

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

November 4, 2010

To: John W. Powell  
Chairperson, Executive Committee of Academic Council

From: Gillian Bice  
Chairperson, University Committee on Academic Policy

RE: **UCAP Response to the Proposal for the Reorganization of the Shared Basic Biomedical Science Departments**

c: Doug Estry, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education  
Kim Wilcox, Provost  
Jackie Wright, Secretary for Academic Governance

Per the request of the Executive Committee of Academic Council, the University Committee on Academic Policy (UCAP) reviewed available documents related to the Provost's Proposal for the Reorganization of the Shared Biomedical Science Departments. Material included the original memo from the Provost to the Deans of CVM, CNS, CHM and COM [dated August 25, 2010], as well as a document titled "Basic Science Reorganization FAQs".

At its November 4, 2010, meeting the committee concluded the following:

***The current proposal lacks the specificity, clarity, and detail required for a thorough and informed evaluation of its potential impact on undergraduate education and research. It would therefore be premature to either endorse or not endorse the proposal at this time or to make specific recommendations.***

Recognizing that ECAC has asked for comments by January 15, 2011, UCAP would like the following additional documentation in order to provide an informed recommendation:

- Identification of specific "problems" this proposal is intended to remedy with *concrete* examples of how specific issues/processes occur in the existing model and how they would be improved in the proposed model.
- A strategic plan that represents the collective work of the four colleges involved.
- Evidence of, and results from, consultations with faculty and other stakeholders (e.g. students and advisory boards) and how it informed the strategic plan.
- Evidence of alternative solutions that were considered and rejected (including pros and cons of each).



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- Flowcharts comparing and contrasting the existing structure to the proposed structure and further explanation as to how the proposed structure would resolve challenges alluded to in the material provided to UCAP. This would include such things as faculty appointments, undergraduate majors involved, IDC distribution, etc.
- An analysis of the projected/potential impact of the restructuring on undergraduate education, life science education in general, pre-medical education, and faculty research productivity.

In addition, the committee articulated the following specific questions to be clarified:

1. If efficiency of administration, including enhanced communication and accountability, is a goal, how will the Department(s) of Physiology and Pharm/Tox be impacted by the fact that CHM's administration is largely located in Grand Rapids?
2. How will the rumored merger of Pharm/Tox and Physiology work for undergraduates in light of the fact that Pharm/Tox does not currently have an undergraduate program and the Physiology major will remain in CNS?
3. Does CHM have the infrastructure and support staff necessary to service an undergraduate program in Physiology?
4. How will faculty participate in/engage with the college curricular review and revision process particularly if one college is the administrative lead but another is responsible for the UG major, i.e., will faculty be eligible to be voting members on each of the College curriculum committees in which they teach or only the college in which they have their greatest percent appointment? If the latter, will they have voice in the process in the other colleges?
5. When a departmental home is outside a college, how will changes (e.g., in curriculum and research development) occur in cooperative fashion?
6. How will the reorganization foster curricular and instructional innovation and improvement?
7. Will the new organization be beneficial or detrimental to instructional effectiveness/efficiency? How will this be assessed/monitored after implementation?
8. Will the reorganization affect undergraduate students in any way - such as having a reduced number of course sections resulting in larger class sizes or decreased opportunities in research labs?
9. How many faculty members will be required to change their lead department/college?
10. To what extent will faculty have "say" in which unit they will be located or will all faculty have the same appointment?
11. The document states that, "each department will continue to be responsible for the teaching that it is currently doing in support of each of the four colleges". Therefore, what happens if a faculty member who is usually responsible for a specific course is no longer in the department that is overseeing that instruction?

12. Do the departments/colleges have similar systems for merit reward, promotion, etc? If not, how will that issue be resolved for faculty who must "switch" lead units?
13. Are there any facility/lab/office issues that need to be addressed?
14. How does the reorganization relate to the new Translational Science division in CHM – West Michigan?

Given the significance and potential ramifications of the proposal, if the data and/or documents requested are not available, UCAP offers this general recommendation with regard to process: that any potential resolution to the “problems” this proposal is designed to address involve input from, and broad-based involvement by, faculty and other stakeholders in a strategic planning process (e.g., convene a joint faculty - administrative working group charged with identifying potential solutions to a specified set of “problems”/challenges). Once completed UCAP, will be in a better position to make informed comments/recommendations.