S. degree authorized in 1920, the B.S. in 1935, and the Ph.D. degree in 1940. The undergraduate curriculum in rural sociology was superseded by the Public Service and Administration in Agriculture (PSAA) degree in 1969, which itself was superseded by the current Agriculture and Society (AgSo) degree in 2015. Rural sociology is in the Department of Sociology, jointly administered by CALS and LAS. Over the past 10 academic years, the AgSo/PSAA program typically enrolls 37 majors and awards 11 degrees annually (see fig.1).

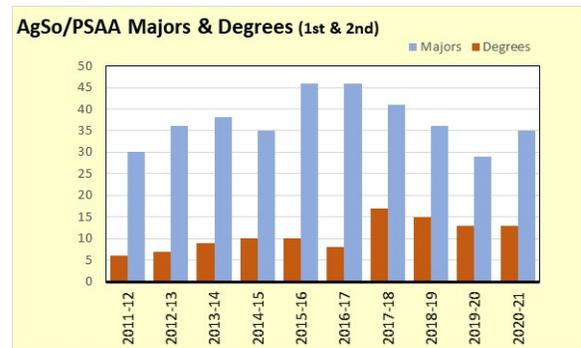


Fig. 1 AgSo/PSAA majors and degrees.

II. PROGRAM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Both students and alumni have expressed the need for changes in the current Agriculture and Society (AgSo) major. More students are interested in pursuing careers in agricultural policy. There is interest in having more policy-related courses, and for courses to provide more tangible job market skills. Students also see a critical need to change the name of the AgSo major, as it is often confusing to employers. To obtain more detailed information instead of anecdote, a web survey was administered to all 35 current students and 286 alumni with known email addresses between January 6 and February 17,

2021. The response rate was 71.4 percent for students and 30.4 percent for alumni, with the latter having more non-response from those age 65 and older (most said they were long retired and could not comment on the current jobs market).

In general, students are only *moderately satisfied with the AgSo major*. Only 39 percent were fully satisfied with courses and advising, indicating a need for improvement in this area (see fig.2). There is widespread dissatisfaction with club activities and career services provided by the program, with satisfaction ratings under 20 percent. Nearly all students said the *AgSo curriculum needs a new direction*, with 63 percent favoring a policy focus and 27 percent a focus on agricultural communications or farming (fig.3). Consistent with a focus on policy, 86 percent of students have some interest in a *future career in agricultural or rural policy*, with one-third indicating this as a primary career interest (fig.4). Select comments from students related to AgSo curriculum and advising include ...

“Hard to describe courses taken and their importance.” “The mix of courses means I sometimes am required to take courses I have no interest in.” “Not a good independent major.” “Not incredibly structured.” “Not really suited for intercity farming.” “Nothing concrete on course order.” “No job skills I can use from the courses.” “Too much focus on economics.” “Some of the classes are not worth taking (eg. POLS XXX, the professor did not make anything relatable to our future careers).” “I wish there were more Soc and PolS classes that were more focused on agriculture.” “Seemingly no major-specific classes.” “Not many ag classes/ most are liberal and not accurate depictions of ag.” “I wish there was more policy courses.” “Focusing more on public policy.”

