

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE
REQUEST FOR DECISION

PRESENTED BY: Lisa Kalynchuk, chair
Planning and priorities committee of Council

DATE OF MEETING: December 17, 2015

SUBJECT: **Name change of the Department of Bioresource Policy,
Business and Economics**

DECISION REQUESTED:

It is recommended:

That Council approve that the Department of Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics be renamed the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, effective September 1, 2016, and that Council's Bylaws be amended to reflect the new name of the department.

PURPOSE:

The Department of Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics has found that the name of the department is difficult for individuals outside the department to remember, and therefore has proposed a new name for the department.

CONSULTATION:

The Department of Economics was consulted about the change in name and supports the new name. The name change has been discussed over the past three years within the department, and all undergraduate and graduate students were surveyed about the name change. The College executive supports the change.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The planning and priorities committee met with the department head who presented the name change to the committee at its meeting on November 18, 2015 explaining that

although the current name describes the activities of the department well, the combination of words in the name has proven difficult to remember. This is of concern to the department, particularly as it relates to external stakeholders.


The proposed name of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics is relatively common in the field, and resource economics is a discipline within the profession that is gaining greater depth and popularity. Currently, there are two full-time resource economics professors in the department. The department considered and voted on numerous choices for a new name and identified the new name by a process of elimination.

SUMMARY:

The planning and priorities committee supports the change of name of the Department of Bioresource Policy, Economics and Business to the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics as the new name continues to describe the activities of the department and will be easier to remember.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *Request for Change of Name for the Department of Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics*

 UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN	<h2>Request for Change of Name</h2>
---	---

This Request form and attachments will be the basis for decision-making about this change. Submitted by: Bill Brown Date October 1, 2015

College: Agriculture and Bioresources

College approval date:

Proposed effective date of the change May 1, 2016

1. Proposed change of name

	From:	To:
College		
Department	Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics	Agricultural and Resource Economics
Program name		
Degree name		
Name of Field of Specialization (major, minor, concentration, etc)		
Course label (alphabetic)	BPBE	AREC
Building		
Street		
Other		

2. Documentation

Rationale

Provide a rationale for the change and describe the background leading to this decision.

The department name changed to the current name “Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics” (from the previous name “Agricultural Economics”) a number of years ago. Over the years it has become very apparent that “Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics” is too complicated, and too difficult to remember by the Department’s stakeholders both internally (students, faculty, staff) as well as externally (academics in other universities, representatives of the provincial and federal government, and the agribusiness community). There was a general consensus that the department needed a simpler name that still communicates what we do to our stakeholders and better aligns us with our sister departments within our profession. Discussions of a name change have taken place within the department over a series of department meetings over the last three years. At a department meeting on March 6, 2015 a variety of options for the new name were discussed at length and voted upon. A final motion to change the Department name to **Agricultural and Resource Economics** was passed with 7 votes in favour, 1 opposed, and 0 abstentions. A copy of the minutes from that meeting recording the votes is attached.

A discussion was also held on the preferred abbreviation of the department name for communication purposes and for use as subject code/course modifiers. A motion was also passed “to have a 3 letter course descriptor designation (**ARE**) as preference and (**AREC**) as an alternative” – 8 in favour, 0 opposed, 0 absentions.

The name “**Agricultural and Resource Economics**” (abbreviating to **ARE** or **AREC**) was chosen as the new name for several reasons:

- (i) it describes two main focus areas within the department, and within the “agricultural economics profession” is broadly recognized to encompass agribusiness, agricultural and food policy, resource and environmental economics, which are the primary teaching and research foci of the department.
- (ii) The department’s programs include undergraduate degrees in Agribusiness, Agricultural Economics, and Renewable Resource Management (Economics and Policy stream), as well as graduate degrees in Agricultural Economics (M.Sc. and Ph.D.). The proposed new name of “Agricultural and Resource Economics” ties in closely with both our undergraduate and graduate programs. Informal discussion with and polling of students (discussed below) revealed strong support for a name change.
- (iii) The name “**Agricultural and Resource Economics**” is more inclusive of the interests and activities of the department than reverting to our old name of “Agricultural Economics”: at least four faculty have a research focus in resource economics and management issues; in the years since the department was called “Agricultural Economics”, the department has added an undergraduate program with a focus on resource issues (B.Sc. in Renewable Resource Management); a number of our graduate students (past and present) have M.Sc. and Ph.D. thesis research focusing on resource economics issues.

