



UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING

Office of  
Academic Affairs

Office of Academic Affairs  
Dept. 3302 • 1000 E. University Avenue  
Laramie, WY 82071  
(307) 766-4286 • (307) 766-6476 • fax (307) 766-2606  
[www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs)

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Re: UW Regulation 2-13: Biodiversity Institute

Under the auspices of University Regulation 2-13, the Provost and Executive Vice President, in consultation with Vice President of Research and Economic Development, Brent Ewers, Director, Biodiversity Institute (BI), and John Koprowski, Dean, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources (Haub School), proposes that the Biodiversity Institute be moved to the Haub School in the UW organizational structure and budget. The transfer of the Biodiversity Institute to the Academic Affairs Division has the support of the Provost's Office. This document outlines plans for the transition of staff and budget to ensure the long-term viability and growth of the BI.

## **Background:**

The University of Wyoming's Biodiversity Institute was established in 2012 when the building for Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center was constructed. At that time, BI was part of the Haub School. In its beginning years, generous contributions from Bob and Carol Berry provided resources through the Wolf Creek Foundation. Once that funding ended, UW decided to close BI, which resulted in a negative reaction from BI supporters. In response to this reaction, a proposal was developed in 2018 to transfer BI responsibility to the Research and Economic Development Division. The recommendations presented to the UW Board of Trustees included: "(1) leveraging BI practices to benefit STEM education and outreach across UW and joining forces with the Science Initiative; (2) maintaining administrative support for the Program in Ecology; (3) continuing support of the Museum of Vertebrates and its curation; and (4) developing a capacity to create "Broader Impacts" plans for research proposals."

Since that transfer, there has been mixed success in implementing these recommendations. Now there is a thriving interdepartmental Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution (PiEE) and an outstanding Museum of Vertebrates. Both activities are not implemented by or financially supported by BI. The public engagement goal of BI is implemented extremely well with dedicated staff that conduct a set of activities serving local and state-wide communities. BI does not administer any formal courses or education programs (e.g., minor, or major). It also does not provide University-wide assistance for developing a wide spectrum of broader impacts activities nor does it have formal collaborations with the Science Initiative.

The mission of BI is highly relevant to Wyoming communities. Since its beginning, BI has focused on the interplay between society and biological diversity. It aims to foster the knowledge, appreciation, and conservation of biological diversity through (1) innovative research, education, and outreach, and (2) engaging a broad audience in the scientific process of exploring biodiversity. Both activities are broader than the mission of the Research and Economic Development Division, which focuses on expanding externally funded research enterprises across the campus and on fostering economic development across the state. Therefore, we believe that the mission of the BI will be better served by transferring it to an academic unit that is focused on engagement, education, and research in environmental sciences.

The Haub School provides an excellent home for the BI. Its mission to advance the understanding and resolution of environment and natural resource issues aligns with the BI mission as biological diversity is a major component of natural resources. Like BI, the Haub School also uses strategies of engagement with communities to explore the understanding of natural resources and to address issues where competing societal interests are at play.

Because of overlapping missions and synergistic strengths, the transfer of BI to the Haub School will make BI economically sustainable while fostering the expansion of its activities and impacts. This proposal was discussed with Dean Rasco of the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences, and Natural Resources. She agreed with the proposal. The proposal was also discussed with the current staff of the BI; they agreed with the transfer. Some of the staff members have been with the BI since its inception, and thus have already worked under the auspices of the Haub School. Finally, the proposal was discussed with the faculty and staff of the Haub School and the Haub School's advisory board; the Haub School would welcome the BI with a sustainable plan in place that includes a core of positions supported by the central block grant.

## BI in Haub School

### Activities:

BI in the Haub School will continue its private fundraising and public engagement activities. It will also develop formal educational and research activities over time that can include:

- Wyoming Naturalist certification/certificates
- A Biodiversity minor
- Biodiversity faculty affiliations across the campus
- Biodiversity events for research and education (e.g. workshops and research seminars)
- Fostering interdisciplinary projects in biodiversity through affiliated faculty

### Financial Sustainability:

- The transfer of BI to the Haub School will increase **efficiency**. Currently BI has functions such as accounting that will not be needed in the Haub School, which has existing business operations functions that can manage BI needs. BI also has functions (communication and marketing) that are needed in the Haub School, whereas BI lacks events management expertise, which is available in the Haub School.
- The transfer of BI to the Haub School will **expand opportunities** for financial stability. The existing (private fundraising) will be streamlined and more effective because of the overlap between donor bases and the shared major gift officer for BI and the Haub School. New activities will allow the Haub School to generate income through tuition revenues and indirect costs on externally funded grants, which will serve as the home department/college for such revenue return.
- Core support** for the existing permanent staff will be a key to the success of BI. In the next budget request, UW will include an increase in the block grant to the Haub School to ensure support for the core staff of BI. Until the block grant increase is in place, REDD will continue to support the core staff in BI (Dorothy Tuthill, Erendira Morales, and Mason Lee).
- Transition funding** from REDD will assist with an efficient transition. These funds will support the three core positions listed above in the Haub School.
- Endowment funds and current balances** will be transferred to the Haub School for continued growth to support BI activities in accordance with the intent of each gift.

## Staff positions

**Director:** After BI transfer, this position will report to the Dean of Haub School, which will be responsible for the selection, appointment, and compensation for this position.

**Associate Director:** This position will be continued after transfer.

**Project Coordinator:** This position will be continued after transfer through support from an increase in the block grant; until this increase is realized, REDD will continue to provide support for the Project Coordinator's salary.

**Communications and Marketing Specialist:** This position will be continued after transfer through support from an increase in the block grant; until this increase is realized, REDD will continue to provide support salary for up to three years.

The following positions in the BI are currently unoccupied or covered through hourly employees:

**Research Scientist, Asst-** This position is expected to provide broader impacts and help in proposal preparation across the campus. This function will be transferred to the newly reconfigured EPSCoR office and will not continue in the transferred BI.

**Accountant-** This function for the BI will be covered by the existing accounting staff in the Haub School.

**Website Designer and Developer-** The current BI website was designed outside the UWYO website. It will be realigned with the UW website. A separate full-time staff person will not be needed after the first year when the website and programmatic materials are transferred and incorporated with the UWYO/Haub School websites with the potential to share this position across campus a possibility.

## Space

The BI is housed in the Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center (BBCC); however, the BI and the BBCC are not synonymous. Space in the BBCC is controlled by the university process through Operations Division.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor BBCC BI Suite:** The current BI suite of space (Rooms 227, 327 – conference rooms, 231, 233, 235) and offices in 108, 208 and 308 will be transferred to the Haub School; the Haub School graduate students with an emphasis in biodiversity can be considered through current grad student space assignment practices for space in the graduate student offices under BI but shared with other biodiversity units in 210 and 310. These space assignments will permit the Haub School and BI to be integrated quickly and facilitate the continued growth of partnerships.

This organizational change will follow UW Regulation 2-13 due to the transfer of the BI to an academic unit.

Regards,



Kevin R. Carman  
Provost and Executive Vice President

CC:  
Ed Seidel, President  
Parag Chitnis, VP for Research and Economic Development  
John Koprowski, Dean, Haub School  
Brent Ewers, Director, Biodiversity Institute