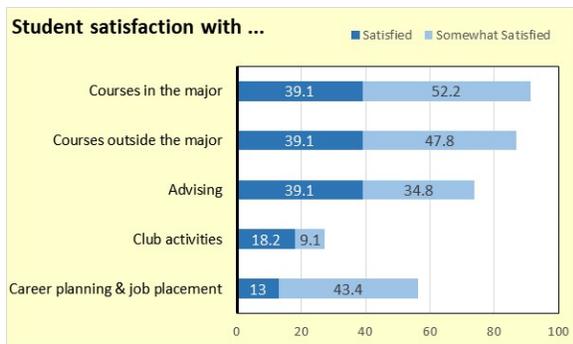


Fig. 2 Student satisfaction with the AgSo program

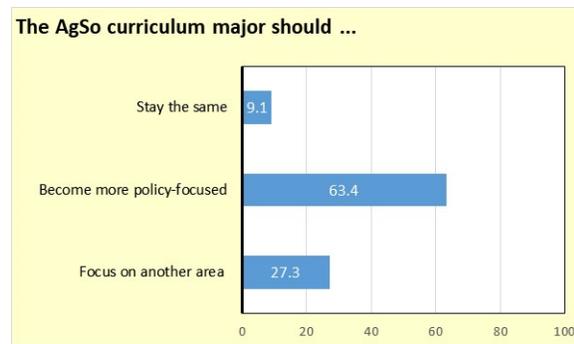


Fig. 3 Student opinions about the AgSo curriculum

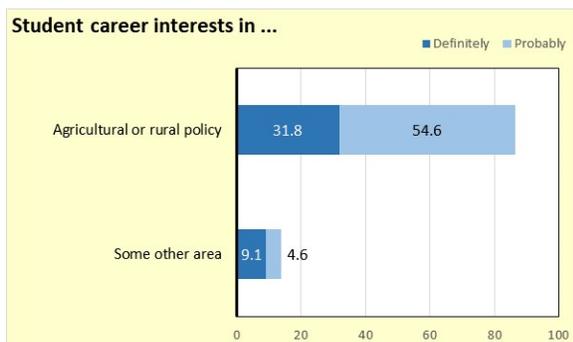


Fig. 4 Student future career interests

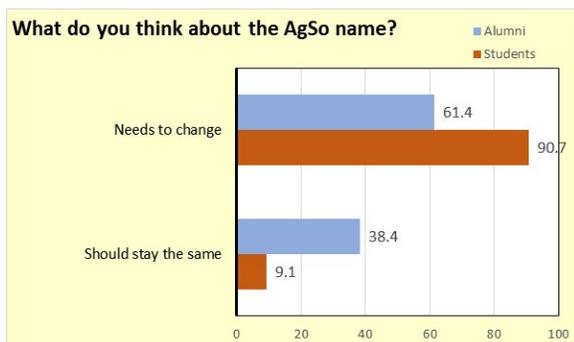


Fig. 5 Student and alumni opinions about the AgSo name

In addition, the *Agriculture and Society name is very problematic* with current students, with 91 percent saying the name of the degree needs to change (see fig.5). Alumni also tended to favor a name change, but less so than students. Recent graduates (since 2005) were 77 percent in favor of a new name, as were 66 percent of those who graduated between 1995 and 2004. By contrast, only 50 percent of older graduates (pre-1995) were supportive. Sample comments from students about the current name include ...

"No outside recognition of major." "Major not very widely known." "The title of the major is misleading for my career path." "It's small and does not have much name-recognition with industry professionals." "Name is unclear." "The name could possibly be clearer in conveying the major encompasses." "No opportunities to actually market my major." "Dislike the name of the major." "Application to careers and life after college isn't the clearest." "It's relatively small and needs to be advertised better."

Alumni comments echo those of students, but many articulated employer concerns about the name ...

