

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY
University Senate

**Resolution on Discontinuing Probationary Status of the
Rangeland Resources/Wildland Soils Program**

29-15/16-ICC – April 26, 2016 – First Reading

RESOLVED: That the University Senate of Humboldt State University recommends to the Provost that probationary status of the Rangeland Resources/Wildland Soils program be ended.

RATIONALE: Senate Resolution 12-09/10/EX, passed Nov. 17, 2009, reads:

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Humboldt State University recommends to the Provost the probationary continuation of the Rangeland Resource and Wildland (RRWS) Soils Majors and Minors for a four-year evaluation period post implementation of the new revised RRWS curriculum with benchmarks to be negotiated between the dean, the department and the Provost and reported to the Senate; and be it further

RESOLVED: That failure to meet these benchmarks will result in an immediate recommendation from the ICC for discontinuance of the Rangeland Resources and Wildland Soils program, to be forwarded to the Academic Senate.

The chart below shows the targets that the program was expected to meet, and the results.

	Target *	Fall 10	Fall 11	Fall 12	Fall 13	Fall 14	Fall 15
Number of Majors-Range*		15	11	13	21	34	28
Number of Majors-Soils		23	20	15	21	25	21
TOTAL MAJORS	50	38	29	28	42**	59**	49
Annual Number of Graduates- Range		3	5	5	2	8	-
Annual Number of Graduates-Soils		9	6	6	3	8	-
TOTAL GRADUATES	12	12	11	11	5	16	-***
Student Faculty Ratio- RRS	20	21.2	28.2	16.8	28.2	25.3	-
Student Faculty Ratio- SOIL	20	20.4	18.5	18.3	20.4	22.0	-

*Per the MOU, targets must be met “prior to or during Fall 15 semester.” The number of majors and SFR were counted after census for the Fall semesters. The number of graduates was counted for the previous academic year - e.g., the number of graduates for AY 14/15 is reported in Fall 14 column.

**These numbers reflect the Fall major headcount. An average of both Fall and Spring numbers gives us numbers of 45 for 13/14 and 55 for 14/15.

***The program projects 11 graduates in Spring of 16.

Although the program has not quite met the benchmarks, the ICC is recommending against the action required by the 2009 Senate resolution for the following reasons:

- 1) The RRWS program is unique in CA, and serves an important need preparing people for jobs that are essential to the environmental health of the state. In addition, an RRWS degree provides virtually-guaranteed employment for graduates.
- 2) The RRS and SOIL courses are full – sometimes over-full. If the program were to grow further, additional sections of courses would be needed, which would increase the program costs.
- 3) The program feels that their probationary status has prevented them from competing effectively for new tenured-track faculty.
- 4) Re-working curriculum to maintain some type of RRS and/or SOIL training for students within a different major would not result in any significant cost savings for the university.
- 5) The program came close to meeting the stated benchmarks. Furthermore, the ICC believes the established benchmarks were somewhat flawed; instead of a set of benchmarks for the final year of five, annual benchmarks (or benchmarks for an average of several years) would have been more meaningful. Furthermore, the numbers chosen seem to have been somewhat arbitrary – and, given the current RRS and SOILs class sizes, perhaps not reflective of a true “right size” for the program.