**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding CaSB Track Curriculum Revision**

**What are the new tracks?**

With this revision, CaSB students will choose from one of three tracks: Bioinformatics, Biological Data Sciences, or Dynamical Modeling. These areas represent different domains of computational biology/technical computing. Each track has a list of courses related to that area that are more computational or quantitative in nature. Students will be required to take 3 courses from their chosen track’s course list. In addition to these 3 more computational courses, students will also take 2 courses from a list of life science courses. The life science courses are organized into different categories, including: neurosystems, genetics and molecular biology, ecology, epidemiology, physiology, and biochemistry. Students can take both life science courses within one of these categories, or take one course each in two different categories. The list of approved life science courses is the same across all three tracks, allowing students in any track to apply their computational coursework to any of these biological areas. There will also still be an opportunity for students to propose a customized track for faculty approval, just as students are currently allowed to propose a customized concentration.

**Why is CaSB shifting from concentrations to tracks?**

The main goals of the revision are to:

1. Update the curriculum and tracks to better align with modern themes in computational and systems biology, as well as with the current administrative structure of UCLA.
2. Add more flexibility to the major (by allowing students to choose from a list of courses rather than requiring specific courses) and better align requirements with what students are actually taking.
3. Better ensure that all students take a mix of both computational and life science coursework.
4. Reduce students’ time to degree by eliminating strict requirements of courses with hidden pre-requisites.
5. Accommodate growth in the major by no longer requiring all students in a concentration to take a specific course, reducing reliance on and competition/demand for seats in individual courses offered by other departments, such as Computer Science and Statistics.
6. Reduce the number petitions needed (for example, when a required concentration course is not being offered, has too few available seats, or will no longer be offered).

**Which track is right for me?**

Students who were previously interested in the Bioinformatics or Biological Data Sciences concentrations will likely find a lot of similar courses in those respective tracks. Students who were previously interested in the Biomedical Systems, Systems Biology, or Neurosystems concentrations will find similar courses spread out throughout the three tracks, as well as throughout the life science courses. The CaSB Counselor can help you determine which track best overlaps with a previously chosen concentration.

Students are encouraged to come to the forthcoming info session to learn more about which track might be right for them based on their interests, as well as consult with the CaSB Counselor.

**Will I be held to the new requirements?**

The tracks are pending final approval from the University in Fall, but we expect them to be implemented in Winter 2022. If you have already been admitted (or are admitted prior to the start of Winter 2022) to the CaSB ***MAJOR***, you will not be held to the new tracks. You will continue with your concentration. If you would rather switch over to one of the new tracks, please contact CaSB Counselor, Annelise Werhel, to update your catalog term.

If you are currently in the CaSB ***PRE-MAJOR***, you will be held to these new requirements, unless you are admitted to the major prior to the start of Winter 2022.

If you will be finishing your last pre-major requirements this Spring, Summer, or Fall, you are strongly encouraged to apply to the major as soon as your grades post. If you are admitted to the major prior to the first day of Winter Quarter (Week 0), you will not be held to the new requirements. Once Winter quarter officially begins, students admitted to the major will be held to the new requirements.

**How will the new track requirements impact my academic plan?**

If you are currently in the CaSB pre-major and will not declare the major before the start of Winter 2022, it is recommended that you attend the forthcoming info session (to be scheduled over the summer or fall) to learn more about the track requirements. You are *strongly* encouraged to meet with the CaSB Counselor during Summer or Fall to talk about how these changes impact you specifically and update your academic plan.

**How do I pick courses/know when classes are offered/figure out if I meet pre-requisites, etc.?**

The CaSB website will be updated in the coming weeks with resources to help you choose and plan for your classes. You are also always encouraged to consult with the CaSB Counselor.

**Can I still propose a customized track (formerly concentration)?**

Yes, customized tracks can still be proposed and approved by the faculty. For now, please see the CaSB website for general instructions (updates coming soon): <https://casb.ucla.edu/major/customized-concentrations/>.

**I have already taken something towards my planned concentration that isn’t part of the tracks (or the track I hope to pursue), what can I do?**

We understand that students may have already started to make progress towards their chosen concentration. Please meet with the CaSB Counselor to discuss the best way to utilize any previously completed coursework.

**I have concerns about these changes, what can I do?**

We understand that students may have concerns about these changes and may have been excited about a particular concentration. Students are encouraged to share any concerns with the CaSB Counselor. The hope is that the changes will ultimately give students more flexibility and options for progressing through the major.