**Complex choices faced by students and advisors.**

The proposed changes to the Biology undergraduate curriculum are widespread, and will introduce many new options for our undergraduates. We believe that these changes will be very well received by our students, but we also agree that there is potential for confusion. Below we outline our strategies for making the options easy for both students and advisors to navigate.

**Entering Students**:

Students will be introduced to the emphasis areas in their introductory Biology courses (BIOL 1610 and 1620). These courses cover the same range of topics as is represented by the eight emphases (three previously approved, but being updated, one with proposed name change and updating, and four new emphases). In these two courses, as topic that are foundational for an emphasis are introduced, we will mention the relevant emphasis. For example, the instructors will say something like .... *if you especially enjoy this material, you could focus your undergraduate studies on this topic by majoring in Biology with an emphasis in (emphasis name)*.

Additional details about the emphases will be available to students through meetings with their advisors and also in the form of Academic Worksheets. These worksheets will detail all the requirements for each emphasis, and will be available both in the advising office and on-line at the School of Biological Sciences web site.

Another important factor for making these emphases usable by students is the degree audit. We have been made aware that a couple of the course menus have overlapping options, and that this might be problematic for the audits. We are actively working to identify these problematic areas, and will simplify choices to allow degree audits to run smoothly.

**Transfer Students**:

Most of Biology's transfer students come from Salt Lake Community College (SLCC), and we are already working to promote the success of these students. First, our advisors visit SLCC at least once a semester, where they work with students to help them understand how their credits transfer, and identify the requirements for earning a BS or BA in Biology. Second, SLCC students can make appointments with the U's biology advisors at any time, broadening their availability beyond the days that they visit. Third, in 2017-2018, Leslie Sieburth (Associate Director), Naina Phadnis (Director of Undergraduate Studies), and Denise Brenes, Director of Undergraduate Advising in the School of Biological Sciences worked with the HHMI-funded UPSTEM program, whose goal is to improve the success of students who transfer from Community Colleges to Universities. By working directly with faculty and advisors at SLCC, courses that transfer and apply to each emphasis have been identified, and clear pathways for each emphasis have been established. These pathways will be made available to SLCC students and advisors, and will likely improve both preparation and success of these students.

**Advisors**:

Denise Brenes has worked closely with the Curriculum Reform Committee, and continues to work with Leslie Sieburth and Naina Phadnis on curriculum reform. If approved, Ms. Brenes will work with the advisors to generate Academic Worksheets for each emphasis, and to ensure that all advisors understand the areas of biology represented by the emphasis, and the requirements for each. She will also work with advisors at the coordinator level throughout the College of Science to ensure college-wide understanding of the changes in the Biology major. Similarly, she will work with advisors from departments whose students enroll in our courses, such as Nursing and Kinesiology, and also pre-med advisors, to ensure that all interested parties understand the changes that are afoot in Biology.

We recognize the potential for confusion when we have students who joined the department under the current curriculum and also students who entered with the new curriculum. Old and new versions of emphases will be available for students who declared themselves Biology majors prior to Fall 2019, and the old versions of the emphases will expire at the end of Fall 2022 (four years after Spring 2019). We will strive to be flexible and accommodating as we help the students navigate their choices during this transition period.

Only the new emphases will be available to students joining Fall 2019 and later. Academic Worksheets for old and new versions of the emphases will be available during this period, and will be clearly marked. By recognizing the potential for confusion during this transition time, we will be vigilant about advising each student appropriate for their arrival date.