

Biology, Geology, and Environmental Science Department
Merger Update
December 10, 2015

Goal: This is a plan to facilitate the merger of UTC's Geology Program with the Department of Biological & Environmental Sciences. The overall goal is have one unified department that maintains and promotes disciplinary identity, strengths, and resources. The merged department will offer four degree programs (B.S. Biology, B.S. Environmental Science, B.S. Geology, M.S. Environmental Science) and consist of over 1000 majors and 31 fulltime faculty. The merged department will be home to about 24 percent of the majors in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), yet its operating budget will represent about 10 percent of the CAS operating budget (based on 2014/15 budget). Obtaining an adequate operating budget to support Biology, Environmental Science, and Geology students will remain a critical need. It is important to note that a merger of this magnitude requires careful consideration and time beyond what is described in this document.

Update: The merger has gone smoothly. Nearly all action items have been completed. There have been no significant challenges or problems thus far and none are anticipated. Faculty from the two former independent departments have facilitated the merger with grace and are embracing new colleagues. The Geology program has retained its cohesive character, yet Geology faculty are contributing to the larger department in meaningful ways. For example, a Geology and a Biology full professor are co-chairing BGE's RTR committee for 2015/2016. Geology faculty are serving on multiple BGE standing and ad hoc committees. A high point made possible by the merger is approval for a new environmental geoscientist position that will benefit multiple BGE academic programs and build UTC GIS capacity. A Geology faculty is chairing the search committee composed of faculty from Geology, Environmental Science, and Biology programs. Looking forward, Bylaws revision is the primary ongoing merger activity, and the goal is to complete revisions by the end of spring 2016 semester. A brief update in italics is provided after each item listed below.

ITEMS

1. Faculty Involvement – Faculty have already been involved and will continue to be involved in developing the merger details through face-to-face discussions and email.

Update: Faculty have had input throughout the merger.

2. Name: The Department of Biology, Geology, and Environmental Science (BGE). This is consistent with degrees, Division names, and other departments on campus. Two other options are Department of Biological, Geological, and Environmental Sciences (BGES) and Department of Life and Earth Sciences. The new name will be finalized in mid-June 2015.

Update: Faculty considered various names and a large majority voted that the name be Biology, Geology, and Environmental Science (BGE). The name was endorsed by UTC upper administrators and is now the name of the department.

3. Program Structure: One integrated department with three Divisions, representing the degree programs: Division of Biology, Division of Geology, Division of Environmental

Sciences. The Divisions are intended to help preserve the disciplinary identity, prestige, and potential of our four degree programs. Preserving disciplinary identity is an important factor to facilitate student recruitment, faculty research and grantsmanship, and graduate employment. However, the department will function as an integrated faculty and administrative unit.

Update: The BGE website has been changed to reflect an integrated department with distinct but related degree programs. The UTC catalog has also been changed to reflect the new structure. Functionally, all faculty attend BGE faculty meeting and department committees are integrated.

4. Administrative Structure: One unified department with shared administrators and administrative support staff. Administration will be provided by existing positions plus one new Associate Department Head. Initially, the new Associate Head will coordinate activities in the Geology program. This function is important to ensure a smooth transition and maintain the integrity of the Geology Division in the short term. Over time, as faculty learn about the respective disciplines, the duties of the associate heads will be adjusted to focus more on activities common to all divisions and less on individual disciplines, wherever feasible. Long term, a new Associate Head is important to cope with additional work and responsibilities associated with adding an additional academic program to a very large, understaffed, and under budgeted department. The Department Head and Associate Heads will coordinate their activities to avoid unnecessary duplication and maximize efficiency. General duties of the positions include:

Department Head (existing, Tucker): Overall departmental oversight and administration, faculty and staff evaluation, petitions, budget, represent and advocate for department.

Senior Associate Department Head (existing, Gaudin): Biology and Environmental Science course scheduling, petitions, overrides, general backup to Department Head

Associate Head 1 (existing, Carver): Coordinate Student Relations, Advising, Retention, Progression, Graduation, Course and Program Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment, Student Scholarships and Awards, Student Events, A & P Course Scheduling

Associate Head 2 (new): Initially, this position will focus on coordinating activities in the Geology program, such as Geology course scheduling, Geology Student Relations, Advising, Retention, Progression, Graduation, Course and Program Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment, Student Scholarships and Awards, Student Events. Initially, this position will be selected by, and will work closely with, the existing geology faculty.

