

Resolution on formation of a Graduate Field of Horticulture

WHEREAS, the graduate fields of Floriculture & Ornamental Horticulture, of Pomology, and of Vegetable Crops currently exist,

WHEREAS, joining these three graduate fields in a single graduate field of Horticulture will result in a stronger field, with better opportunities for support for research and graduate education, and a stronger graduate curriculum,

WHEREAS, the proposed formation of a single and combined graduate field has received the overwhelming and enthusiastic support of the faculty involved, and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Committee of Cornell University and the University Senate Committee on Academic Programs and Policies has reviewed the proposal and have recommend creation of this new graduate field,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate upon review of the merits of the proposal put forth approves establishing a graduate field of Horticulture and urges the Administration to place this on the agenda of the Board of Trustees for approval.

Rationale: Additional details supporting the proposal appear in the one-page "Petition to Merge the Graduate fields of Pomology, Vegetable Crops, and Floriculture & Ornamental Horticulture into a Graduate Field of Horticulture."

Submitted by the
University Senate Committee on Academic Programs and Policies
February 1, 2001.

PETITION TO MERGE THE GRADUATE FIELDS OF
Pomology, Vegetable Crops, and
Floriculture & Ornamental Horticulture
Into a GRADUATE FIELD OF HORTICULTURE

Graduate degrees in Pomology, Vegetable Crops, and Floriculture & Ornamental Horticulture have been offered at Cornell since the early 1900s. In recent years, prospective graduate students have shown increasing interest in studies that cross commodity lines, and encompass such subjects as plant propagation, Controlled Environment Agriculture, and physiological principles applied to horticultural crops. To facilitate such studies, and to encourage potential synergies across the three smaller fields, it is proposed to form the Graduate Field of Horticulture. The proposed merger was approved by a joint meeting of the graduate faculty members of the three fields in May, 1999, and by the General Committee of the Cornell Graduate School in May 2000.

The three graduate fields comprising horticulture at present have 40 members, housed primarily in the Departments of Horticulture on the Ithaca campus, and the Department of Horticultural Sciences in Geneva. They offer PhD, MS, and MPS degrees, as well as a joint MS/MLA (Master of Science / Master of Landscape Architecture, only in Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture). No change is proposed in the graduate degrees offered. There are currently about 55 students pursuing graduate degrees in the three fields.

The relatively small size of the current graduate fields, with relatively few faculty members has limited enrollment, and inhibited the formation of a large graduate level curriculum. Instead, a proliferation of senior level (400 level) courses maintained enrollment by catering to both undergraduate and graduate students. With the formation of the Field of Horticulture, several of these will be broadened, upgraded with new content, and offered at the graduate level. These will include such subjects as Physiology of Herbaceous Horticultural Crops, Root Growth of Crop Plants, and Advanced Postharvest Horticulture.

By forming this larger and more visible Field of Horticulture, we expect to enlarge the potential pool of talented graduate student applicants through focus on recruitment and emphasis on discovery in areas that overarch commodities. With the larger pool of faculty and administrative resources it will be possible to improve the quality of the graduate experience through emphasis on additional course offerings, sharing facilities and resources, and broadened dialogue in seminars and journal clubs. **The merger** will also encourage faculty members in the combined fields to interact on a more regular basis and foster collaboration and innovative initiatives in graduate study. Colleagues in more basic disciplines such as Plant Biology and Biochemistry will be invited to join the new graduate field to strengthen the graduate research focus on fundamental aspects of horticultural plants and plant systems.