

## Issues Related to a Merger Proposal for the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology and the Department of Pathology

In considering a merger of departments, major issues include a sound academic basis (departments should have complementary missions), goals of such a merger to include a positive effect on program efficiencies within the departments and resource management in the institution, reasonable assurance of continued viability and improved quality of essential departmental activities (education, research, service), adequacy of support resources, impact of such a merger on retention of current faculty and future faculty recruitment.

Discussion issues to consider in proposing a merger of the departments of anatomy and neurobiology and pathology:

1. Many institutions are reviewing traditional organizational departmental structures as a part of strategic planning to determine the best organizational structure that promotes internal collaborations and communication. There are several where mergers have formed or are proposed between the departments of anatomy and pathology. Some examples from web sites are listed below:

University of South Florida: "Welcome to the Department of Pathology and Cell Biology at the University of South Florida Health College of Medicine. The identification of Pathology as a discipline bridging the basic and clinical sciences is particularly true today after the recent merging of two departments (Pathology and Anatomy) within the newly created School of Basic Biomedical Sciences."

Thomas Jefferson University (Jefferson Medical College): "The Department of Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology offers a graduate program (Ph.D.) in *Molecular Cell Biology*, and undergraduate courses in pathology, anatomy and cell biology as part of the M.D. program of the Medical School"

Eastern Virginia Medical School: "The mission of the Department of Pathology and Anatomy is the advancement of knowledge of both normal and pathological structures and processes in human biology. Essential current information is taught to medical, physician assistant, and graduate students in courses on gross anatomy, histology, neuroscience, and pathology." Although not obvious from the name, this department appears to include neuroscience.

Marshall University: "Welcome to the Department of Pathology and Anatomy and at the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. Our mission is to strive for excellence in teaching, research and patient care. Through our sections of Pathology and Anatomy, the Department bridges basic and

clinical knowledge in the training of medical students and provides sophisticated diagnostic and consultative services for patient care."

Columbia University: Minutes of the Faculty Senate, February 2007:  
"Dean of the Faculty of Medicine has proposed to merge the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology with the Department of Pathology, and to call the new unit the Department of Pathology and Cell Biology."

2. Both departments have essential roles in terms of contributions to teaching, research, institutional service. Activities in both departments have an emphasis on morphology and function of cells, tissues, organs so that there is a reasonable complementariness in terms of the departmental mission and focus
3. There already exists strong faculty commitment to and extensive participation in the undergraduate medical and graduate teaching programs. With an increased emphasis on centralized control of the curriculum and more integration of basic science and clinical material, a merger of departments would enhance faculty interactions and collaborations to support this emphasis
4. There is the lack of a critical mass of faculty in key areas of both departments and issues related to anticipated faculty attrition over the next few years underscores the need for recruitment of faculty especially to perform the teaching duties. Alternatively, there could be incentives/training opportunities developed for graduate students, fellows and faculty members to strengthen their expertise especially for the teaching of the students in the undergraduate medical courses.
5. There is a very strong research program in the neurosciences with most participating faculty having a faculty home in the Anatomy Department; however, there is limited research activity by members of the faculty who are not associated with the Neuroscience Institute. In the Pathology Department, there is a strong research focus for two faculty members, but there is a need to enhance the department's research programs through recruitment of additional faculty. An association with neuroscience research could possibly be an effective recruitment tool for attracting clinical faculty with the possibility for increased opportunities for translational research.
6. Some degree of conflict currently exists within the anatomy department based on spheres of interest (traditional anatomists/cell biologists versus "neuroscientists"). There is a need for some resolution of this issue.