

## A Strengthened Division:

### Option C, Modified and Explained

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Version of 10/26/98

I believe, with many other speakers of the Senate meeting of the 21st of October that Option C is preferred by the large majority of members of the Division of Biological Sciences. However, for the wider university audience, I believe the option needs some explanations. Therefore I have reproduced the original option with appended "rationales". These reflect only my understanding of why those sections are included. I have also suggested modifications and additions to the original document in an effort to perfect it. I invite comments from the faculty on this revised draft which may be either communicated to me directly by e-mail (hch2@cornell.edu), by phone (5-4716, or fax: 4-4308) or posted on this website by mailing them to Dean Cooke. Just as we did with the "Response to the Task Force" I propose to incorporate your suggestions into the draft, and to update it periodically until we reach a final agreement on the Option--perhaps with a meeting, if needed (though I know we are all tired of meeting) or until such time as a decision is taken by the Administration, whichever comes first.

In the following additions to Vice Provost Garza's text, and to the Rationales are indicated by underlining. Deletions are indicated by ~~strikeouts~~ Each section of the original document is followed by a rationale. The first posting was a revision of Vice Provost Garza's original document; this is thus Revision 2.

#### Option C

Revision 2, 10/23/98

##### 1. Retain the Division of Biological Sciences.

Rationale: For many years the Division represented a viable solution to the organization of the basic biological sciences at Cornell both in research and in the undergraduate curriculum in biology. Recent difficulties can be traced to idiosyncracies in the administration of the Division during the last decade, to the gradual diminishment of resources available to the Division, and to the resulting tendency of sections to act as departments, taking their needs directly to the Deans. The final result has been that none of the three Deans have the overall responsibility for the welfare of the Division or of basic biology at Cornell. The modifications to the Divisional structure proposed here preserve its successful arrangements and correct the initial faults which only time and changed conditions could have revealed.

##### 2. The Director would be appointed by and report solely to the Provost. Candidates for the Directorship would be selected by a search committee comprised of equal numbers of members nominated and elected from within the Division faculty and appointed by the Provost.

Rationale: This is the way in which the Director of the Division has always been appointed. It is particularly important that it is the Provost who negotiates with the Deans for the resources of the Division, and not the Director. The Director should be freed from going hat in hand to the Deans, and he or she should not have to report to them. Presumably the Provost would convene a search committee for the new Director and, as is conventional at Cornell, the faculty of the Division would have significant input to that committee.

##### 3. Existing sections would be ~~[reorganized into broader areas of scholarship]~~ organized into areas of

scholarship led by individuals appointed as associate directors to stress responsibilities to the Division of Biological Sciences as a whole and secondarily to narrower areas of scholarship.

Rationale: This is an attempt to make the walls between the Sections more permeable and moveable. The number and areas of scholarship might initially be congruent with the number and names of the Sections. The Director and the Division Faculty should determine the changes from the original pattern.

4. The determination of resources assigned to the Division of Biological Sciences would be the responsibility of the Provost after consultation with the relevant university units, and the Director of the Division. These resources would include the annual return of a significant proportion of indirect costs to the Division of Biological Sciences, the assignment of faculty lines and teaching and research assistantships, allocation of funds for materials and operations of the undergraduate curriculum, etc. The consultative process would be formalized in a Resource Committee composed of the four Deans (A&S, CALS, VET and Grad School of Medicine) plus a Vice Provost and the Director of the Division, the last as an *ex-officio* member.

Rationale: The return of a significant portion of the overhead to the Division is a very necessary step in empowering the Director to undertake new teaching and research initiatives, to protect against "raids" on the faculty, to finance new set-up funds and to initiate new collaborative efforts with other parts of the University. The faculty lines need not be the "property" of the Division. These could be "loaned" to the care of the Division for fixed periods of time, with appropriate transition periods if their numbers change. The number in control of the Division could be periodically renegotiated by the Resource Committee (see below). This significantly distinguishes Option C from a "College Plan"

5. The Director would be responsible for the allocation of all faculty lines and resources that are assigned to the Division of Biological Sciences by the Provost and the Resource Committee.

Rationale: This will prevent the stagnation of Sections which may have resulted from their retaining lines by tradition. It will further allow the Director to control the direction of growth of the Division. However; see the responsibility to the advisory committees below.

