



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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DATE: November 24, 2005

AGENDA ITEM: 4

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Faculty of Arts and Science and School of Graduate Studies: Disestablishment of the Department of Botany and the Department of Zoology and Creation of the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and the Department of Cell and Systems Biology

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee recommends to the Academic Board on changes which establish significant new academic directions for a Faculty.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

HIGHLIGHTS:

Biological sciences teaching and research takes place within the Faculty of Arts & Science in the Department of Botany and Department of Zoology. Arising from the *Stepping UP* planning process, departmental external reviews, and extensive consultation within the two units, the Faculty proposes that the Departments of Botany and Zoology be disestablished and that the members these two units be reorganized into two new departments: The Department of Systems Biology and the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. It is proposed that the tri-campus corresponding graduate Departments of Botany and Zoology will also be disestablished and new tri-campus graduate Departments of Cell and Systems Biology and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology be created in the School of Graduate Studies. The proposal is outlined in the attached "Proposal to Create Two New Biological Sciences Departments".

The academic goals for each of new departments are contained in the attached vision statements. The reorganized departments will facilitate undergraduate and graduate education by focusing teaching resources in ecology and evolution on the one hand, and cell, molecular and systems biology on the other.

Existing undergraduate teaching programs, which are already largely shared by these two departments would be initially unaffected, though opportunities to create courses and programs of study aligned along the foci of the new departments would be possible. The undergraduate Human Biology program will not be affected by this change, as both new departments would continue to resource the existing first and second year courses that constitute the core courses for this curriculum, in collaboration with the other departments in Arts & Science and the Faculty of Medicine. The existing specialist/major/minor programs in Botany, Zoology and Developmental Biology would also continue to be supported, though programs of study with the designators "EEB" and "CSB" would be subsequently developed.

The two new departments would provide more focused graduate programs that are expected to be well-aligned with student interest and demand. The two existing graduate programs will be jointly administered by the Chairs of the new graduate departments until such a time as there are no more students registered in each program. The existing core and collaborative graduate programs would be unaffected, though both departments would subsequently develop new programs in these areas. Hence, the proposed reorganization at the graduate level will initially leave unchanged the programs that the two departments are currently responsible for or are collaborative partners. An administrative structure is being developed to ensure that students currently in these programs or those that will be admitted in these programs for September 2006 will be able to complete their intended degrees. Over the next several years, new programs aligned with the core activities of the new departments will be created and some of the existing programs will be phased out. Detailed planning for this transition has commenced.

There has been extensive consultation both within the Faculty, UTM, UTSC, and with related Divisions regarding this proposal as outlined in the attached documentation. The Biological Sciences Planning Committee (included representatives from both departments, including undergraduate and graduate students) has recommended proceeding with this reorganization. The faculty of both Arts and Science departments have voted in favour of this reorganization in secret ballots conducted in late October 2005. In separate ballots, the tri-campus graduate faculty of each department also voted in favour of the re-organization.

The proposal was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Science General Committee on November 21, 2005 and by the School of Graduate Studies Council on November 22, 2005.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

This reorganization will not result in any changes in base funding resources at a University level. Any increases in base funding to better support the two new activities and the capital funding for the proposed renovations would be allocated from existing operating resources or through appropriate mechanisms within the Faculty.

The faculty members, administration and budget of each of the two discontinued departments will be redistributed and transferred to one or other of the two new departments as outlined in principle in the attached plan.

The proposal will be brought forth to the Planning and Budget Committee on December 6, 2005.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs concurs with the recommendation of the Planning and Budget Committee that

- 1) The Department of Botany and the Department of Zoology be disestablished coincident with the establishment of the new Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and the new Department of Cell and Systems Biology as of July 1, 2006; and
- 2) The graduate Department of Botany and the graduate Department of Zoology be disestablished coincident with the establishment of the new graduate Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and the new graduate Department of Cell and Systems Biology as of July 1, 2006.