

RESOLUTION TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCES

To: Faculty Senate

From: FACULTY SENATE ACADEMIC PLANNING & ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Committee Chair, Diane Christian, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor

Date proposed to FSEC: The original resolution was proposed 10/29/2024.

Date approved by the FSEC for placement on the Faculty Senate Calendar: 10/29/2024

Date approved by the Faculty Senate: 12/17/2024

Vote of the FS: 69 Approved/1 Disapproved/0 Abstentions

WHEREAS the Faculty of the Department of Geology in the College of Arts and Sciences seeks to change its name to the Department of Earth Sciences, they cite the following reasons:

- 1) The majority of “Top 25” schools have the phrase “Earth Sciences” in their departmental names because the name “Geology” is limited and outdated.
- 2) The name “Earth Sciences” better communicates what they do, which is research the intersection of science and society; where most people think of Geology as “rocks”.
- 3) Changing the name to “Earth Sciences” should enhance the recruitment of graduate students, including to their new and first-in-the-country MS program in “Computational Earth Sciences.” Similarly, current undergraduates do not know what “Geology” is, or they assume it is oil or gas extraction—and no one in the department is researching fossil fuels;

WHEREAS the faculty surveyed other geoscience departments in the country to identify their nomenclature practice and considered SUNY schools for non-conflict (See attached report tables.);

WHEREAS the Department held extended discussions and then voted unanimously in March 2024 to seek the change;

Whereas Dean Schultze and Associate Deans Bennett and Tjaden concur in full support;

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate Academic Planning & Assessment Committee met with Geology Chair Professor Tracey Gregg, Dean Robin Schultze and Associate Dean Sean Bennett to discuss pertaining matters on 18 October 2024;

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate Academic Planning & Assessment Committee accepted the faculty argument that the name change better represented their research and goals and further noted that the term “Earth Sciences” would also be more in keeping with New York State middle school educational experience and so more recognizable and attractive to students;

WHEREAS the Academic Planning & Assessment Committee voted unanimously to approve the change in name;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Department of Geology change its name to the Department of Earth Sciences.




University at Buffalo

Faculty Affairs

Office of the Provost

To: Vice Presidents
Vice Provosts
Deans
Department Chairs
Institutional Analysis
Business Services
Human Resources
Chair, Faculty Senate
UB Now

From: Robert Granfield 
Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Subject: Department of Geology Name Change

Date: January 15, 2025

This is to advise you that President Satish K. Tripathi has approved the name change of the Department of Geology to the Department of Earth Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences.

cc: Satish K. Tripathi, President
A. Scott Weber, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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