



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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DATE: November 24, 2005

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION: Restructuring of the Biological Sciences in the Faculty of Arts and Science

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee recommends to the Academic Board on plans and proposals to establish, disestablish, or significantly restructure academic units and resulting planning and resources implications.

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, 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 corresponding tri-campus graduate Departments of Botany and Zoology will also be disestablished and new 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 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 two 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 also be unaffected, though both departments would subsequently develop new programs in these areas.

There has been extensive consultation within the Faculty, UTM, UTSC and with related Divisions regarding this proposal as outlined in the attached documentation. The Biological Sciences Planning Committee (include 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 reorganization proposal is being presented to the Faculty of Arts and Science General Committee for approval on November 21, 2005 and to SGS Council on November 22, 2005.

The two new departments will reside in the Ramsay Wright Zoological Laboratories (RW) and the Earth Sciences Centre (ESC), occupying the space that currently is allocated to the Departments of Botany and Zoology. As part of this development, the Faculty of Arts and Science indicates that the RW will have to be extensively renovated, with replacement of most of the building infrastructure and renovations of the research and teaching laboratories. A phased approach will be taken, given the lack of staging space to allow a complete single-phase overhaul of the building. Given the locations of the animal care facilities and the plant growth facilities, the Faculty anticipate that CSB may come to largely occupy Ramsay Wright and that the majority of EEB may come to reside in the Earth Sciences Centre. The actual relocation of faculty offices and laboratories will arise out of further consultation, and a comprehensive plan for space utilization will be in place by July 2006 and will be brought forward for consideration by Planning and Budget.

The Faculty recognizes that significant financial resources will have to be made available to renovate Ramsay Wright and implement the desired rearrangements of offices and laboratories. These resource considerations are discussed in more detail in Section 5 of the attached Proposal.

The Faculty recognizes that the success of the teaching and research mission in both new departments depends critically on administrative and technical staff currently allocated to the Departments of Botany and Zoology. A comprehensive human resources reorganization of the two departments is currently under review, led by the existing department chairs.

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. The proposal will be brought forth to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on December 7, 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. While there are significant costs for the Ramsay Wright renovations, the sources of funding will be identified as part of the project plan.

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.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning and Budget Committee recommends for approval 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.