"Agriculture & Society is a little vague." "Agriculture and Society sounds wishy-washy; connotations of advocacy; too vague." "Ambiguous." "Doesn't really tell me what it is." "Folks hear it and they are confused haha." "I feel like the word agriculture narrows it down too much and isn't as inclusive." "Similar connotation to getting a degree in agriculture...it doesn't really tell you anything." "I don't think it clearly defines the major ... when I tell people what my degree is in I often have to include that I focused on sociology, political science, and some economics." "Agriculture and Society is incredibly vague, I feel like if someone who's not familiar with the program were to read it on a resume it may get passed over." "It does not really define what it is or its purpose." "Agriculture & Society is too ambiguous when viewed on a resume or LinkedIn profile." "It's a name of a major that will be less attractive to employers." "Nobody knows what it means ... I always have to give a long winding explanation on how it's a combination of political science, economics, and the sociology of people and food." "The term Agriculture in Society in my experience has confused more ... I have even been laughed at when I presented the name of my major to other professionals." "Vague and uninspiring." "Feels like a "soft" name." "For those in the major, it's a great name that encompasses the program, but to future employers and others outside the major, it's a "fluffy" name." "Maybe something a little less "soft" sounding...if that makes sense?" "Doesn't seem like graduates will have practical, analytical, science based skills." "I don't think it sounds actionable and it sounds like you will learn about this topic, but not have a career destination afterward." "It suggests an utopian view of academic philosophy vs a practical view of working with people within our agricultural culture to succeed." "The major need to focus on people who want to work with and motivate people in our ag systems ... Ag business focuses on economics/numbers, let's be the major that focus on people." "I did like that the old name highlighted the public service aspect of the degree." "I still like PSA." "I think PSAA was a name that gave a little more idea what the major was, but also agree it isn't quite what it could be." "It doesn't carry the same weight as the previous name PSAA." "It really doesn't say anything about what I will be doing when I graduate ... PSA at least have some indication I would be working in Public Service vs AgBusiness." "People don't know what it is ... many people knew what PSA was."

There is a *mismatch between career skills needed and the existing AgSo curriculum*. Courses currently offered in the major primarily provide content in the sociology of agriculture and rural

communities, with very little in the way of job skills needed by those pursuing a career in policy.¹

Students say the most important skills they need to be successful in their future careers are organizational leadership (100%), civic engagement (91%), diversity and inclusion (86%), organizational management, and policy analysis skills (both 82%) – as shown in fig.6. Alumni also identified the same skills, but said program evaluation (85%) and data management and presentation skills (84%) are also important. The AgSo degree does not offer any courses that directly teach policy-related skills, an important gap in the existing curriculum.

Students also say they need more policy-related courses to be successful in their future agricultural policy careers. The most important course topics indicated by students (see fig.7) include conservation and environmental policy (91%), global trade policy (82%), food and nutrition policy (82%), economic development (77%), and rural infrastructure policy (77%). Interestingly, alumni thought specific policy areas were less important than the job skills discussed above. That said, alumni generally agreed with students on policy areas, but there were some differences. Over half of alumni thought technology policy, health policy, and community development were important content areas. These findings highlight a mismatch between student interests and existing courses. The current AgSo degree does not offer any formal policy courses, let alone courses on the topics mentioned above. In short, the existing AgSo curriculum does not prepare students for a career in the agricultural or rural policy arena, which is a stated career goal of most students.

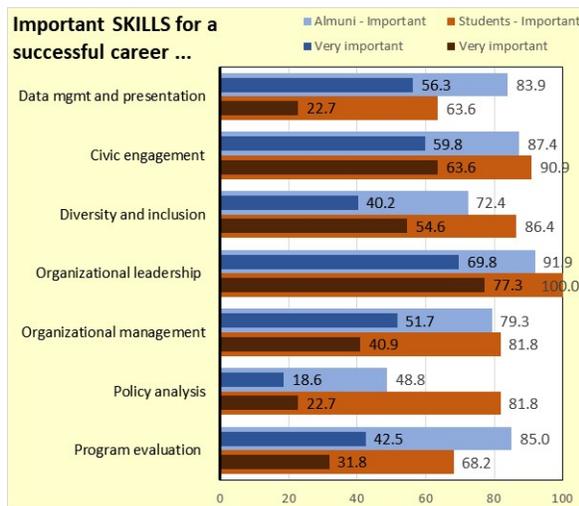


Fig. 6 Student and alumni opinions important skills to be successful in their career

