



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Academic Board

SPONSOR: Vivek Goel
CONTACT INFO: (416) 978-2122, provost@utoronto.ca

DATE: September 6, 2007 for October 2, 2007

AGENDA ITEM: 9

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Faculty of Medicine: Name changes of the Department of Medical Genetics & Microbiology/Graduate Department of Molecular & Medical Genetics to the "Department of Molecular Genetics".

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Board has authority to approve name changes of academic units.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

HIGHLIGHTS:

Historically, two names have been assigned to the Department of Medical Genetics & Microbiology/Graduate Department of Molecular & Medical Genetics. The department traces its roots back to the Department of Cell Biology, founded in 1969. At that time, the department was an undergraduate unit of the Faculty of Medicine. The name of the department was changed to the Department of Medical Genetics in 1973, in order to reflect its focus on genetic approaches.

Until 1990, the graduate program was run under the auspices of the Department of Medical Biophysics. In 1990, the department began its own graduate program in the School of Graduate Studies under the name of the Department of Molecular and Medical Genetics. In 1996, the department further expanded its mission in the area of microbiology. As a result, the department was renamed the Department of Medical Genetics and Microbiology. The name of the Graduate Department of Molecular and Medical Genetics remained unchanged.

The proposed name more accurately reflects the fact that all faculty in the department use molecular genetic strategies to approach scientific questions, highlighting the common research and teaching focus of the department. The majority of the faculty in the department are involved in the training of graduate students and most have appointments in both departments. The proposed name reflects the common research that unites the department, rather than the department's history.

The proposal to change the name to the Department of Molecular Genetics will also alleviate current confusion regarding the identity of the unit both externally and internally. For example, currently most publications list only one name and not the other, giving the impression to the outside world that there are in fact two distinct departments.

The name of the department's undergraduate specialist program, Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, will remain the same, given that the program emphasizes the molecular aspects of both disciplines. The program is research-intensive and is designed to provide a strong background in science that is applicable to a variety of careers. It consists of two streams:

'Genetics' and 'Microbiology'. Students enter the program at the start of their second year, and choose a stream by the start of their third year. Each stream provides focused training but there is considerable overlap between the programs.

The proposal was developed in broad consultation with members of the Department. The Faculty of Medicine Council approved the proposed name changes on June 25, 2007.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no new/additional financial resources required to implement the name change.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Academic Board approve:

THAT the name of the Faculty of Medicine Department of Medical Genetics and Microbiology/Graduate Department of Molecular and Medical Genetics become the "Department of Molecular Genetics", effective immediately.