Proposal to the Senate Educational Policy Committee

PROPOSAL TITLE: Change the Department of Animal Biology to the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior.

SPONSOR: Andrew Suarez, Professor and Head, Department of Animal Biology, 244-6631, suarez2@illinois.edu

COLLEGE CONTACT: Kelly Ritter, Associate Dean of Academic Programs, LAS, 333-1350, ritterk@illinois.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: The Department of Animal Biology seeks to change its name to the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior. This change will not affect any program requirements. The faculty in the Department voted 10-0 in favor of this name change on September 25, 2018. On October 9, we held a School-wide meeting to discuss the name change. On October 24-25, the faculty from the School of Integrative Biology (Departments of Plant Biology and Entomology) voted 20-1 in favor of the name change.

JUSTIFICATION: The Department of Animal Biology, a graduate degree granting program within the School of Integrative Biology, is proposing to change its name to the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior. This change is motivated by the following primary concerns with the name Animal Biology: 1. Animal Biology is not a recognized discipline which has hindered our ability to recruit graduate students and be compared to appropriate peer programs at other institutions. 2. The name Animal Biology does not reflect the teaching or research mission of the faculty. 3. The name Animal Biology is routinely confused with the Department of Animal Sciences (in the College of ACES) by faculty on campus and graduate student applicants.

Motivation for this change stem from long-standing concerns held by the Departmental faculty along with the recommendations of our 2017-2018 external review. The external review committee’s top recommendation was for the Department to change its name as summarized by this quote from their final report: “Perhaps the most difficult problem facing the Department of Animal Biology is that of defining its unique identity, which has implications for levels of national recognition and graduate recruiting. The existing structure has been largely determined by the needs and desires of the other two very strong units in SIB to emphasize their identities as taxon-based scientists. In contrast, Animal Biology largely comprises faculty who emphasize their focus as ecologists, evolutionary biologists, or organismal biologists, although they also have deep knowledge of the organisms with which they work. The current name of Animal Biology does not reflect this identity. As a result, despite the very strong individual faculty in the department, the department does not appear in lists of top-ranked programs in the discipline and has a more difficult time attracting top graduate applicants.”
Renaming our Department to Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior will help us achieve several goals: 1. Provide a similar name for the Department and our current Graduate Degree Biology-concentration in Ecology, Ethology and Evolution. 2. Allow us to be identified by disciplines that best fit our teaching mission and our faculty’s research strengths. 3. Promote collaboration and affiliation with faculty from other units on campus who primarily identify as evolutionary biologists. 3. Allow us to be compared to and ranked with comparable departments at peer institutions including Departments of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior (i.e. Minnesota, Maryland), and Departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (i.e. Michigan, UCLA, Princeton, Yale, and Cornell) 4. Provide an identity that is forward thinking, will improve faculty and graduate recruitment, and will increase visibility of research in the School of Integrative Biology and in Biology generally on campus.

**BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:**

1) Resources

   a. How does the unit intend to financially support this proposal?

The change in Department name will not require additional staffing or expenditures.

   b. How will the unit create capacity or surplus to appropriately resource this program? If applicable, what functions or programs will the unit no longer support to create capacity?

The change in Department name will be able to support all existing programs and functions and will not need to create additional capacity or surplus.

   c. Will the unit need to seek campus or other external resources? If so, please provide a summary of the sources and an indication of the approved support.

The only anticipated costs are those related to revising promotion materials (website, digital letterhead, etc.). These costs will be covered with the current operating budget and we will not need additional support from campus.

   d. Please provide a letter of acknowledgment from the college that outlines the financial arrangements for the proposed program.

No financial arrangements are needed.

2) Resource Implications

   a. Please address the impact on faculty resources including the changes in numbers of faculty, class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratios, etc.

The name change will not require any internal reallocation of resources. It will also not result in changes to class size, teaching loads, or student faculty ratio. The Department is a graduate program only, all undergraduate teaching is administered at the School level.

   b. Please address the impact on course enrollment in other units and provide an explanation of discussions with representatives of those units.

The name change will not involve changes in class size, teaching loads or student faculty ratios. The name change will also not affect course enrollments in other units. See attached letters of support for further information.

   c. Please address the impact on the University Library
There is no anticipated impact on the University Library. A letter of acknowledgement from the University Librarian is attached.

d. Please address the impact on technology and space (e.g. computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.)

There is no anticipated impact of the name change on computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.

**DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:** Fall 2019

**STATEMENT FOR ACADEMIC CATALOG:** Name of Department in catalog should be:
Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior.
CLEARANCES:

Signatures:

__________________________________________  Oct 19, 2018
Unit Representative:  Date:

__________________________________________  October 22, 2018
School Representative:  Date:

__________________________________________  Date:
College Representative:
September 20, 2018

Andy Suarez  
Animal Biology  
suarez2@illinois.edu

Dear Prof. Suarez:

The University Library recently received a proposal from you outlining plans to change the Department of Animal Biology to the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Behavior.

It is our belief that there will be no impact on the University Library. We are already supporting this program and see no meaningful changes in our operations as a result of this move.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John P. Wilkin  
Juana J. and Robert E. Simpson  
Dean of Libraries and University Librarian

e-c: Thomas Teper  
Kelli Trei
September 23, 2018

Andrew Suarez, PhD
Professor and Head
Department of Animal Biology

Dear Andy,

The faculty of the Department of Microbiology fully support your proposal to change the name of the Department of Animal Biology to the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Behavior. Indeed, given the central importance of microbial ecology and evolution in biological and environmental ecosystems as well as animal health and disease, we anticipate increased interactions between our departments.

Sincerely,

James M. Slauch, Ph.D.
Professor and Head of Microbiology
Director, Medical Scholars Program
Dear Dr. Suarez:

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES) fully supports the proposed name change of the Department of Animal Biology to the Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior. The new name aligns far better with the department's programmatic strengths and provides clarity about the department's identity. Unnecessary confusion with other departments such as Animal Sciences is also eliminated. The department is to be commended for their vision in proposing the name change.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Brawn
Professor and Head
Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
jbrawn@illinois.edu; 217-244-5937
September 18, 2018

Dr. Andrew Suarez, Head
Department of Animal Biology

Dear Dr. Suarez:

I write on behalf of the Psychology Department to support the name change for the Department of Animal Biology. The new title is very strategic and does a much better job of reflecting the interests and strengths of the department. As a statement of identity it is very distinct from the Psychology department, and I do not have any concerns that it will conflict with our own interests in any way. Indeed, I view the identities of the two departments as complementary and synergistic in ways that have yet to be fully leveraged, and hope that the name change will foster more and richer interactions.

I agree with the outside reviewers of your program that this change will help you in recruiting and hiring and in promoting the success and visibility of your department. To the degree that your department is successful in recruiting top graduate students and junior faculty, it benefits the Psychology Department by virtue of the many shared interests and potential collaborations with our faculty. We have faculty in areas such as Behavioral Neuroscience and other basic and applied areas with interests and expertise in animal behavior, and the potential for rich interactions increases as we strengthen both departments.

We wish you the best of luck in further elevating your reputation and increasing your successful recruitment of top students and faculty.

Sincerely,

Wendy Heller
Professor and Head
Dear Dr. Suarez,

The Program in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology (PEEC) fully supports the proposal for the Department of Animal Biology to the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior. The proposed name better reflects the breadth of research and teaching carried out by the department, and should aid in student recruiting by clarifying the mission of the department. We anticipate increased synergy between the renamed department and the PEEC graduate program.

Sincerely,

Angela Kent, Professor
Director, Program in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology