FOR APPROVAL

TO: Arts & Science Council

SPONSOR: Jay Pratt, Vice-Dean, Research & Infrastructure

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DATE: November 13 for November 20, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM OF BUSINESS:
Closure of the Centre for Biological Timing and Cognition – EDU:C

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:
As per IV-9 of the Faculty of Arts and Science Council Constitution, “Council shall also review and approve or recommend for approval to the Governing Council proposals concerning Extra-Departmental Units in the Faculty, pursuant to the Policy on Interdisciplinary Education and Research Planning.” The creation or closure of an EDU-C requires final approval by the Faculty of Arts & Science Council.

GOVERNANCE PATH:
Arts & Science Council [For Approval], November 20, 2019.

HIGHLIGHTS:
The proposal is to close the Centre for Biological Timing and Cognition (CBTC) as an EDU-C (Extra-departmental Unit, type “C”) of the Faculty of Arts & Science. The Centre and its building were created in 2007 in large part due to a $30M Canada Foundation for Innovation funding initiative. While originally intended to be a facility and hub in the study of circadian rhythms and cognition, over time the Centre has effectively functioned as a set of independent laboratories for researching in brain and behavior from the Departments of Psychology, and Cell and Systems Biology. The research of affiliated members is not organized by the CBTC, and the current Director recommended the disbanding of the Centre and the laboratory space be placed under the oversight and control of the respective home departments of the researchers.

MOTION:

THAT the Centre for Biological Timing and Cognition be closed as an EDU:C of the Faculty of Arts & Science effective December 31, 2019.
Proposal for Closure: Centre for Biological Timing and Cognition – as an Extra-Departmental Unit type ‘C’ (EDU-C) of the Faculty of Arts & Science (A&S) at the University of Toronto

November 4, 2019

Brief History of the EDU-C
The Centre for Biological Timing and Cognition (CBTC) was established in the Faculty of Arts & Science (A&S) in 2007 as an EDU:C. The Centre and the building that houses it were created primarily through a $30M Canada Foundation for Innovation funding initiative, under the leadership of Dr. Martin Ralph from the Department of Psychology (inaugural Director). Its purpose was to serve as a novel, integrated, multidisciplinary, multi-site facility to study circadian rhythms and cognition, and generate new insight into optimizing productivity and quality of life for Canadians of all ages and the international community.

Specifically, the CBTC was created to undertake research on:
- the synchrony between biological rhythms and the schedules imposed by school and work influences cognitive function and performance;
- the roles that sleep and sleep disturbance play in cognition and mental health;
- the neural and genetic mechanisms responsible for the control of rhythms and cognition;
- the developmental and age-related changes in the influence that biological timing has on cognition;
- the impact of seasonal changes in light cycles and other environmental factors on cognition; and
- to design ways to improve cognitive ability, sleep, mental health, and work and school achievement by identifying and eliminating the causes of disturbed or poorly synchronized biological timing and sleep.

Reason for Recommending Closure of the EDU-C
For the last 8 plus years, the CBTC has essentially functioned as a set of independent laboratories for brain and behaviour researchers from the Departments of Psychology (PSY) and Cell and Systems Biology (CSB). While the CBTC houses a suite of shared equipment that supports confocal microscopy, tissue sectioning, bio-analysis and animal behaviour testing for all affiliated researchers (all of which is currently supported by a technical manager), the research programs of the affiliated members are not organized by the CBTC’s core organizing mission.

The current CBTC Director is Dr. John Peever (CSB). During his 6-year tenure, he has overseen the Centre’s function as core laboratory space. After consultation with the Chairs of CSB and PSY, the Vice-Dean Research & Infrastructure, Jay Pratt, and the core users of the CBTC, his recommendation is that the centre be decommissioned and that the associated laboratory spaces of affiliated researchers be placed under the oversight and control of their respective home Departments. Under the leadership of Vice-Dean Pratt, A&S supports this recommendation. All parties (Dr. Peever, CSB Chair, Vince Tropepe, PSY Chair, Susanne Ferber, and Vice-Dean Pratt) have agreed on the immediate future space allocation plans, which have been designed to support the growth and sustainability of animal neuroscience research in the Faculty of A&S.
Closure Plans and Activities
To prepare for closure, the Vice-Dean Research & Infrastructure, Jay Pratt, with the support of his Research Services and Infrastructure & Planning teams, as well as Dr. Peever, undertook consultation with all of the CBTC users, and the Department Chairs of PSY and CSB (Dr. Ferber and Dr. Tropepe, respectively) to develop Decommissioning plans, specifically:

1. to develop a preliminary CBTC space allocation plan for the immediate future,
2. to identify and plan for required renovations that accommodate a) future growth of animal neuroscience and behavioral research in A&S and b) address space and infrastructure deficiencies,
3. to outline plans with PSY and CSB that ensure space and infrastructure is appropriately shared and that both space and equipment utilization is maximized,
4. to formalize the Biological Sciences Facility’s oversight of animal research in the labs, and
5. to ensure the proper custody of shared core infrastructure and space.

Activities to date include
- Preliminary floor plans developed, outlining the allocation and future use of the space, as well as an accounting of the scope of renovations needed. A Project Planning Report will be developed during the Fall of 2019.
- Preliminary agreement between A&S Dean’s Office, Departments of PSY and CSB regarding space allocation plans, sharing arrangements for core facilities, shared use of future flexible wet-lab and behavioral testing spaces, formalizing the role of the BSF Director re: oversight of animal care and husbandry in the area, as well as cleaning and organizing animal rooms, overseeing equipment service/maintenance (in compliance with Federal and Provincial animal research regulations).
- A&S has agreed to fund a 1.0 FTE staff position, which will report to the Director of the BSF (with accountability to both Department Chairs as well). The person will be devoted roughly 60% to managing core infrastructure (i.e. Confocal microscopy) and management of laboratory spaces, as well as 40% accountability to BSF – i.e. animal care and husbandry, overseeing equipment service, compliance checks, etc. The position is in the process of being developed.

Future Activities
- Develop a formal Memorandum of Agreement between the Departments of Psychology and Cell and Systems Biology, the A&S Office of the Dean, and the BSF outlining:
  o BSF Oversight Role
  o Agreement on shared use of core facilities, infrastructure and space
  o Cost sharing and/or recovery model for core equipment
- Develop formal budget and project plans based on the Project Planning Report that addresses space and infrastructure deficiencies.

The Division is committed to working with the Departments of CSB, PSY and the A&S Biological Sciences Facility to support the growth and sustainability of animal neuroscience research in the Faculty of A&S.

Effective Closure Date
It is recommended that the CBTC, as an EDU-C of the Faculty of A&S be closed effective December 31, 2019 – to coincide with the completion of Dr. Peever’s term as CBTC Director.