6. In determining the broad allocation of faculty lines to specific areas of scholarship, developing general search plans for faculty, selecting major facility investments, etc. the Director would be required to consult an External Advisory Committee appointed by the Provost in consultation with the Director and faculty of the Division (see paragraphs 11 and 12 below).

Rationale: The Director should not be an autocrat. He or she should be guided by the best available advice within and without the University.

7. Retain a single undergraduate biology major.

Rationale: This has served us extremely well for over thirty years. There is no reason to change it.

8. The Director of Biological Sciences would be responsible for enlisting the participation of basic biologists throughout the university in the undergraduate curriculum insofar as it is useful to these biologists and to the undergraduate curriculum.

Rationale: There is a perceived desire of other basic biologists to participate in the teaching of undergraduate biology in the biology curriculum; however, they should not be forced to participate, nor should the coherence of the curriculum be sacrificed to their participation. The Director, or his traditional delegate, an Associate Director, should find ways of including these faculty in the teaching curriculum.

9. The Director of Biological Sciences would be advised by a curriculum committee chaired by the individual appointed by the Director to oversee the day-to-day operations of the major. Committee members would be appointed by the Director of the Division of Biological Sciences ~~[and the Provost]~~. Eight (or more if needed) members of the faculty will be appointed to this committee, five (or more if needed) will be drawn from each of the areas of scholarship of the Division, and three will be life science faculty outside of the Division appointed ~~[by the Provost]~~ in consultation with the deans of the University's colleges. In addition, two undergraduate majors in biological sciences will be appointed to the curriculum committee.

Rationale: This arrangement reflects the traditional structure of the Division's curriculum committee with the addition of faculty members from outside the Division. These latter are designed to keep the Division in touch with the needs of the life scientists outside of the Division. Two undergraduate biology majors have traditionally served on the Curriculum committee since the late 60's. The Provost should not be expected to micro-manage the selection process.

10. The Director of the Division of Biological Sciences will be advised by two advisory committees, an internal and an external committee.

A.) The President in consultation with the Director of the Division of Biological Sciences will appoint an External Advisory Committee to advise the Division of Biological Sciences in its allocation of resources and future directions.

Rationale: The original Divisional structure included an advisory committee, but this was allowed to lapse with time. Periodic reviews and external advice might have saved the Division from the troubles it is now experiencing. As the external advisory committee includes prominent persons from industry, the appropriate person to make the appointments is the President.

The External Advisory Committee would consist of the deans of the colleges of agriculture and Life Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, and one other college, as ex officio members ~~four faculty members of the life sciences (two who are members of the Division of Biological Sciences and two who are not~~ and five seven external senior scientists biologists from a variety of disciplines in the public and private sectors, and an equal number of "lay" members from business or industry who have an interest in biology, but are connected with potential sources of support. The committee would be chaired by a senior Cornell faculty member, and would meet at least once every two years. [~~Alternatively, internal and external advisory committees could be appointed the former meeting more frequently, etc.]~~

Rationale: The external advisory committee would be a major mechanism for keeping the Division from becoming isolated or from stagnating. The main functions of this committee are to see that Biology at Cornell is moving in the "right" direction and second to help raise the funds to support it. The lay members of this committee could help the Division in realizing goals which required significant financial assistance. The general makeup of the advisory committee is similar to that of Harvard's Visiting Committee of the Board of Overseers. The several deans of the colleges are ex officio members because they should be informed of the advice given to the Division.

B.) The membership of Internal Advisory Committee will be approved by the provost or his/her delegate. It will consist of the Associate directors of the Division, one member from each of the areas of scholarship elected by the members of the area, and three additional biologists nominated by the Provost, two of whom are not members of the Division. This committee will meet at least monthly with the Director and advise the Director in the day to day operations of the Division.

Rationale: the internal advisory committee will advise the Director in the day to day operations of the

Division. The Associate Directors are included both to hear and to give advice. The non Division members are included to provide a channel from the biology community outside of the Division.

11. Given the wide university interest in achieving greater coherence across the life sciences the composition and role of this committee would be reassessed at the conclusion of the on going university wide program.

Rationale: self-explanatory.

12. Initial reappointment, tenure and promotion decisions at what used to be the sectional level will be made by the tenured faculty of the appropriate "area of scholarship" acting as a department faculty. These decisions will be passed by the associate director of that area to the Director of the Division of Biological Sciences who will convey the faculty's and his or her opinion to the appropriate dean for further action.

Rationale: this procedure mirrors that traditionally employed by the Division.