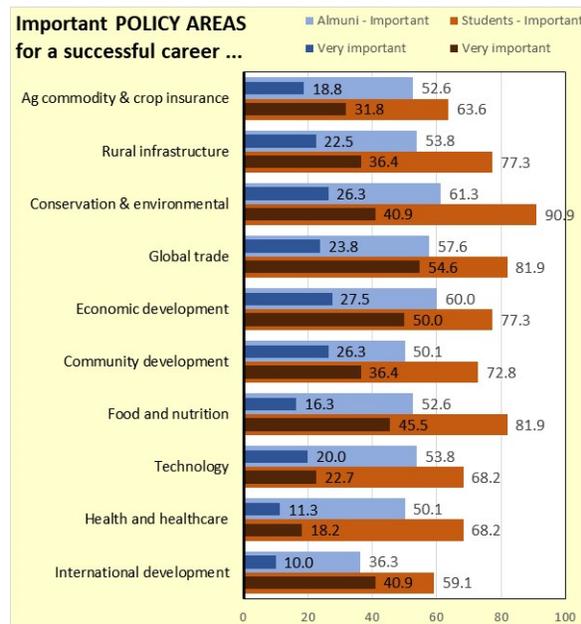


Fig. 7 Student and alumni opinions about important policy content areas to be successful in their career

¹ From O*NET, US Department of Labor

III. CHANGE IN PROGRAM NAME AND CURRICULUM

A. Change in Program Name

Taking stock of the issues identified in the needs assessment, the program coordinator (Dr. David Peters) and the Department of Sociology proposes to change the current name of the major from Agriculture and Society (AgSo) to Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies. The new name clearly communicates the purpose and learning objectives of the major to potential students and employers.

B. Change in Rationale and Learning Objectives

As stated previously, the name change is driven by needed changes in the purpose and learning objectives of the major. Agriculture is more than just farming; it is about food, energy, and conservation. Rural is more than just small towns; it is the linkages between cities, urban consumers, and the global economy. Our major prepares students to guide political and social decisions impacting agriculture and the well-being of rural communities. Students will learn about the social and policy dimensions of agriculture, and about strategies to promote rural resiliency and community vitality. Students will also learn how to lead and manage policy programs, and how to get diverse audiences to discuss controversial issues. The goal is to give students the tools to help rural people and places thrive in the 21st century. In short, our major is the people and policy side of agriculture. So whether students want to advocate for local producers, revitalize small towns, organize urban food networks, influence governmental affairs in D.C., or travel the world for international development, students will make a difference with a degree in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies. The updated major will achieve the following *learning objectives*:

- Understanding the connections between agriculture, the environment, and rural communities
- Investigating how social, economic, and cultural systems affect decisions
- Analyzing information and recommending solutions to guide decisions
- Evaluating program and policy outcomes
- Communicating information and ideas to others to guide decisions
- Leading and managing policy programs
- Promoting civic engagement across diverse people and places

The updated curriculum is designed to attract students with the following *interests*.² *Investigative* students who like to work with data, information, and ideas. Such students can think about and find solutions to problems mentally. *Social* students who like to work in teams and communicate frequently with people. They are comfortable interacting with diverse audiences and in diverse settings. *Artistic* students who like to work with designs, maps, and layouts to communicate information and ideas. They like unstructured situations where they can use their creativity. *Independent* students who like to develop

² Based on O*NET Interest Profiler, US Department of Labor.

their own way of doing things, with little to no supervision or direction. They come to their own conclusions rather than taking the views of others.

C. Change in Program Curriculum and Courses

To achieve the new learning objectives requires radical changes to the existing AgSo curriculum. These changes include a new course prefix and an updated curriculum with new courses. These steps will address issues identified in the needs assessment. To begin, we propose a *new course prefix* of AG P. In the needs assessment, many AgSo students said they do not always seek elective courses in sociology, as many think the department does not offer other agriculture-related courses. For the same reason, students also thought courses in the major (with a SOC prefix) are often overlooked by other CALS students. Thus, a stand-alone course prefix is needed to better identify and market courses across CALS and ISU. However, all AG P courses will also be cross-listed with SOC courses.

Next, we propose a *curriculum change* that will necessitate the development of several new courses. The updated curriculum and course descriptions are presented in appendix A, but are also reviewed below. The curriculum change has four parts. The first and most extensive changes are to the core requirements, called the *agricultural and rural policy studies foundation*. Totaling 35 credits, this will require development of six new courses, along with three minor changes to existing sociology courses. The new courses will provide the needed policy-related skills and content knowledge needed by students to be successful in their future careers, as identified in the needs assessment. The required foundational courses are presented below.

Soc 110 Orientation

- *1 cr. existing course.*

Soc 210 Data Discovery & Visualization

- *New 2 cr. course on how to manage data, create descriptive statistics, make charts and graphs in Excel, and other methods to visualize data. Primary training in Excel or Access.*

Soc 215 Civic Engagement & Inclusion

- *New 2 cr. course on group facilitation, focus group, and public participation skills. Includes identification of issues, prioritization, managing conflict and value differences, and understanding diversity issues in rural America.*

Soc 230 Rural America in Transition

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 325 Agriculture in Society

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 331 Technology in Society

- *Renaming/renumbering 3 cr. existing course Soc 415. Course on how technology is adopted and diffused in society, with emphasis on adoption models, public trust, social perceptions, and technology governance by various actors.*

Soc 348 Global Poverty, Resources & Sustainable Development

- *3 cr. existing course.*

Soc 410 Policy Analysis Methods

- *New 3 cr. course on basic research concepts, applied statistical analysis (descriptives, MANCOVA, OLS regression), spatial analysis (GIS), and case study methods.*

Soc 415 Policy & Program Evaluation in Agriculture

- *New 3 cr. course on evaluation of public programs and policies, with emphasis on agricultural and rural contexts.*

Soc 416 Policy Leadership & Management

- *New 3 cr. course on organizational leadership, human resources, and budgeting for public programs.*

Soc 425 Agricultural Policy

- *New 3 cr. course on current Farm Bill policies in nutrition, commodity and conservation programs, crop insurance, rural development, trade, and other relevant sections. Discussion of previous Farm Bills and their creation.*

Soc 444/544 Sociology of Food & Agricultural Systems

- *Dual-list with 3 cr. existing course Soc 544.*

Soc 430/530 Rural Development Policies & Strategies

- *Rename and dual-list with 3 cr. existing course Soc 530.*

Soc 492 Graduating Senior Survey

- *New R course on graduation, job searches, resume building, interviewing, and exit interviews.*

Second, minor changes to the curriculum occur in the *social science foundation*, a set of 12 credits from existing courses in economics and political science. The third change updates the *agricultural science foundation*, which includes 11 credits from existing CALS courses. This is intended to give students a broad background in both production agriculture and food systems. The fourth and last curriculum change requires a 15 credit *specialization area*. Students will be required to minor or co-major in an area that complements their policy interests. The idea is for students to customize their degree by gaining specialized knowledge outside the major. Many students currently minor or co-major in political science, agricultural communications, agricultural business, global resource systems, or animal science. The change in program name and curriculum is not expected to alter these pairings. However, the advising strategy for the updated curriculum is to encourage other minors or co-majors outside of CALS to attract students from non-farm or non-rural backgrounds. For example, pairing the updated degree with urban studies, community and regional planning, sustainability, or ethnic and gender studies may make the major more attractive to students from metropolitan areas.

D. Other Initiatives

In addition to changes in the program name and curriculum, we are currently developing other initiatives in collaboration with the Agriculture and Society Club and other stakeholders. The first is establishing an advisory board for the major, consisting of students, alumni, and key stakeholders in government, industry, and non-profit associations. The second initiative is securing space in East Hall for a student lounge, a priority identified in the needs assessment. In addition to being a study and meeting

space, it will provide students with a private space for virtual interviews. Third, we are developing plans to redirect CALS student computing fees to improve technology access for all students in the major. Previous spending of these funds by the Department of Sociology offered little benefit to AgSo students. Fourth, we are developing a mentoring program between students and between students and alumni. The former program will pair first-year and transfer students with upper-division students who have been in the major for several years. The purpose is to make new students feel more welcomed and involved in the program. This is especially important for students from non-rural backgrounds, as well as for students of color. The latter program will match current students with alumni who share their career interests. We already have 87 alumni who are interested in becoming mentors. This will allow students to learn informal job and networking skills that cannot be obtained from academic courses. Lastly, generous CALS investment in the program has provided for a lecturer, a new tenure-track assistant professor, and discretionary funds for program development and marketing. In January 2021, Dr. David Peters was appointed program coordinator to provide leadership for the major.

