

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE  
REQUEST FOR DECISION

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**PRESENTED BY:** Jay Kalra, Chair

**DATE OF MEETING:** June 17, 2010

**SUBJECT:** College of Engineering Departmental Restructuring

**DECISION REQUESTED:**

*It is recommended:*

*That Council approve the merger of the departments of Chemical Engineering and Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering into a renamed Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering effective July 1, 2010.*

**PURPOSE:**

The intent for the merger is to create four equally strong academic pillars within the College to support the College's academic programs and to sustain its accreditation. With the merger of the departments of Chemical Engineering and Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering, the College of Engineering will have four departments supporting the College's academic and research programming: Chemical and Biological Engineering; Civil and Geological Engineering; Electrical and Computer Engineering; and Mechanical Engineering.

The basis for the proposed merger arises from the academic benefit, enhanced research, and improvements in structure and administrative efficiencies attained from the joining of complementary departments which will benefit the College. It is also the College's response to the budget adjustment target it was assigned in 2009-10 which accelerated the process of change to the departmental structure within the College.

**CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:**

The Planning and Priorities Committee met with Dean Kozinski on June 2, 2010, to discuss the proposed merger, together with Dr. Len Proctor, Chair of the Academic Programs Committee, following APC's review of the submission.

Dean Kozinski outlined the structural changes are consistent with the intent within the College's strategic plan for the College's agricultural and bioresource engineering program to evolve towards a biological engineering program. He confirmed that discussion was initiated in 2008 regarding this shift. The need for the College to address a budgetary reduction accelerated the process of consideration, in response to the

administrative efficiencies available through the merger. However, the strategic basis for the college restructuring remains the opportunity to facilitate the disciplinary evolution for this area at the university level and enhance interdisciplinary study and research, while ensuring continuity of academic programming.

Presently the agricultural and bioresource engineering program has an accredited program with productive faculty, but limited student enrolment over three program streams. Greater collaborative opportunities are envisioned as a result of the merger and the opportunity to increase student enrolment in the agricultural and bioresource engineering program. At present, the programs associated with both departments as they presently exist are expected to continue to be offered, regardless of where faculty members are housed within the College's departments. The College of Engineering has also confirmed that it will continue to provide the same level of service to the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. Graduate-level programming will not be adversely affected, and graduate students will continue to have access to research facilities and equipment. As expected of all programs, program development, which reflects the evolution of broad disciplinary changes and individual circumstances, will occur over time.

### **CONSULTATION:**

College consultation regarding the proposed merger is outlined in the College submission, with input and feedback sought from stakeholders involved prior to seeking Faculty Council approval. The Academic Programs Committee requested letters from the departments involved as well as from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources regarding the consultative process followed, including an indication of faculty support for the proposed merger. In addition, the Planning and Priorities Committee sought an indication of support from the Department of Civil and Geological Engineering, given several faculty members from the existing Department of Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering have expressed interest in transferring to or seeking a joint appointment within this department. Although critical aspects of the merger appear in the letters received from the College of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering, it is also clear from the existing correspondence that all academic units involved support the merger in principle.

### **SUMMARY:**

The intent for the merger is to create four equally strong academic pillars within the College to support the College's academic programs and to sustain its accreditation. The College has identified the restructuring as a strategic means to gain administrative efficiencies and build research intensity and interdisciplinary research. Although the restructuring is prompted, in part, by the requirement to meet a budgetary reduction, the merger is based on careful planning and the desire to address academic priorities. The Planning and Priorities Committee supports the merger as aligned with the College's strategic intent and the University's larger planning efforts.

**FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED:**

Following approval of the proposed merger, the Bylaws Committee will be asked to amend Section IV of the Council Regulations to reflect the change in the College of Engineering departments.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposal for College of Engineering Department Restructuring
2. Letters requested from academic units