



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

College of Agriculture
and Bioresources

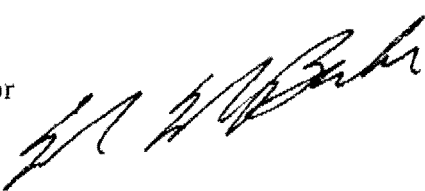
JUN 02 2010

TO: Len Proctor, Chair,
Academic Programs Committee

FROM: Mary M. Buhr, PhD, Dean and Professor

DATE: May 31, 2010

SUBJECT: Amalgamation of Departments of Agriculture and Bioresource Engineering with Chemical Engineering



As Dean of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, I understandably have concerns surrounding the closure of the Department of Agriculture & Bioresource Engineering and its merger with the Department of Chemical Engineering. This concern is echoed by my College Executive. I have been informed by Dr Abdul Jalil of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture that the Ministry also has concerns. Both the Ministry and my College fear that the loss of a discrete department will diminish the awareness of, and support for, the discipline of applied, agriculturally-focused engineering.

However, I am also aware of the challenges faced by the College of Engineering, and believe that the implementation of the decision to merge the two departments has been planned to minimise any negative impact on both my College and the specific discipline of agri-bio engineering. My College has been kept apprised of the developments around the restructuring since last September by Dr Lope Tabil, who as Head of the Dept of Agriculture and Bioresource Engineering sits on my College's Executive. I understand that no full-time faculty positions are to be cut as a result of the closure, and that the faculty will be encouraged to continue their research programmes and expand them in collaboration with their new colleagues. The Dean of Engineering has confirmed to me that the College of Engineering will offer all courses for the 2010-11 academic year that are currently taught by the College of Engineering and required by the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. Associate Dean Bergstrom is to confirm specific teaching assignments with me later in June 2010. Our two Colleges will subsequently discuss optimal ways of collaboration between Engineering and Agriculture & Bioresources with regards to delivery of mutual programs. Specifically we will need to ensure teaching needs are met in the 2011-12 years and beyond, and that this important research specialisation is not diminished. We look forward to working with Acting Dean Barber and the Associate Deans of Engineering to develop consensus allowing for even closer partnership between our sister colleges.

cc. Janusz Kozinski



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Department of Agricultural & Bioresource Engineering

MEMORANDUM

To: Dean Janusz Kozinski
College of Engineering

Academic Programs Committee of the University Council
c/o Cathie Fornssler

From: Lope G. Tabil, Head
Dept of Agricultural & Bioresource Engineering

Date: 2 June 2010

Re: Department Restructuring

The restructuring of the department, that is, its amalgamation or merger with the Department of Chemical Engineering has been on our minds since it was first brought to us in a meeting in October 2008 with the Dean. While I may say that this issue has been simmering for a long time, it came to a rather definite movement as a result of the financial cutbacks that hit the college budget. From that time (Oct. 2008) until now, there were meetings held, but these meetings were more or less for information, more of generalities about the merger, rather than working out on details. Faculty were not satisfied of the process for a lack of a more definitive plan and discussions about the future of the department and its undergraduate program.

I generally agree with the idea of a merger to create a stronger department and strengthen or improve upon the academic and research areas of a merged department. For example there may be efficiencies to be gained in offering a common second year program with Chemical Engineering. Also, more research activities in terms of funding and collaboration may result from such merger.

A major issue not being discussed in this restructuring is its effect on the Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering (ABE) program and/or the proposed Biological Engineering (BE) program, which our department is currently working upon. With the proposed merger, 3 faculty members already signified their intention to move to Civil and Geological Engineering, and some faculty are also contemplating transfers to other departments. With this development, it is difficult to maintain an ABE program and even a BE program if it comes to fruition. The “critical mass” of faculty may not be there and will be an issue that needs addressing.

Another issue to be addressed is our teaching commitment to the College of Agriculture and Bioresources (CAB). While there are efficiencies to be achieved in the teaching of courses to CAB programs, our teaching commitment (or any change to it) has not been discussed.

Going back to my first point (1st paragraph), this merger is not voluntary to faculty and staff in the department. We have discussed this potential merger in several department meetings, but certain details were not discussed especially when the Dean or the Associate Dean Faculty Relations met with us. Many questions are still lingering in the back of our minds and until definite and detailed plans are made, the faculty are not supportive and are disillusioned about the whole process.

Even though I generally support the idea behind the plan, I cannot support this plan as of this time in its present form. It should present more details and issues have to be addressed so that I and faculty included will have something to look forward to and be invigorated by this plan.

If it is of help to you, I am appending in this letter comments (direct quote or paraphrase) from departmental faculty about the merger. I feel it is important that they be heard.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew" followed by a stylized flourish.

Comments about the proposed merger of ABE and CHE departments from the ABE faculty:

1. "I am in support of the merger. This opens more academic and research opportunities that will eventually translate to higher enrolment, international recognition and increased visibility in the community at large."