(iv) The name “**Agricultural and Resource Economics**” is simpler, easier to remember, and should resonate more strongly with our key internal and external stakeholder groups. Agricultural and Resource Economics is a fairly common name in our profession in use by a number of equivalent departments, for example, at the University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Davis, University of Arizona, Colorado State University, University of Connecticut, University of Maryland, North Carolina State University, West Virginia University. Sister departments in Canada feature names that are variations on the agricultural, resource economics theme, for example: Department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (U. Guelph), Food and Resource Economics (UBC), Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology (U Alberta), Agribusiness and Agricultural Economics (U Manitoba). The proposed name of “**Agricultural and Resource Economics**” is therefore well within the norm in our discipline.

(v) The name “**Agricultural and Resource Economics**” abbreviates to the easily remembered and pronounceable ARE (the preferred subject code) or to AREC (an alternative abbreviation if a four letter subject code is required), which should assist with communication.

Impact of the change

Please describe any potential impact of this change, including any of the following areas if relevant:

- impact on students
- impact on faculty
- impact on staff
- impact on alumni
- affect on other programs, departments, colleges, centres
- impact on university-wide systems (e.g. SiRIUS, UniFi, PAWS, U-Friend, Library, About US, etc.)
- resource areas such as library resources, physical facilities, and information technology
- external impact (e.g. reputation, accreditation, other institutions, high schools, community organizations, professional bodies).

Please attach any statements or opinions received about this change.

It is envisioned that the impact of this change on students, faculty, staff and alumni will be minimal to positive and will be welcomed by the Department’s stakeholders. Informal discussions and polling with undergraduate and graduate students in the Department’s programs showed that the current name, “Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics” was unpopular, and there was widespread support for a change in the department name. Faculty report having avoided using the current Department name in introductions at conferences due to its complexity, and welcome the move to a simpler name that was more recognizable within the agricultural and resource economics profession. It is anticipated that alumni, many of whom graduated under our previous name (Agricultural Economics), will welcome the change.

The new name should not affect other programs, departments, colleges or centres on campus or impact any industry-wide systems such as SiRIUS, UniFi, PAWS, the Library, etc). We anticipate that the proposed new name will make it easier for prospective graduate students seeking a graduate program in Agricultural or Resource Economics, to connect with the department and learn about its name. Indeed this was one feedback comment received from a current graduate student who recently graduated from the department’s undergraduate program in Renewable Resource Management. The external impact of the proposed new name in terms

of reputation and making a clearer association between the department and equivalent departments at other universities, is anticipated to be positive for the reasons outlined in the Rationale above.

Costs

Please describe whether this change will result in any additional costs for the university (ie, repainting signs, technical changes in SiRIUS, PAWS, financial services, etc.)

Any additional costs should be minimal. These may include updating a sign in the Agriculture Building, and updating electronic records on campus (subject codes, web site information, letterhead, business cards, etc.)

Consultation

Please describe any consultation undertaken with other university offices, such as Student and Enrolment Services, Institutional Strategy and Analytics, Institutional Planning and Assessment, Financial Services, Facilities Management, Office of the University Secretary, Information Technology Services, etc. Please attach any memos or emails received about this consultation

Informal discussions and polls with undergraduate and graduate students showed that the current name Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics was one of the least popular of all names suggested (which included variations on Agricultural, Resource, Food Economics and Agribusiness) .

