



TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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AGENDA ITEM: 4

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Proposal to disestablish the existing Centre for Environment (EDU: B) and to establish the School of the Environment as an EDU: B, effective July 1, 2012, Faculty of Arts and Science.

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Planning and Budget Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Academic Board on plans and proposals to establish, disestablish, or significantly restructure academic units, here defined as "faculties, schools, colleges, departments, centres and institutes with teaching, or teaching and research functions, undergraduate degree programs, and graduate degree programs," regardless of the source of funds. (*P&B Terms of Reference, Section 4.4.1*)

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

This is a proposal to create a new School of the Environment as an EDU:B concurrent with the disestablishment of the current Centre for the Environment which is also an EDU: B within the Faculty of Arts and Science [FAS]. This proposal is the result of ten months of extensive and intensive deliberation and consultation by the FAS Environment and Resources Working Group with faculty, staff and students associated with the environment in the Faculty. The mandate of the Working Group is included in the proposal as Appendix 1. As the proposal outlines, the Faculty has many teaching and research strengths in the area of environment that cross a wide range of disciplines and in which teaching staff from many academic units are heavily engaged. The final Memo from Dean Meric Gertler of January 25, 2012 which is included in the proposal as Appendix 4 accepting the recommendations of the Final Report of the Working Group summarizes the breadth of scope of the changes anticipated from this process.

The establishment of the School for the Environment as an EDU:B is intended to support programs that are truly shared with different departments and programs; provide strong links to activities embedded in other disciplines; establish a home for undergraduate student advising and

activity and; better support research and scholarship in the environment. The name of the proposed School is presented as the most appropriate because it encompasses the general focus on research and teaching of humanities, social science, and science faculty working in the area and resonates with students. The use of term “School” brings the EDU:B into line with nomenclature used elsewhere. The Faculty’s intention is that the Centre’s current academic programs and activities will continue as the development of new or revised programs occurs and while programs are approved through FAS and university governance processes. Students would be able to complete their current programs.

The proposal outlines a number of elements that the Faculty is committed to as necessary to the success of the new School including the:

- establishment of two program committees to propose modifications to the Environmental Studies Program and to develop proposals for two new programs in Earth System Science and Environmental Science or a single program that combines aspects of both areas.
- creation of a standing Environment Undergraduate Curriculum Committee with the responsibility to review courses and curriculum for environment-related programs offered across the Faculty.
- development of a mechanism to allow academic units to receive full recognition for faculty involved in the shared environment programs, and the numbers of students taught by those faculty members.
- possible future development of new tri-campus graduate programs in the future.
- pursuit of activities to bring together faculty across the humanities, social sciences and sciences.
- formalization of relationships with existing units through the School serving as a home for other centres, allowing students and faculty to take advantage of the full span of activities in Environment in Arts and Science.
- identification of contiguous space that could encourage a sense of identity, academic cohesion, and efficiency of operation.

This proposal received unanimous approval by the Faculty of Arts and Science Council on March 7, 2012. At this meeting, representatives of both the undergraduate and graduate student unions expressed appreciation for the extensive consultation process around the proposed change.

#### **FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

The Centre for Environment budget provides for the mounting of its current programs, staffing and a professional development series of courses. The budget of the current Centre will be transferred to the new School. Existing senior lecturer appointments, cross-appointments and tri-campus graduate appointments will be transferred from the Centre to the new School. The existing organizational structure and administrative positions will be migrated to the School and

will continue to support its academic mission with no reduction or changes planned in the immediate future. As the proposal notes, changes may be required in the future as the School and its programs evolve.

The Centre's current academic programs and activities will continue as the development of new or revised programs occurs and as programs are approved through FAS and university governance processes. Undergraduate and graduate program committees will be charged with providing students with the opportunity to provide input at every stage of the process.

As an EDU:B the School will be in a position to make budgetary appointments of up to 49%. The Faculty observes that the consultation process indicated that potential cross-appointments will need to be carefully considered by the Director once programs are more fully developed and that it will be important that appointments reflect the balance of disciplines in environment.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be It Recommended to the Academic Board:

- (a) THAT the Centre for Environment be disestablished, effective July 1, 2012;
- (b) THAT the School of the Environment be established as an Extra-Departmental Unit B (EDU: B), effective July 1, 2012.