



# University of Toronto

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OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Vivek Goel  
CONTACT INFO: provost@utoronto.ca

DATE: March 24, 2004 for the meeting on May12, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 5

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

School of Graduate Studies: Proposal for the Department of Botany to change the name of the graduate Botany Program to the “Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology”.

## **JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee has authority to approve minor changes to within degree programs.

## **PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

## **HIGHLIGHTS:**

The proposed new name would more accurately reflect the department’s broad research interests and would be more scientifically inclusive of the faculty members’ research areas. Renaming the graduate program is important for student recruitment.

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

There are no new/additional financial resources required to implement the program change. The change to the program is planned to be included into the SGS Calendar for 2004-2005.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs approve:

THAT the proposal for the Department of Botany to change the name of the graduate Botany Program to the “Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology”, as specified in the attached letter from the School of Graduate Studies dated March 15, 2004.



# School of Graduate Studies

University of Toronto

April 15, 2004

Professor Vivek Goel  
Interim Vice-President and Provost  
Room 225, Simcoe Hall  
27 King's College Circle  
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Goel:

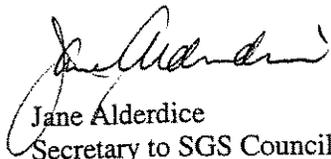
With respect to my original letter of March 15, 2004, I am writing to confirm that SGS Council approved the following motion at its meeting of March 23, 2004:

**THAT** SGS Council approve the proposal of the Department of Botany to change the name of the graduate Botany Program to the "Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology", effective immediately.

The motion and supporting documentation were attached with the letter of March 15, 2004.

Mr. Andrew Drummond, Secretary to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, has informed my office that the item will appear on the agenda of the May 12 meeting of AP&P, for approval.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Alderdice  
Secretary to SGS Council  
and Coordinator of Policy, Program and Liaison

/smr

c.c.    T. Chan                    U. De Boni  
          A. Drummond            C. Johnston  
          R. Sage                    L. Yee  
          S. Zaky

H:Council/FollowUp/2003-2004/March 23/Botany Name Change Program Only



## School of Graduate Studies

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University of Toronto

March 15, 2004

Professor Vivek Goel  
Interim Vice-President and Provost  
Room 225, Simcoe Hall  
27 King's College Circle  
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Goel:

The following motion is on the agenda of the upcoming March 23, 2004 SGS Council meeting:

**THAT** SGS Council approve the proposal of the Department of Botany to change the name of the graduate Botany Program to the "Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology", effective immediately.

The motion and supporting documentation are attached. Division IV Executive Committee approved the proposal at its meeting of February 10, 2004. The above motion changes the name of the graduate program offered only, not the name of the Department.

We will confirm this approval on March 24, after the SGS Council meeting. In the meantime, we hope you are able to place this item on the agenda of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs meeting scheduled for March 31. Approval of the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs will permit inclusion of this new information into the SGS Calendar for 2004-2005. Please let me know if you require any further information.

On behalf of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies and pending SGS approval, I am presenting this item to Governing Council committees, for approval.

Yours sincerely,

*per*  
Jane Alderdice  
Secretary to SGS Council  
and Coordinator of Policy, Program and Liaison

Encl.  
/smr

c.c. T. Chan U. De Boni  
A. Drummond (with attachments)  
C. Johnston R. Sage  
L. Yee S. Zaky (with attachments)

H:Council/FollowUp/2003-2004/March 23/Botany Name Change Program Only

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## Motion

### School of Graduate Studies Council Tuesday, March 23, 2004

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Item 10.

- 10. Proposal to Change the Name of the Graduate Program in the Department of Botany to “the Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology”**

**MOTION ( / ) THAT** SGS Council approve the proposal of the Department of Botany to change the name of the graduate Botany Program to the “Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology”, effective immediately.

*See attached.*

**NOTE:**

The above motion changes the name of the graduate program offered only, not the name of the Department.

Division IV Executive Committee approved the proposal at its meeting of February 10, 2004.

With SGS Council approval this item will go to Governing Council committees for approval. The Ontario Council on Graduate Studies will be informed.

School of Graduate Studies  
University of Toronto

Division IV Executive Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, February 3, 2004

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY TO "PLANT AND MICROBIAL BIOLOGY"

We propose to rename the graduate program of the Department of Botany to "The Graduate Program in Plant and Microbial Biology".

The overwhelming majority of faculty believes that the new name more accurately reflects the department's broad research interests. We have a strong commitment to both plant and microbial (fungal and bacterial) research. The research programs of 25% of our faculty (8 of 32, including AbouHaidar, Anderson, Espie, Guttman, Horgen, Kohn, Moncalvo, and Saville) focus exclusively on microorganisms. Two other laboratories (Thaler, Yoshioka) work on fungi or bacteria and their interactions with plants and plant predators. The term botany does not encompass the study of prokaryotic microbes at all. As a consequence, a significant proportion of our department do not believe that their research interests are reflected in the official name of the graduate program, and believe that this needs to be rectified.

Second, a majority of departmental members feel that the term "Plant Biology" is more inclusive and less archaic than the term "Botany", and that it more accurately reflects the nature of many research programs. Currently a common connotation of "Botany" is the traditional study of multicellular green plants, with an emphasis on their structure, physiology, ecology and taxonomy. A number of research labs in our department use plants as model systems for bioinformatic, proteomic, or chemical-biology studies (e.g., Provar, Christendat, Cutler). These faculty members prefer the term "Plant Biology". Faculty members working in the areas of functional genomics, molecular and cellular biology, genetics and evolutionary biology, also feel that plant and microbial biology better encompasses their research emphasis.

Renaming the graduate program is important for graduate student recruitment. Prospective graduate students interested in a range of fields that they would identify as "Plant and Microbial Biology" rather than "Botany" might not find our program in an internet search for graduate programs. They also might be reluctant to apply to a "Botany" program if they do not understand the range of subject matter studied in our department. It is quite common for people to express surprise at the scope of research carried out in our program. We believe that this is a significant hindrance to our recruitment efforts.

An indication of the evolution of descriptors for fields of study comes from the largest plant-based scientific society in the U.S., the American Society of Plant Physiologists and Molecular Biologists". This group recently changed their name to the "American Society of Plant Biologists".

We are currently proposing to change the name of the Department to the "Department of Plant and Microbial Biology" in the current academic planning exercise for 2004-5.