

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST FOR A DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:  
FROM DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY TO DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY AND  
IMMUNOLOGY**

**Action Requested:** Consider recommending approval of the request by the University of Iowa to change the name of the Department of Microbiology to the Department of Microbiology and Immunology in the Carver College of Medicine.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed department name change will better reflect the expertise, teaching and research of many faculty in the department and aligns with department names at peer institutions. No other Regent university has a department with this name. The Board Office reviewed this request and recommends approval.

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of program.** The Department of Microbiology is an “all university” department that includes faculty members, 1/3 each in Immunology, Bacteriology and Virology. All University means that the Department teaches microbiology and immunology at the undergraduate, graduate and professional levels (Medical and Dental). Additionally, faculty members in the Department, of which there are 20 primary faculty, perform research in both microbiology and immunology. There are nearly 100 undergraduate majors and 25 graduate students in the Department.
- ◇ **Proposed name.** Department of Microbiology and Immunology
- ◇ **Reason for proposed name change.** There are reasons for the change in name:
  - a) The immunology faculty members in the Department have the majority of grant funding, yet they are not recognized in the current department name;
  - b) Adding Immunology to the Department name will give critical visibility to the strongest aspects of the Department;
  - c) Similar departments across the U.S. adopted the name Microbiology and Immunology;
  - d) The change increases the likelihood of attracting high-quality new faculty, postdoctoral associates and graduate students.
- ◇ **Comparable name at other institutions.** There are no other departments in the state with this name or with the same mission. There are departments with Immunologists such as the Iowa State University Microbiology program; however, the mission is veterinary-and plant-related, whereas ours is undergraduate, graduate and professional human health-related (Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Nursing). University of Northern Iowa has a Biology Department, and like SUI’s Biology Department, does not have the same mission. The Department of Internal Medicine has an inflammation group, a field related to immunology. The faculty members in that group have secondary appointments in the Microbiology Department, so their secondary appointments would now be more appropriate and include the term immunology. There are small numbers of Immunology faculty in other areas of Internal Medicine (for example the Division of Immunology), but those faculty are primarily clinical faculty. Similarly, the Department of Pathology has a small contingent of Immunologists, the majority of whom have secondary appointments in Microbiology. Many Microbiology Departments in the U.S. now include Immunology in the name (for example, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin and Northwestern University).

- ◇ Consistency with accreditation requirements. There is no programmatic accreditation for Microbiology and Immunology. This change requires no change to HLC accreditation.
- ◇ Effect on program configuration. There is no change in the Department undergraduate and graduate programs or curriculum in microbiology.
- ◇ Effect on students. The only effect on current students will be positive to reflect that we provide instruction in two critical, overlapping areas of biomedical science. This is likely to help in their job searches.
- ◇ Effect on resources. No costs except for redesigning web pages for faculty members. The Department already has administrative support in place to make this name change.
- ◇ Proposed name consistent with College mission. The proposed name will have both Microbiology (Bacteriology and Virology) and Immunology in the name. Both of these are completely in keeping with our mission, namely providing superb teaching, research, and service in microbiology and immunology. The name change accurately reflects our mission. We are the one Department of Microbiology (and now hopefully also Immunology) that represents this important area of biomedical science at the University of Iowa.
- ◇ Date of implementation. If approved by the Board of Regents, the name change will be implemented in July 2017.