There are several future initiatives that are being planned, pending resources and student demand. One initiative is the development of new topical courses in local food systems, Amish society, rural criminology, cooperatives and communities, economic impact analysis, and rural health. Another initiative is to develop domestic and international travel courses. The former would take students on a bus trip to Washington, DC to meet with USDA and other agencies, with stops in selected rural communities along the journey to show the diversity of rural America. The latter would develop international travel courses in nations where we have established contacts. At present, this includes (i) security and rural development in Colombia, (ii) rural Arctic communities in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, (iii) shrinking agricultural communities in Poland, and (iv) climate change and rural development in Nepal or India. Lastly, we have plans to develop a 5-year BS/MS degree, pairing the undergraduate degree with the MS in rural sociology.

IV. IMPACT OF PROGRAM CHANGES

A. Student Impact and Employment Outlook

The needs assessment shows Agriculture and Society (AgSo) students are very supportive of the proposed name and curriculum changes. Our plan is to make the updated major open to students beginning in the fall term of 2022. We do not expect any disruptions in student degree progress; and there are no issues with accreditation. However, some current AgSo students have indicated the desire to switch to the new major when approved. This may require waivers for some courses. Program changes detailed here will make students more competitive for policy careers in agriculture. Outside the major, anecdotal evidence suggests strong interest in agricultural policy as co-major among CALS students. We anticipate

the major will double in size to roughly 80 students over the next five years, as we aggressively market the degree across Iowa and the nation. Over time, we believe the proposed Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies major will draw students from across the country to this unique program, strengthening ISU's reputation as a top land-grant university.

The employment outlook is positive for students in the updated major. Policy-related jobs are expected to grow 6 to 9 percent over the next decade, faster than other jobs nationally.³ The fastest growth is in government affairs and relations, with slower growth in state and local government. Starting pay with a bachelor's degree in agricultural policy-related fields range from \$58,850 to \$64,650.⁴ For students with exceptional academics and internships, starting pay can be as high as \$77,500. After 5 years of experience or a graduate degree, pay typically ranges from \$92,150 to \$108,900. Pay for well-qualified employees is around \$128,100. Based on alumni surveys and federal employment data, a degree in Agricultural and Rural Policy will prepare students for the following careers after graduation: Policy Analyst or Legislative Advisor; Government Affairs or Relations Specialist; Agriculture or Farmer Relations Specialist; Public Information or Communications Specialist; Economic or Community Developer; Research Analyst in the social sciences; and graduate school or law school. Most alumni are employed by agricultural businesses and cooperatives (farmer relations, government affairs, lobbyist, public information), non-profit organizations and government (policy analyst, legislative advisor, lobbyist, research analyst, public information, economic/community developer), and to a lesser extent by electric utilities and civil engineering firms.

B. Institutional Impact and Limitations

Program changes are not expected to have a major impact on resources within CALS or ISU. The biggest limitations are time to prepare new courses in the near-term, and expanding the program in the long-term. There are only two faculty members and a half-time lecturer devoted to CALS teaching in the Department of Sociology, totaling 1.5 FTE. While sufficient to staff the updated curriculum, new courses will have to be developed and phased in over the next two years. However, a search is underway for a new CALS faculty line to support the major, which will bring total teaching effort to 2.0 FTE by fall of 2021, alleviating some of the staffing shortages. Other support provided by CALS is sufficient at the present time.

³ Based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook for 2019-2029.

