Background

The WSU Registrar received a Major Program Change request, proposing change of name for the MS and PhD programs. The request was to change ‘MS Botany’ to ‘MS Plant Biology’, and ‘PhD Botany’ to ‘PhD Plant Biology’.

Reviewer Comments

The justification for the change in name are as follows:

1. The term "botany" implies a more traditional training in plant sciences and may not represent the diversity of disciplines included under the modern definition of' plant biological research.

2. Internet search engines for graduate programs do not always find Botany programs when students search with key terms such as 'molecular plant biology', 'plant physiology', 'plant biochemistry' or 'plant metabolism'.

3. Of WSU's peer institutions, only 3 offer degrees in ‘Botany’, while every other institution offers degrees in Biology, FEB (ecology, evolution and behavior or an analog) and Plant Biology.

4. Since WSU’s plant scientists among the most highly cited in the world, and WSU has one of the top plant graduate programs in the US, aligning the degree program with this recognition would enhance student recruitment into SBS's graduate programs.

5. Changing the degree name to Plant Biology will provide SBS’s graduates with additional flexibility in applying for jobs in the modern work force, which include areas that have been outside the traditional definition of a degree in botany.

**Reviewers’ Final Assessment**

We find that the justifications are adequate to recommend a name change, subject to the following:

1. Students currently enrolled these programs will be given the option to complete their program under the previous program name (i.e., Botany) or switch to the new program name (i.e., Plant

Biology).

2. Curriculum Requirements for the new programs in Plant Biology will remain unchanged from the previous revisions that referred to a MS/PhD in Botany, which was approved by the faculty senate in 2011.

**The Motions**

We move to approve the change in name of (a) the MS in Botany program to MS in Plant Biology, and (b) the PhD in Botany program to PhD in Plant Biology