

MERGER OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF ANATOMY AND CELL BIOLOGY AND OPHTHALMOLOGY

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Wayne State University Board of Governors approve the merger of two departments, Anatomy and Cell Biology and Ophthalmology, to form a new Department of Ophthalmology, Visual and Anatomical Sciences in the School of Medicine, effective Spring/Summer 2018.

Description of Request

The principal purpose of the proposed structural reorganization is to align the School's strategic vision and resources to support the viability and success of its teaching and research programs. Over recent years, these two departments have functioned together in research and teaching and have shared office staff, growing in a cost-efficient manner. The overarching goal of merging these two departments is to combine research and teaching strengths, utilizing Anatomy and Cell Biology's focus on vision (and anatomical sciences/neuroscience) research, with a similar focus in Ophthalmology. This will maximize opportunities to grow, continuing leading-edge science and achieving academic excellence with a greater ability to attract financial resources, exceptional faculty, students and philanthropy.

Background & History – Anatomy and Cell Biology

The Anatomy and Cell Biology Department, chaired from 1975-1995 by Dr. Harry Maisel, has continued to develop into one of the strongest of the basic science research/teaching departments at WSU. The department continues to grow under Dr. Hazlett's leadership (1995-present), and has excellent ongoing research programs in the visual- and neurosciences.

Faculty: The department faculty include the chair, Linda D. Hazlett, PhD, who is also appointed as Vice Dean of Research and Graduate Programs (2016-present) in the School of Medicine (SOM). Faculty include: 3 Assistant Professors, 8 Associate Professors, and 5 Professors. Six faculty hold secondary appointments in Ophthalmology, while 7 faculty are primary in Ophthalmology with secondary appointment in Anatomy. Those latter appointments are as follows: one Assistant Professor, 3 Associate Professors and 3 Professors.

Teaching: The department provides 56% of the teaching for the SOM Year 1 Medical Curriculum by teaching of Gross Anatomy, Histology/Cell Biology/Embryology and Neuroscience courses. The department also offers 13 graduate, and 2 post-graduate courses, and is developing a new Masters in Research Program (2018).

Enrollment: The department currently has one MS student, one MD/PhD student, and 10 PhD students. All are currently working with faculty who have extramural support. Enrollment is similar to past years.

Research: Total annual sponsored program activity for FY2017 is \$5,516,923, continuing a pattern over the last 10 years that yields an average ranking (Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research) in the top 50% of NIH-funded School of Medicine Anatomy departments (76 ranked departments, 2017). Dr. Hazlett is PI of a P30 NEI Core Vision grant (36 years as of 2018, one of only 38 nationwide), and vision research has, by holding this grant, been designated a Center of Excellence in eye research for over three decades.

Background & History – Ophthalmology

Following World War II, leading ophthalmologists Drs. A.D. Ruedemann Sr. and Parker Heath saw the need for a comprehensive eye institute in Michigan. Through a generous grant from the Kresge Foundation, they established the Kresge Eye Institute in Detroit and took on the challenge of bringing together physicians and scientists in a collaborative effort to preserve vision. Since that time, the Kresge Eye Institute has been dedicated to excellence in patient care, eye research and medical education.

Kresge Eye Institute is considered one of the nation's leading medical centers for the preservation of sight and has an international reputation for its pioneering eye research program, basic science studies and serves as a major referral center for the treatment of difficult vision problems. A part of WSU since 1966, the Institute is an integral part of the University's SOM and administers and directs all ophthalmological services for WSU and the Detroit Medical Center.

Kresge Eye Institute's clinical ophthalmologists, who are also WSU SOM faculty members, treat more than 100,000 patients annually and perform nearly 5,000 surgical procedures. Patients come from throughout the metropolitan Detroit area and the Midwest for highly specialized care in areas such as glaucoma and filtering surgery; cataract and lens implant surgery; corneal transplantation and refractive surgery; neuro-ophthalmologic, orbital diseases and plastic surgery; retinal disease and vitreous surgery; pediatric ophthalmology and diabetic eye care. In addition to 11 satellite locations, Kresge Eye Institute is privileged to provide healthcare to United States Veterans at the Detroit V.A. Hospital.

