

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR A NAME CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:
MASTER OF SCIENCE AND Ph.D. PROGRAMS IN BIOLOGY TO
MASTER OF SCIENCE AND Ph.D. PROGRAMS IN INTEGRATED BIOLOGY**

Action Requested: Consider recommending approval of the request by the University of Iowa to change the name of the Master of Science and Ph.D. Programs in Biology to the Master of Science and Ph.D. Programs in Integrated Biology in the Department of Biology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Executive Summary: The proposed name change will create a clearer identity for the programs internally and a stronger identity nationally. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact” and Goal #8 – “Iowa’s public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and effective.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** The Department of Biology investigates a wide range of research questions across numerous disciplines in the biological sciences. The interdisciplinary faculty have research interests in areas from single cells to biological systems. Teaching future scientists is one of the department’s priorities – the graduate research program trains scientists for careers in academia, industry, and government. All graduate students have an opportunity to participate in research areas. New Ph.D. candidates are expected to do research in three laboratories on a rotating basis during their first year. The Master of Science Program in Biology with thesis requires 30 semester hours of graduate credit and a thesis based on original research. The Master of Science Program in Biology without thesis requires 34 semester hours of graduate credit and a library research report. The graduate programs currently have four sub-tracks – Genetics; Neurobiology; Evolution/Ecology; and Cell/Developmental Biology.

- ◇ **Reason for proposed name change.** As a program with a smaller faculty group than the large interdisciplinary programs on campus, graduate student recruitment needs to focus on applicants who will be attracted by the Biology programs’ unique attributes. “Competition” between university programs for the same pool of graduate students serves no useful purpose. Therefore, it will be beneficial to more accurately target students who are particularly interested in the Biology programs. The programs’ uniqueness lies in the integrated approach to biological questions spanning many levels of analysis and the integrated approach to an academic career, including significant teaching assistant training.

The proposed new focus on integrated biology will result in eliminating the existing sub-tracks. The focus on integration precludes such tracking; instead, the revised courses, departmental seminars, and events will ensure that all students are familiar with the variety of levels and systems used in the department. The proposed name change to Integrated Biology will allow the programs to more accurately target students interested in a broad approach to Biology and help eliminate confusion with the Biosciences Graduate Program that has a similar or overlapping names with the sub-tracks. The proposed name will accurately describe the diverse programs, curriculum, and research interests.

- ◇ Comparable name at other institutions. A number of peer institutions and programs have a similar program name, including the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, and Case Western Reserve University.
- ◇ Consistency with accreditation requirements. Accreditation requirements do not apply because there is no national accrediting association for biology programs.
- ◇ Effect on program configuration. As part of the Department of Biology's continuing efforts to improve its research and educational missions, the graduate programs have been modified to include new and revised courses, and reorganization of both the first-year research rotations and teaching assistant training. In the first year rotations, students will be exposed to research techniques in individual faculty labs and will use this new expertise to approach scientific questions from a broader, more comprehensive view.
- ◇ Effect on students. Current students will not be affected by the changes. They can continue under the same approach as when they were admitted and enrolled; their sub-tracks will be recognized on their transcripts. However, current students may prefer the integrated approach and switch to the new coursework approach.
- ◇ Effect on resources. The department expects little direct or indirect cost to the proposed name change. Recruitment and marketing are primarily web-based. The website will be changed as part of a regularly scheduled web maintenance program. Changes to signage will be made on the department's poster printer.
- ◇ Date of implementation. The proposed name change will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog.