To: Dr. Meredith Hay, Executive Vice President and Provost

From: G. Tim Bowden, PhD, Chair, Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program

Re: Cancer Biology GIDP and the Transformation Process

The CBIO Executive Committee met on September 22, 2008 to discuss the role of the CBIO GIDP in the University transformation process. The unanimous decision of this Committee was to remain a GIDP. In addition, a survey by e-mail was conducted for the CBO GIDP faculty and the responses indicated overwhelming support to remain a GIDP.

This decision and recommendation to remain a GIDP was based on the fact that Cancer Biology is truly an interdisciplinary science and Ph.D. students in the Program are best served through a Program that crosses departmental and college boundaries. The interdisciplinary nature of the training in this Program is supported by the most recent Academic Program review and the recent awarding of a $2.1 million National Cancer Institute T32 training grant which provides training support for predoctoral students specifically pursuing a Ph.D in Cancer Biology.

The mission of the CBIO Program is to train the next generation of Ph.D and M.D./Ph.D. students who have gained the required knowledge in cancer biology so they can contribute to the prevention and treatment of human cancers. There are 57 faculty from 16 departments and 6 colleges across the campus. The CBIO Program presently has 24 Ph.D. and one M.D./Ph.D. student being trained. Since 1988 when the CBIO Program was approved by ABOR as a GIDP, we have graduated 49 Ph.D. and 6 M.D./Ph.D. students. All of the CBIO graduates have gone on for postdoctoral training and are now transitioning into academic as well as industry positions.

The Academic Review external advisory committee for our 2004 review indicated that:

- “As the University develops its strategy of "focused excellence", CBIO should serve as a flagship graduate program, based on its exceptional faculty drawn from diverse disciplines, its highly integrative and collaborative nature, and the high quality of the students it is able to recruit.”
- “Since the last review, the program has approximately doubled in size and has developed a strong national reputation.”
- “The program faculty is outstanding, including many internationally recognized leaders in various areas of cancer research. The quality of the faculty is demonstrated by the fact that virtually all of them are supported by peer-reviewed NIH grants. “
- The program has been able to attract excellent students from around the country, with increasing quality and geographic and ethnic diversity over the last seven years.”
- “The students in the program are highly energetic, enthusiastic, and appreciative of the quality of the training they are receiving.”
- “Overall, the graduate training program is well-conceived and executed, as indicated by the high level of student satisfaction and the outcomes indicated above.”
“In summary, the Cancer Biology GIDP exemplifies the ideals represented by the concept of interdisciplinary graduate programs and deserves to be at the forefront of the University of Arizona's efforts to achieve focused excellence. “

In closing, it is important to point out that interdisciplinary graduate education at the University of Arizona has been a hallmark of education and research on this campus. The GIDPs draw both students and faculty who do not fit into strict departmental structures. The GIDPs allow for flexibility and economy of funding for administrative support. The multi-disciplinary training of the next generation of cancer researchers at the University of Arizona who will prevent and cure cancer will benefit both the State and the Nation.