The new name of **Agricultural and Resource Economics** is very close to the previous name of the Department (Agricultural Economics) and therefore it is not anticipated that this change should be the cause for any concern on campus. The Department of Economics has been consulted and is supportive of our proposed name change. (See attached email)

Consultation with SESD has occurred with regard to the proposed new name and subject code and AREC has been decided upon.

3. Review and Approval Authority

All changes of names for academic entities must be requested by the responsible college, following internal approval by its own approval procedures.

After submission of the Request by the College, the following approval procedures are used, and must be initiated by the College:

- **Changes of course labels** are approved by the Registrar in consultation with the college offering the courses. Any disputes arising over course label changes will be referred to the Academic Programs Committee for resolution. Course label changes are to be distributed for information through the Course Challenge system.
- **Changes of names for colleges and departments** are approved by University Council (following recommendation by the Planning & Priorities Committee) and by the Board of Governors.
- **Changes of names for degrees or a degree-level programs** are approved by University Council
- **Changes of names for fields of specialization** are approved by the Academic Programs Committee of Council.
- **Changes of names for buildings, streets and other physical entities** are approved by the Board of Governors (following recommendation by the Naming Committee).

The department name changed to the current name “Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics” (from the previous name “Agricultural Economics”) a number of years ago. Over the years it has become very apparent that “Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics” is too complicated, and too difficult to remember by the Department’s stakeholders both internally (students, faculty, staff) as well as externally (academics in other universities, representatives of the provincial and federal government, and the agribusiness community). There was a general consensus that the department needed a simpler name that still communicates what we do to our stakeholders and better aligns us with our sister departments within our profession. Discussions of a name change have taken place within the department over a series of department meetings over the last three years. At a department meeting on March 6, 2015 a variety of options for the new name were discussed at length and voted upon. A final motion to change the Department name to **Agricultural and Resource Economics** was passed with 7 votes in favour, 1 opposed, and 0 abstentions. A copy of the minutes from that meeting recording the votes is attached.

A discussion was also held on the preferred abbreviation of the department name for communication purposes and for use as subject code/course modifiers. A motion was also passed “ to have a 3 letter course descriptor designation (**ARE**) as preference and (**AREC**) as an alternative” – 8 in favour, 0 opposed, 0 absentions.

From: Bruneau, Joel
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2015 4:24 PM
To: Brown, Bill
Subject: RE: name change to Agricultural and Resource Economics

Hello Bill, I have distributed the email to the department.

I fully endorse your name change. Your rationale is sound.

As you know, we often still refer to your department as AG ECON so the BPBE name never really stuck in our minds. I am sure this new (old) name will resonate better with us.

I fully endorse including Resources in your name as it clearly represents a large part of what you actually do especially given the new undergrad programming you have. It reflects much of the research you do.

I do not see any reason why this name change should not be adopted. I do not see any damage to other departments in any way. I do see benefits for marketing due to clarity.

Cheers and good luck

Dr. Joel Bruneau
Associate Professor
Acting Department Head
Department of Economics
University of Saskatchewan
ARTS 816, 9 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK, S7N 5A5
CANADA

joel.bruneau@usask.ca
Office: 306-966-5228
Fax: 306-966-5228

From: Brown, Bill
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2015 3:17 PM
To: Bruneau, Joel
Subject: Department of Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics name change to Agricultural and Resource Economics

Hi Joel:

On March 6, 2015 the faculty of the Department of Bioresource Policy, Business and Economics voted to change its name to The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Below is our reasoning for the change. Could you please ask your colleagues as to whether they would support this name change and let me know their comments.

Bill



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

College of Agriculture
and Bioresources

College of Agriculture and Bioresources
51 Campus Drive Saskatoon SK S7N 5A8 Canada
www.agbio.usask.ca

November 17, 2015

Professor Bill Brown
Department of Bioresource Policy, Business
And Economics

Re: Department Name Change

The request to change the name of your department to *Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics* was unanimously approved by the College Executive Committee at its November 12 meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary M. Buhr".

Mary M. Buhr
Dean and Professor