



TO: Planning and Budget Committee

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AGENDA ITEM: 6

ITEM IDENTIFICATION: School of Graduate Studies / Faculty of Arts and Science:
Proposal for a Master of Science (M.Sc.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Excerpt from the terms of reference for the Planning and Budget Committee:

4.4.2. The Committee advises the Academic Board on the planning and resource implications of plans and proposals to establish, disestablish or significantly restructure academic programs. Those implications might include significant planning and budgetary changes within the division or significant effects on other divisions, the University as a whole and the public.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) was approved by Governing Council on February 9, 2006 effective as of July 1, 2006.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The proposed programs in EEB arise from the re-organization of biological sciences in the Faculty of Arts and Science that resulted in the formation of the Department of Cell and Systems Biology (CSB) and the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB). At the time of the reorganization, it was indicated that the new graduate departments would work towards the development of new aligned graduate programs.

The proposed programs aim to provide more focused graduate studies that are well-aligned with student interest and demand. The new EEB graduate program was developed by the department's Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) and included extensive consultation with the Department's graduate students and faculty members, as well as input from cognate units in the Faculty and with other divisions in the University. Elements of the previous Botany and Zoology graduate programs appear in the new EEB proposal, but there are new features as well.

The M.Sc. and Ph.D. proposals were accepted following unanimous department faculty approval and majority graduate student approval. The proposals were approved by the Three Campus Graduate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Science (April 30, 2007) and by the Graduate Education Council (May 22, 2007).

This proposal will be presented to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on September 10, 2007.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

The two existing graduate programs (Plant & Microbial Biology and Zoology) will continue to be jointly administered by the CSB and EEB departments, and the programs will continue until there are no more students registered in each program. A proposal to cease admission to the current programs and close them will be brought forward for approval once no more students are registered in the programs.

Establishment of the new graduate programs for EEB should have no new resource demands beyond those of the previous departments, and the EEB graduate program will have no new staffing beyond that agreed in the human resources plan for EEB, which was instituted on July 1, 2006. The financial plan has been reviewed by the Faculty of Arts and Science.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

THAT the proposal to establish the Master of Science (M.Sc.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programs in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology within the Faculty of Arts and Science be approved, effective September, 2008.

Master of Science (MSc) & Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Executive Summary

The Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) was established on July 1, 2006 following a reorganization of the Departments of Botany and Zoology. For decades these departments have run very successful graduate programs that attract the best students from around the world. The tradition of graduate education in the fields of Botany and Zoology and their many subdisciplines is a long and successful one at the University. Bringing together professors and students with common interests in ecology and evolutionary biology will produce a stronger and more cohesive community of scholars.

The EEB graduate program will focus strongly on Ph.D. students. The M.Sc. program will be funded for one year while doctoral students will be funded for years 1-4 or 1-5 depending on whether candidates enter with or without a master's degree. Transfer from the M.Sc. program into the Ph.D. will be possible for students demonstrating excellence in research. The program should have positive impacts on graduate activities in cognate divisions because it offers new opportunities that are available to many University of Toronto students. Feedback from the Departments of Anthropology, Cell and Systems Biology, Chemical Engineering, Geography and Geology as well as the Centre for Environment and the Faculty of Forestry has been generally supportive with indications that some EEB courses will be of interest to other departments as will the possibility of developing collaborative programs.

Since EEB has resulted from a reorganization of two previously existing departments, the resources required for the new department and its graduate program are in place. A process for reallocating these resources between EEB and CSB is ongoing and includes consideration of the buildings in which the departments will be housed, faculty and student offices, labs and all the required laboratory equipment and support. Computing facilities are in hand as are more general resources such as the library.