Faculty: The department faculty include the chair (Mark Juzych, MD, MHSA), 5 Professors, 4 Associate Professors, 7 Assistant Professors, and 5 Clinical Assistant Professors. There are 7 faculty that are primary in Ophthalmology who have secondary appointments in Anatomy: one Assistant Professor, 3 Associate Professors and 3 Professors. Additionally, there are 6 faculty who are primary in Anatomy and Cell Biology who are secondary appointed in Ophthalmology.

Teaching: The department provides Graduate Medical Education teaching for 7 ophthalmology residents per year (21 total) and 5 clinical fellows (2 retina, and one each in glaucoma, oculoplastic, and pediatric ophthalmology). Ophthalmology residents from Metro Detroit seek rotations at Kresge Eye Institute due to its clinical expertise and unique patient population. WSU medical students do clinical and research elective rotations during their 3rd and 4th year. Typically, 30 students per year rotate at the eye institute. Additionally, rising 2nd year medical students have an opportunity to do externships (4 students for clinical and 3 for research).

Enrollment: The department currently has no graduate students except those that are recruited by Anatomy and Cell Biology and who have research mentors in Ophthalmology.

Research: Total annual sponsored program activity for FY2017 is \$4,640,584 (SPA data-from all funding sources) which continues a pattern over the last 10 years. Of NIH funded SOM Departments of Ophthalmology, Kresge Eye Institute ranks 30th in NIH funding (\$2,438,293 - Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research, 2017). Dr. Juzych holds a Research to Prevent Blindness award, which is competed for every 5 years and is held by only 30 Ophthalmology departments in the country. Additionally, the departmental faculty are involved in multiple clinical industry-sponsored pharmaceutical and surgical trials.

Background and History—National Perspective

Structural reorganization of departments of this type is not without some precedent, yet this restructuring has innovative aspects as well, with the inclusion of both research (vision and neurosciences) and teaching (all aspects of Anatomy for medical, graduate and post-graduate students) included as the mission of the new department. One example of a successful department with some similarity is the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Science at the University of Chicago, where both basic science and clinical research are conducted. Students are admitted to the graduate programs of the department for the Master of Science degree and the Doctor of Philosophy degree similar to our proposed structure. Clinical work does not receive credit and although work towards a degree can be done concurrently with residency or fellowship training, it is separate and distinct from it. The curriculum is designed for individuals who are interested in a career in research in vision/neuroscience and ophthalmology. Clinical trials (45) are ongoing in areas of strength (as planned for this restructuring).

Impact on Students

The structural reorganization of these two departments will have no negative impact on students and their education endeavors. SOM courses will continue to be prepared by the faculty with support of subject-matter experts from faculty, filling all teaching assignments. In fact, there will be a positive impact which includes development of new Masters-level courses (MD/MS and research MS), already in progress, enhanced philanthropy (which is a forte of Ophthalmology), based upon bench to bedside discoveries, and more training opportunities and clinical exposure for students. This will enhance the marketability of department of Anatomy programs.

Program Administration of New Department

To ensure a smooth administrative transition, the current Chairs of Ophthalmology (Juzych) and Anatomy and Cell Biology (Hazlett) will serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the new department, respectively. Drs. Juzych and Hazlett already have an integrated research and teaching faculty, as well as departmental office staff. No disruptions in faculty or staff positions are anticipated. Grants will be transferred and credited to the new department.

Budget and Resource Requirements

There will be no additional funds required to execute the proposed merger. All funding for the merger will be secured through funds provided through the School of Medicine.

Accreditation

The merger of these departments will have no impact on current or future accreditations for the SOM or these departments.

Approvals

The proposal for the merger is supported by the faculty of both Departments, the SOM Faculty Senate, the Dean of the SOM and the Provost.