2. The way the restructuring has been/is done is a 2-phase process of removing or discontinuing the Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering program. Although, I am amenable to the idea of merger, the details are not ironed out and the future of the ABE program is hanging if this merger were to be approved now.

3. The driving force behind this merger that was suddenly forced upon our department and that of Chemical Engineering is the financial situation. We are developing a new undergraduate program in Biological Engineering and somehow the Dean and Executive Committee is undermining this effort by not including it in the discussions and consultation. If the merger were to be successful, efficient planning will have to be done so that faculty will totally support the idea. I will espouse that we should stay as department to continue the ABE program or the BE program."

4. This is played out in the APC as an amicable merger, which it is not. Sometime last year, the Dean met with the department and somehow assured faculty that merger will be wide open for discussion and consultation, and that if we were to propose a new program, that it may save us from being broken up. This year, on March 9, the Associate Dean for Faculty Relations met with the department and told us that merger between ABE and CHE is going to happen. Even if I am in favor of the idea of merger, I am not comfortable the way it has been played out, because how the merger work has not been thoroughly addressed. A number of unanswered questions or simmering issues are not addressed, such as how the ABE program will continue, how graduate students will be located, space issues, and others.

5. I cannot support the merger if it means the disbandment of the ABE program. This is an issue that did not get a thorough consideration and is a major cause of concern.

6. "My concerns for the merger relate to the viability of the bio program. With fewer resources, a potential splitting of the associated faculty will leave two programs to be promoted and taught within a merged department that may not have adequate resources. The longer that it takes to know what is going to happen, the less likely it will be that students can be attracted and viability of the program will suffer."

7. "Frankly, due process has not been followed. I get the sense that this merger has been presented as an amicable union. While I think there is support, in principle, for the concept, there are many unanswered questions. The fact that this may involve personnel matters is no excuse to not engage the "Programs" Committee in the College. There is no clear indication of how the necessary resources for the various programs will be sustained. Simply stating that, "All programs will be maintained," is not good enough. If the resources are going to be re-assigned, we all (including APC and Council) need to know that. Alternatively, if the necessary resources will be maintained within a different structure, the obligation remains to show how that will be done."

8. "I do not support the amalgamation of our department with Chemical Engineering and/or some of the faculty going to other departments. An ABE/Biological Engineering program will not survive in that scenario. There not be a "critical mass" of like-minded people to keep the program going." "I think it is wrong that there will not be an ABE/Biological Engineering department at this university and this province. The president is very big on "sense of place". There nothing that fits in that "sense of place" more than the ABE department and ABE program and ABE research, and also ABE interdisciplinary "service courses" with the College of Agriculture and Bioresources".

9. "While I am strongly in favour of the merging of these two departments now, proper process has not been followed, and I am concerned that this may affect undergraduate programs. I feel that a proper planning process might have resulted in other alternatives of greater benefit for the college and the undergraduate programs; a more focused Biological Engineering program with better Chemical Engineering involvement, an agricultural-machinery stream within Mechanical Engineering, and a better incorporation of natural resources faculty within Environmental Engineering. Trying to retain agricultural emphasis of the current Agricultural and Bioresources undergraduate program within the proposed Biological Engineering program within a merged department will not succeed and will waste several years of our time trying to make it so. Although the lack of process and proper planning may damage these programs, there is also the issue of moral within students, staff, and faculty of the Department of Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering if the merger is put off for another 6 months or longer - thus I feel we must do the work and planning after a July 1 merger and not allow such a lack of process to occur again."

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sandra Calver, Coordinator
University Governance

FROM: Jim Kells, Head
Department of Civil and Geological Engineering

CC: Janusz Kozinski, Dean
College of Engineering

DATE: June 4, 2010

RE: Letter of support for transferring faculty

As per your email request of June 3/10, I am responding to the matter raised by Planning and Priorities Committee with respect to the matter of three faculty members in the Department of Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering (ABE) having requested a transfer to the Department of Civil and Geological Engineering (CGE) as part of the proposed merger of the departments of Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering and Chemical Engineering into a new Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering.

I am aware of the requested transfers, and indeed the possibility of them taking place has been discussed with my department colleagues in a department meeting on more than one occasion. It should be noted that our discussion of the transfers was largely carried out in the context of the Environmental Engineering program eventually being housed within our department, which is a decision yet to be finalized. Regardless, in reviewing the requests for transfer, we are quite satisfied that the synergy that exists or could exist with the three faculty members from ABE and several of the members within CGE is quite considerable. We fully intend that, should the transfers be approved, the transferred members will find a hospitable departmental environment that is supportive of their career aspirations in teaching and research at the University. Moreover, we are also aware of their ongoing contributions to the delivery of the ABE program, most of which are expressed in courses delivered as part of the Environmental Engineering program.

I trust that this information is adequate for your needs. Please advise if you need any additional information.