

Motion to Support the CSAT Proposal Regarding Program Names and Coordinator Titles

Motion

The Faculty Senate recommends changing the names of the current programs in the School of Environmental and Physical Sciences to departments and the name of the program coordinators in SEPS to department heads.

Rationale

For practical purposes, the four programs within SEPS operate essentially autonomously in their individual curricular and budgetary decisions. This separation would formalize what is already occurring. At present, committees composed of representatives of four disparate programs currently make decisions affecting individual programs. This arrangement, however, has been impractical due to the widely varying expertise of the members of each committee. In addition, being a “program” as opposed to a “department” puts RU at a competitive disadvantage compared to other universities as the present configuration implies weakness both in academic content and in the status of degrees.

Being departments will have the following benefits:

- Helps attract and recruit higher caliber students;
- Maintains the status and distinct identities of the degrees obtained by students;
- Helps recruit highly qualified faculty members into each department when the current budget crisis lifts and allows for new faculty hires. Since potential faculty applicants obtained their advanced degrees in specific fields, a “program” would not attract the quality of applicants as a specific department in control of its destiny;
- Enhances the ability to obtain extra-mural funding from discipline-specific external agencies, or from specific programs within broad external agencies.;
- Department heads can more fully and adequately represent their departments (e.g. in recruitment activities like Quest).

Programmatically, each new department will have its own goals and expected outcomes for their graduates, with their graduates eventually going into widely disparate fields. Each department will have its own research mission, its faculty will have very different backgrounds from the other departments, and its faculty will bring very different tools into the overall academic picture of the University. Although there will be some degree of overlap with research, and even with some dual-listed courses across the disciplines, the four disciplines within SEPS will not necessarily be constrained by a common vision for their futures.

Impact on current programs and constituencies

There will be no impact on the programs currently in SEPS or within the College of Science and Technology. The four SEPS programs were collaborating in a number of ways before the creation of SEPS, and they will continue to do so after this change as well. In fact, this

separation will be positive in that each program will feel more comfortable in their interactions across the distinct disciplines since their separate identities will be guaranteed.

No changes will occur in the day to day workings, class offerings or in the class scheduling due to this separation.

Impact on current budget

This proposal is budget neutral—administrative costs will not change from current levels. The Department Heads will not receive a Department Chair stipend since they are not Chairs.