

Alfred University receives state approval for new degree programs in biology, biochemistry

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ALFRED, NY – The New York State Education Department has granted Alfred University approval to offer Bachelor of Science degrees in biology and biochemistry. The new degree programs, both housed in the University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, will be available beginning with the 2020-21 academic year.

Alfred University already offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology. In some cases, biology majors—those with plans to go on to medical or professional school, for example—are already taking classes required to earn a Bachelor of Science degree.

“One of the reasons we wanted to offer the Bachelor of Science degree is that many of our (B.A. biology) students were already doing the coursework to earn the B.S. in biology but weren't getting the degree. We have all the capabilities in place to do this,” said Jean Cardinale, professor of biology and chair of the Biology Department at Alfred University.

Currently, a Bachelor of Arts biology major who plans to go to graduate or professional school has to take courses in physics, math, and some additional biology courses not required for earning a B.A. degree. “This recognizes that extra effort. The B.S. degree in biology is very science intensive and includes multiple opportunities for hands on learning. Being able to award these students the B.S. degree provides them instant recognition for their achievement,” Cardinale said.

Cardinale explained that B.S. degree in biology is attractive to students because it has a number of concentration areas: Animal Science, Plant Biology, Human Biology, Ecology and Evolution, and Molecular Biology.

“Students come to Alfred University with a lot of different careers goals—human health sciences, conservation and the environment, veterinary, molecular biology, or microbiology, for example,” she said. “By distinguishing concentration areas, we can cater to and support diverse student interests and career paths.”

Students enrolled in the B.S. degree program in biochemistry—the study of chemical processes within and relating to living organisms—can start directly in the program or move into the program after starting as biology or chemistry majors. Among the careers available to biochemistry majors are scientific researcher; pharmaceutical sales, pharmacologist, forensic scientist, and work in the bio-technology field. Other options include enrolling in graduate (medical school, for example) or professional schools (such as veterinary, dentistry, pharmacy).

Beth Ann Dobie, Alfred University provost, and David Toot, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, said the new degrees demonstrate the University's commitment to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) educational offerings. In addition to the Bachelor of Science degree programs in biology and biochemistry, Alfred University has submitted application for a new B.S. degree in chemistry and plans to apply for B.S. degrees in physics and astronomy.

“Alfred University has always made significant contributions to the sciences and math,” Toot said. “These and other B.S. degrees in the works strengthen that record, encouraging students to dig deep into their chosen fields.”

“Our new B.S. programs complement and enrich our offerings in the sciences,” Dobie commented. “Alfred University is committed to supporting student success in STEM fields through our experiential learning curricula and opportunities created by our Career Development Center.”