Administrative Assistant (existing, Shutters): Manage department front office, respond to or direct face-to-face, email, and phone inquires, general administrative assistance to department head and faculty, process faculty and student travel, purchase office supplies, enter course overrides, co-supervise student workers

Accounting Specialist (existing, Locke): Bookkeeping and accounting for all state, lab fee, gift, and grant accounts; payroll, personnel hiring and termination paperwork, co-supervise student workers, faculty evaluation paperwork

Faculty Associate (existing, Murphy): Purchase research and teaching supplies and equipment, oversee lab safety, develop and maintain department website, department credit card holder, coordinate introductory biology labs, coordinate equipment maintenance and repair

Update: The administrative structure described above is being implemented and is working well. Approval of an associate head position to focus initially on overseeing the geology program has been critical to achieving a smooth merger transition. The move of the Geology administrative assistant into the BGE Accounting Specialist position has also enabled a smooth merger.

5. Space: Programs and faculty will retain their existing space.

Update: Programs and faculty have retained existing space. There are some space benefits of the merger. BGE faculty meetings are now held in a Geology lab in Grote hall. There is no suitable space large enough to accommodate BGE faculty meetings in Holt Hall. The office in Grote that was vacated when the Geology administrative assistant moved into the Holt Accounting Specialist position will likely be the office for BGE's new environmental geoscientist.

6. Bylaws: Faculty will integrate the two sets of bylaws into one set of bylaws. As part of this process faculty will review reappointment, tenure, and promotion criteria, considering characteristics unique to each program such as existing criteria, teaching loads, research activity, and related factors. There may be instances where separate disciplinary specific criteria and procedures will be retained within the combined bylaws. RTR committee composition will also be addressed in the bylaws. Existing Geology criteria will apply to Geology faculty and existing BES criteria will apply to BES faculty during academic year 2015/2016. This will provide sufficient time for faculty to fully consider ramifications of any proposed changes.

Update: BGE established an ad hoc Bylaws committee involving faculty from Geology and BES to review existing bylaws and make recommendations for integrating Geology and BES Bylaws into one document. The committee met during fall 2015, clarified the mission, and developed a timeline resulting in merged bylaws by April 2016. Final revisions will be considered and voted on by the full BGE faculty. An email summarizing the Bylaws Committee meeting and establishing a timeline is included at the end of this report.

7. Webpage: The Geology website will be integrated into the BES website. The department Faculty Associate (Murphy) will maintain and update the integrated website, with input from Geology faculty and the new Associate Head 2. The website structure will reflect an integrated department with Divisions of Biology, Environmental Sciences, and Geology.

Update: The Geology website has been integrated into the existing BES website. The new BGE website is structured as one integrated department with three primary divisions. Portions of the website are fully integrated – e.g. – all faculty are listed together, and others are have a disciplinary focus – e.g. – curriculums are listed under disciplinary headings. Photos and brief stories about geology students have been added to the BGE website. Additional integration will occur over time.

8. Budget: The Geology budget will be integrated into the BES budget. Presently BES has separate state operating accounts for Biology and Environmental Sciences. Maintaining separate Geology state accounts would be consistent with the present practice in BES. Non-state accounts will be retained and used for existing designated purposes.

Update: The Geology accounts are included in the BGE department. Restricted Geology accounts and geology lab fees are spent to support geology laboratory courses. Unrestricted Geology accounts are spent to support Geology programs. At fiscal year end close out, unrestricted funds will be transferred from accounts with surpluses to cover overages in other accounts, if necessary. The overall goal in administering unrestricted accounts is to ensure faculty and student needs are satisfied to the fullest extent possible.

9. Evaluation: The Department Head will conduct EDO evaluations and the RTR committee and Department Head will perform their respective duties in the faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes. The Department Head will conduct staff evaluations (SPDR).

Update: All EDO objectives were submitted to and reviewed by the BGE head. EDO evaluation by the BGE head will occur in the spring. All BGE faculty undergoing reappointment, tenure, and promotion review will be reviewed by the BGE RTR committee that includes faculty from Geology and BES. RTR is presently co-chaired by a Geology and a Biology professor.

10. Major Rosters: Persons responsible for generating and maintaining a list serve of majors for the four academic programs will be determined.

Update: This is being shared by the introductory biology lab coordinator, M.S. Graduate Coordinator, professional advisor, and Geology Associate Head.

11. Advising: The department Professional Advisor will assign a geology faculty advisor for each geology major. The geology students will be divided equitably among the geology faculty. BES students will continue to be advised by department faculty and the Professional Advisor.

Update: This is occurring.

12. Summer School Teaching: Every fall semester the Department Head will distribute a form to faculty to gauge faculty interest in teaching during the upcoming summer. The Department Head will coordinate with the Associate Heads as they develop summer schedules.

