

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

Approved by the
Regents
December 18, 2014

ACTION REQUEST: Change in Name of an Existing Department

CURRENT NAME: Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences,
College of Engineering

RECOMMENDED NAME: Department of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering,
College of Engineering

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2015

The Dean and the Executive Committee of the College of Engineering are pleased to recommend that the Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences be renamed as the Department of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering, College of Engineering, effective September 1, 2015.

The Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences (AOSS) has seen pronounced shifts, coinciding with national and international trends in atmospheric and space science and evolving societal needs. Since the department no longer offers courses or conducts research in oceanography, “Oceanic,” which is in the department’s current name, no longer applies to the program. Faculty expertise is now grouped within five broad subdivisions: (1) climate science; (2) atmospheric chemistry and dynamics; (3) planetary atmospheres and magnetospheres; (4) space weather; and (5) space systems engineering. Increasingly, faculty research has become highly integrative from seeking the origins of solar flares and coronal mass ejections, to probing the atmospheres and space environments of Earth and the planets, to innovating new experimental techniques for measuring climate change and exploring the Solar System.

Today the department is a research leader in climate science and education. Their faculty research programs are sponsored by federal agencies charged with the understanding, forecast and mitigation of climate change. While theory and modeling continue to be important, there has been a pronounced shift toward experimental investigations including the regional atmospheric chemistry, the remote sensing of atmospheres by satellites, and the engineering of space instrumentation to probe the Sun, planets, and the local interstellar medium. This growing emphasis on experimental science has greatly diversified and increased the external funding sources that provide the grants that support the department’s research and graduate student education. The department’s leadership in climate and space sciences, and related engineering disciplines, also extends to their undergraduate and graduate teaching and the wide range of courses they offer.

The name change will accurately communicate to undergraduates, graduate students, and the scientific and engineering communities the rich educational opportunities and research capabilities of the department. The department prepares students for careers in industry, government, and academic units charged with climate change research and assessment, space weather science and mitigation, Solar System exploration, and space systems engineering. These

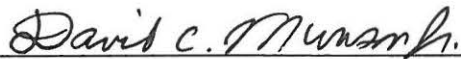
new and rapidly evolving scientific and engineering disciplines are well outside of AOSS's historical focus on meteorology, high altitude atmospheric research, and oceanic science.

The proposed name change will encourage new connections to units across the University of Michigan by more fully and accurately communicating the scope and depth of the faculty's research, teaching, and service. The name change will also help students to recognize opportunities for interdisciplinary research, participation in instrument and space mission development teams, climate and space related laboratories, and broad faculty expertise. Most important, it will add to the visibility of the university as one of the premier institutions engaged in the study of climate and space issues from a wide variety of perspectives.

We are pleased to recommend that the Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences be renamed as the Department of Climate and Space Sciences and Engineering, College of Engineering, effective September 1, 2015.

RECOMMENDED BY:

RECOMMENDATION ENDORSED BY:



David C. Munson, Jr.
Robert J. Vlasic Dean of Engineering
College of Engineering



Martha E. Pollack
Provost and Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs

December 2014