

# AACR 4

Office of the President  
June 11, 2013

Members, Board of Trustees:

## CHANGE IN NAME AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE GRADUATE CENTER FOR BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Recommendation: that the Board of Trustees approve the change in the name and organizational structure of the Graduate Center for Biomedical Engineering to the Department of Biomedical Engineering, in the College of Engineering, effective July 1, 2013.

Background: The Graduate Center for Biomedical Engineering was established by the Board of Trustees on March 4, 1986. Whereas most benchmark universities established departments of biomedical engineering, the University of Kentucky (UK) has retained the “center” designation. Although operation of the program as a graduate center preserved the multidisciplinary character of biomedical engineering, existence as a center limits certain educational opportunities and serves as a source of continuing confusion regarding the center.

Quality graduate students are critical to a successful program. Competition for top-level students is an ongoing challenge. The University of Kentucky’s biomedical engineering program must not only compete with perennially top-ranked programs but with benchmark institutions as well. These universities have departments of bioengineering or biomedical engineering. The center designation at UK is a frequent source of confusion. Many view a center as a diffuse collection of faculty from different departments. Historically, across the country a biomedical engineering center served as an umbrella under which education and research activities took place, yet students receive degrees in their respective “home” departments.

Even though UK’s administrative and governing regulations clearly state that graduate centers are equivalent to a department administratively, they are restricted to graduate education only. With the organizational change to a department, the unit will be able to offer undergraduate as well as graduate degrees. The long-term potential for growth and excellence in the biomedical engineering programs at UK are best served by a change from the Graduate Center for Biomedical Engineering to the Department of Biomedical Engineering.

The proposal has been reviewed and recommended by the Senate Committee on Academic Organization and Structure and the Senate Council. The University Senate endorsed the name and organizational structure change of the Center. The Interim Provost of the University supports this recommendation.

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Action taken:     Approved     Disapproved     Other \_\_\_\_\_