Update: This was delayed because of changes and delays in scheduling summer school. This will occur over the holiday break.

13. Course Syllabi: All faculty will submit syllabi to the department Administrative Assistant.

Update: Syllabi are now being submitted electronically by individual faculty.

14. Building and Room Access: A standard procedure to request building and room access for students and faculty will be developed.

Update: This has occurred. Building access requests are processed through the department administrative assistant, and room access requests are processed through the department faculty associate.

15. Office Supplies: Faculty submit request to Administrative Assistant.

Update: This has been fully implement and is working smoothly.

16. Teaching and Research Equipment and Supplies: Faculty submit requests to Faculty Associate.

Update: This has been fully implement and is working smoothly.

17. Travel Requests: Faculty submit requests to Administrative Assistant.

Update: This has been fully implement and is working smoothly.

18. Faculty Committee Assignments: Every summer, the Department Head will distribute a form to faculty to determine faculty preferences for departmental committee assignments for the academic year. The existing BES list of committees will be updated to include committees unique to Geology that are appropriate for crossover with BES faculty. The Department Head will consider faculty preferences when assigning faculty to committees and will strive to ensure the faculty of each division are adequately represented on committees.

Update: This has been fully implement and is working smoothly.

19. Curriculum Impacts: The departmental curriculum committee will 1) propose catalog revisions to reflect merger (e.g. – department name), 2) assess whether there is duplication in environmental science and geology curriculum and propose revisions if warranted, and 3) consider whether existing course designations (BIOL, ESC, GEOL) and cross listing practices should be modified. Any curriculum decisions impacting Geology curriculum will involve at least two Geology faculty on the curriculum committee.

Update: Basic information in the catalog, e.g. – department name, program descriptions, and course descriptions have been changed to reflect the merger. Additional changes will be proposed in the future.

BES & GEOLOGY MERGER TIMELINE

BES Head Meeting with PGA Head & Faculty to Discuss Merger	April 16, 2015	Complete
BES Faculty Meeting to Discuss Geology Merger	April 17, 2015	Complete
BES Head Meeting with Geology Head & Faculty to Discuss Merger	April 21, 2015	Complete
BES Head Meeting with Dean & Provost to discuss Merger	April 24, 2015	Complete
BES Head Meeting with PGA Administrative Assistant, BES Administrative Assistant, and BES Faculty Associate, and BES Associate Head to discuss Merger Plan	May 21, 2015	Complete
Draft Merger Plan to BGES Faculty for Input	May 22, 2015	Complete
BES Head Meeting with Geology Faculty for Input	May 29, 2015	Complete
Draft Merger Plan to Dean & Provost	May 31, 2015	Complete
Mailboxes created for Geology Personnel in Holt 215 Mailroom	June 12, 2015	Complete
Department Name Finalized	June 22, 2015	Complete
Order Letterhead and Business Cards with New Department Name and Address	June 22 – July 1, 2015	Ongoing*
Notify UTC Mailroom of New Geology Address beginning July 1, 2015	June 22, 2015	Complete
Geology Mail delivered to Holt 215	July 1, 2015	Complete
Geology budget transferred to BES	July 1, 2015	Complete
Geology office supply purchasing transfers to Administrative Assistant, Holt 215	July 1, 2015	Complete
Geology travel approvals and reimbursement processing transfers to Administrative Assistant/Department Head	July 1, 2015	Complete
Geology personnel files and department records transferred to Holt 215	July 1, 2015	Complete
Geology personnel paperwork processing responsibility transfers to BGES Accounting Specialist Position	July 1, 2015	Complete
Purchasing of Geology teaching and research equipment and supplies transfers to Faculty Associate, Holt 215	July 1, 2015	Complete
Submit Requests for Catalog Revisions to reflect Merger	July 1, 2015	Ongoing**
Merge BES and Geology Websites	Summer 2015	Complete
Select Associate Head 2 for Geology	Summer 2015	Complete
Draft Merged Bylaws including RTR criteria and procedures to Dean & Provost	April, 2016	Ongoing***

*BGE letterhead is complete. Faculty are continuing to order new business cards.

