

---

**From:** [Mike Kotlikoff, Office of the Provost](#)

**Sent:** Monday, January 14, 2019 3:23 PM

**To:** [Charles Francis Van Loan](#)

**Cc:** [John Andrew Siliciano](#); [Patty Ard](#)

**Subject:** CB and DSDS

Dear Charlie,

I am writing to describe the two departmental changes that we discussed. They involve the Department of Biological Statistics and Computational Biology (BSCB) in CALS and the Department of Statistical Science (DSS) in CIS. Both departments were created to bring together faculty in related research fields. While these departmental configurations have proven successful, the subsequent evolution of the fields in each department, combined with the increasing numbers of related faculty in other units on campus, have led the relevant faculty and deans to conclude that further reorganizing and renaming of these faculty configurations will facilitate future growth and impact.

1. Department of Computational Biology (CB). After extensive internal discussions, Biological Statistics and Computational Biology (BSCB) faculty, with the support of the CALS dean, unanimously recommended that the department be reorganized and renamed as the Department of Computational Biology (CB) to allow a more singular focus on the field of computational biology. (As described below, by mutual agreement, the portion of the BSCB faculty whose research focusses on biological statistics would migrate their appointment homes to an enhanced and renamed Department of Statistical Sciences in CIS.) The renamed Department of Computational Biology (CB) will consist of the relevant faculty from BSCB and will also be open to additional faculty membership through the standard cross-appointment processes for faculty from other units that have expertise in the area of computational biology. The dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who currently oversees BSCB, will continue to serve as lead dean for CB, with general oversight responsibility for operational matters. The CALS dean will consult on strategic matters with the deans of other units who support faculty appointed to tenure/tenure track lines within CB. For faculty holding primary appointments within CB, tenure and promotion decisions will follow the normal department review protocols common to shared departments. The BSCB faculty has unanimously approved the above change. The operational mechanics of the restructuring (e.g. TA funding, support for faculty growth) will be documented in an MOU.

2. Department of Statistical and Data Science. The DSS faculty, with support of the CIS dean, have voted to change the name of the department to the Department of Statistical and Data Science (DSDS) to better reflect the current scope and intellectual mission of that department. The renamed department will include faculty from the former BSCB faculty who focus on the statistical sciences, and will also be open to additional faculty membership through the standard cross-appointment processes for faculty in other units who have expertise in the area of statistical science. The dean of Computing and Information Science, who currently oversees DSS, will continue to serve as the lead dean for DSDS, with general oversight responsibility for operational matters. The lead dean will consult on strategic matters with the deans of other units who have faculty appointed to tenure/tenure track lines within DSDS. For faculty holding primary appointments within DSDS, tenure and promotion decisions will follow the normal department review protocols common to shared departments. The renaming of DSS into DSDS has been extensively discussed within CIS and has been approved by vote of the DSS faculty.

Both of these changes have occurred following extensive discussions with the relevant departments and deans, and are fully endorsed by the faculty within the affected units. As we discussed, I would request that you present this background, as well as the faculty White Paper, to CAPP and the Faculty Senate for comment. Please let me know if you need additional information.

Best,  
Mike

-----

Michael I. Kotlikoff, V.M.D., Ph.D.  
Provost and Professor of  
Molecular Physiology  
300 Day Hall  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853  
607-255-2364