



MEMORANDUM

To: Executive Committee of Faculty Council (April 7, 2020)
Faculty Council (April 29, 2020)

From: Professor Warren Chan
Director, Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering

Date: February 13, 2020

Re: **Proposal to Change the Name of the *Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering* to the *Institute of Biomedical Engineering***

REPORT CLASSIFICATION

This is a major policy matter that will be considered by the Executive Committee for endorsing and forwarding to Faculty Council for vote as a regular motion (requiring a simple majority of members present and voting to carry).

RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

The Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering (IBBME), an Extra-Departmental Unit, Type A (EDU:A) led by the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, requests that its name (and the name of its graduate unit) be changed to the *Institute of Biomedical Engineering* (IBME).

The Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering was created in 1999 through the merger of the Institute of Biomedical Engineering, the Centre for Biomaterials, and the Tissue Engineering group. Recognizing the synergistic research activities between these entities, the merger allowed for better operation of biomedical engineering-related activities at the University of Toronto and captured the biomedical engineering wave in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Many universities similarly launched biomedical engineering and bioengineering departments/institutes but these focused on diverse research activities and there was no consensus at the time of a “standard” department/institute name.

The biomedical engineering field has matured in the last twenty years, leading to a greater consensus in a department/institute name, research activities, education programs, etc. Today, the biomedical engineering field uses engineering and physical principles to address biomedical problems and involves the design of new biomaterials, electronics, devices and

systems to treat and detect the most debilitating diseases. This definition aligns well with the broader research activity in IBBME.

Aligning the name of the Institute with the global community will allow greater recognition of the Institute's research, students and education activities. Prior to proposing this name change, IBBME surveyed the biomedical engineering community at the 2018 Biomedical Engineering Society meeting. Less than 50 percent of the attendees who took the survey understood what IBBME stands for or knew that there are biomedical engineering activities at the University of Toronto. It was clear that including "biomaterials" in the name hampers recognition. Also, few people knew what the two "Bs" (biomaterials and biomedical) stood for in the IBBME acronym. A Google search revealed no other biomedical departments or institutes with "biomaterials" in their name.

Furthermore, the proposed name better aligns with the Institute's graduate programs: MASc in Biomedical Engineering, MEng in Biomedical Engineering, and PhD in Biomedical Engineering (a fourth graduate program is the MHSc in Clinical Engineering), with the Biomedical Systems Engineering stream¹ in Engineering Science and with the Faculty's undergraduate minor in Biomedical Engineering.

This name change is therefore requested for two reasons: (1) biomaterials (used in medical applications) is a sub-category of the field of biomedical engineering and should not be emphasized in the name, and (2) greater alignment with the names of departments and institutes globally will provide greater recognition of the biomedical engineering activities at the University of Toronto.

CONSULTATION

The proposed name change was discussed and approved unanimously at the IBBME Faculty retreat in May 2019, which included core and cross-appointed faculty, students and administrative staff. It once again received unanimous support at the November 13, 2019 IBBME Faculty meeting including from the emeritus professors in attendance, who thought the original name was too long.

The name change was discussed at IBBME student town halls held on October 30, November 1 and November 7, 2019. All students supported the new name, which they stated would give them better recognition during job interviews and at conferences.

Chairs and directors of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering's departments and EDU:As and EDU:Bs were informed of the proposed change in December 2019, and expressed their support.

¹ "Streams" are known as "options" or "majors" in Engineering Science. Engineering Science plans to change the name of its "Biomedical Systems Engineering" stream to "Biomedical Engineering" in 2020-2021.

The proposed name change was discussed with the Deans of the Institute's partner Faculties (Medicine and Dentistry) in December 2019 and January 2020. Both were supportive of the name change.

The proposed name change was also supported by the Acting Vice-Provost, Relations with Healthcare Institutions in January 2020, and by the Council of Health Sciences in February 2020.

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL

Subject to approval of the Academic Board and confirmation by the Executive Committee of Governing Council:

THAT the name of the EDU:A *Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering* be changed to the *Institute of Biomedical Engineering*, effective July 1, 2020.