**Basic integration is complete. Curriculum related revisions may occur in the future.

***BGE is on schedule to complete this task.

Bylaws Committee: Spring 2016 Objectives, Meeting Schedule - Inbox

Message

Delete Reply Reply All Forward Move Rules Junk Unread Categorize Follow Up

Bylaws Committee: Spring 2016 Objectives, Meeting Schedule

Schorr, Mark S

Sent: Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 3:03 PM

To: Aborn, David; Adams, Callie Adams; Bramblett, Jeremy; Churnet, Habte Giorgis; and [4 more](#)

Cc: Tucker, John C

[BGES Bylaws Comm_Meeting_1_2015-12-01.docx \(19.1 KB\)](#) Preview

You replied to this message on 12/1/15, 4:25 PM. Show Reply

Colleagues,

Please find attached a meeting schedule for the Bylaws committee. I've scheduled 5-7 meetings on Fridays at 12:05-1:00 pm. We will meeting the departmental conference room (Holt 214-215). Over the break, I'll start drafting a Bylaws document (merging BIOL/ESC and GEOL into one set of Bylaws - per our objective/discussion). Please note that I have set a deadline of 18 March 2016 (moved up a bit from what I mentioned in the meeting) for the completion of our work - Departmental Bylaws for BGES.

Today, we outlined our work ahead - to be completed in the Spring 2016 semester - which will focus on evaluating the present bylaws of our former departments (BES and PGA), and merging these into a single set of Departmental Bylaws for BGES. Related topics discussed at today's meeting included teaching loads (e.g., mean contact hours [tenure-track faculty] ~ 9.8 in BES vs 15 in Geol) and the tenure process/criteria for BES and Geology.

Our second meeting is scheduled for 22 Jan 2016. In the next meeting, we will continue our discussion of tenure criteria/research teaching loads/related topics and review a rough draft of the Departmental Bylaws for BGES (which I'll send you via email before we meet).

Thank you comments/contributions at today's meeting.

Mark

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From: Schorr, Mark S
Sent: Saturday, November 28, 2015 4:42 PM
To: Locke, Kelly; Aborn, David; Adams, Callie Adams; Barbosa, Jose; Barbosa, Nominanda; Boyd, Jennifer; Bramblett, Jeremy; Brock-Hon, Amy; Carver, Ethan; Caskey, Jodi; Chatzimanolis, Stylianos; Churnet, Habte Giorgis; Craddock, Hill; Gaudin, Timothy J; Giles, David; Harrell, Katherine; Hayes, Loren; Holmes, Ann E; Kajita, Yukie; Klug, Hope; Kovach, Margaret J; McCauley, Joseph; Mies, Jonathan W; Mikelson, Colleen ; Murphy, Cheryl; O'Neill, Eric O'Neill; Reynolds, Bradley; Richards, Sean Richards; Shaw, Joey; Shuttlers, Marketa; Spratt, Henry G; Tucker, John C; Williams, Wayne; Wilson, Thomas
Subject: Bylaws Committee Meeting Tues., Dec. 1, at 12 noon

Colleagues on the Bylaws Committee,

We will meet on Tuesday, December 1, at 12 pm in Holt 214/215 (conference room in departmental office suite). We should be able to conclude our business in ~20 minutes. In this meeting, we briefly discuss our objectives/work for evaluating the Departmental Bylaws and RTR criteria since the merger. The Departmental Bylaws for Biological and Environmental Sciences are posted on Blackboard.

Best,
Mark

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Department of Biology, Geology, Environmental Science

Bylaws Committee Meeting

December 1, 2015

BGES Bylaws Committee, 2015-2016: Mark Schorr (chair), David Aborn, Jeremy Bramblett, Habte Churnet, Tim Gaudin, Loren Hayes, Eric O'Neill

Present: Callie Adams, David Aborn, Jeremy Bramblett, Habte Churnet, Tim Gaudin, Loren Hayes, Eric O'Neill, Mark Schorr

Objective: 1) To discuss Bylaws of the Dept. of Biological/Environmental Sciences (BES) and the Dept. of Physics, Geology, and Astronomy (PGA)

2) To discuss the process of revising/merging Departmental Bylaws of BES and PGA into one Bylaws document for the Dept. of Biology, Geology, and Environmental Science (BGES)

3) To create one Departmental Bylaws document of the Dept. of BGES

Deadline: March 18, 2016: Submit final version of Departmental Bylaws to BGES Head

Meetings: Fridays, 12:05-1:00 pm (see meeting schedule below)

Spring 2016 Schedule of Bylaws Committee Meetings

January 22: Discussion of Bylaws; review draft Bylaws document (draft 1, M. Schorr)

February 5: Review revised document (draft 2)

February 19: Final comments on revised document (draft 3); submit document to departmental faculty for review

March 4: Review revised document (draft 4), after review by BGES faculty; resubmit to departmental faculty, if necessary, for review

March 18* Submit final version of Bylaws document to John Tucker (BGES Dept. chair)

April 8: Meet if necessary

April 22: Meet if necessary

*Spring Break, March 14-20