⁴ Based on federal government pay ranges for USDA policy analyst positions in Des Moines IA, step 1 pay bands of GS-10/11/12 and GS-13/14/15.

C. Relationship to Other Programs

External to ISU, the updated degree in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies is unique. In our review of major land grant and research universities, we found no other undergraduate program having this as a primary focus. Most undergraduate programs focus on agricultural leadership, environmental policy, or community development. Other programs have a policy concentration that requires a certain number of credits from a list of approved courses outside the major, but such programs lack a planned curriculum such as we are proposing. Agricultural policy is offered at several universities, but only as a concentration in M.S. and Ph.D. programs, primarily in agricultural economics. In short, we believe the proposed curriculum in agricultural and rural policy is unique in the nation, having a planned curriculum with courses offered by the major.

Internal to ISU, the most similar program is the political science major in LAS. However, our updated degree is distinct by focusing on agriculture and rural communities; and by providing skills in public administration, program evaluation, and civic engagement. The two programs are complementary rather than competitive, serving different student populations that are both interested in policy. The fact that many AgSo students minor or co-major in political science is testament to the programs being complementary, strengthening both majors. The updated major would also complement other programs in agricultural and life sciences education: communication option (AgEdS), agricultural business (Econ), and community and regional planning (Design). One critique of the current AgSo degree is its similarity to the agricultural communications option. Changing the focus of the AgSo major to agricultural policy makes it less duplicative of other similar programs. We will work with related programs to strengthen collaborations and minimize duplications.

FORM G
BOARD OF REGENTS, STATE OF IOWA
PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE

Institution: Iowa State University
Current Title of Program/Department: B.S. in Agriculture and Society
Proposed Title of Program/Department: B.S. in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies
Name of College: Agriculture and Life Sciences
Approximate date to implement changes: June 2022
Contact person: (name, telephone, e-mail): Dr. David Peters, 515-294-6303, dpeters@iastate.edu

Addendum

A. Consultation with Other Departments

The Departments of Agricultural Education and Studies, Economics, and Political Science were contacted in March 2020 for comments on the name change and proposed curriculum. Department and/or curriculum committee chair provided feedback.

- Agricultural Education and Studies was supportive of the name change
- Economics did not oppose the name change.
- Political Science (PoIS) had concerns the name change would cannibalize their majors. Sociology disagrees with their assessment. Since 2015, we know of no Agriculture and Society (AgSo) student who had switched their major from PoIS. In fact, about half of AgSo majors either co-major or minor in PoIS. Nearly all current AgSo students are committed to staying in CALS, as their primary focus is related to agriculture, so it is unlikely they would ever chose PoIS as a first major. Sociology's assessment is that the name change would benefit PoIS through additional co-majors, minors, and student clock hours.

Academic Program Approval Voting Record

This document is to be appended as the last page of the proposal for any new or revised academic program to record the successive votes of approval as the proposal moves through its required review and approval steps. Consult Faculty Handbook Section 10.8 or the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee website for information regarding Committee review and voting requirements for each action.

Curricular Action: (check appropriate boxes below)

1. New Program Name Change Discontinuation Concurrent Degree for:
2. Undergraduate Major Graduate Major Undergraduate Minor Graduate Minor
 Undergraduate Certificate Graduate Certificate Other: _____
3. Name of Proposed Change: B.S. in Agricultural and Rural Policy Studies
4. Name of Contact Person: Dr. David Peters e-mail address: dpeters@iastate.edu
5. Primary College: Agriculture & Life Sciences Secondary College: Liberal Arts & Sciences
6. Involved Department(s): Sociology

Voting record for this curricular action:

Voting Body	Votes			Date of Vote
	For	Against	Abstain	
Dept. or Program Committee	17	0	0	4/14/2021
College Curriculum Committee	14	0	0	9/17/2021
College Approval Vote	92	5	1	9/27/2021
Graduate Council				
Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee	5	0	0	9/29/2021
Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Council	11	0	0	10/20/2021
Faculty Senate				