October 21, 2005

To: Arizona Board of Regents  
c/o Sandra Beeler  
Curriculum and Registration Office  
P.O. Box 210073

From: Emmanuel T. Akporiaye, Ph.D.  
Interim Head, Department of Microbiology and Immunology

Keith Joiner, M.D., M.P.H.  
Dean, College of Medicine

RE: Name Change Justification, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, College of Medicine, The University of Arizona

We respectfully request that the Board of Regents approve a change of name for our department from Department of Microbiology and Immunology to the Department of Immunobiology. This proposed name change is submitted concurrently with the proposal to split the graduate programs in Microbiology and Immunology into separate graduate programs in Microbiology (College of Agriculture and Life Sciences) and Immunobiology (College of Medicine). There are several reasons for making this request.

1. The central role of the immune system in maintaining health or causing disease is becoming better understood and appreciated. With the expanding population of all ages in the State of Arizona, the diseases of autoimmunity, cancer and the respiratory system all of which have underlying immunological components, pose significant health risks and impact morbidity and mortality. The study of the immunological aspects of these diseases represents an area of strength within the College of Medicine at the University of Arizona. The recognition of the central role of the immune system in health and disease has created a need to shift the focus of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology from the study of host response to infectious disease to the study of immunologically-based diseases. To achieve this goal, the Department of Microbiology and Immunology will be changed to the Department of Immunobiology. In line with this change, research and training efforts will be focused in the areas of autoimmunity, cancer, respiratory diseases and immunopathogenesis. The Department of Immunobiology will be re-configured from the existing Microbiology and Immunology Department and will draw its membership from existing faculty in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, other departments and Centers including the Arthritis Center, the Cancer Center and Respiratory Diseases Center.
2. The Department of Immunobiology will retain its primary teaching function of providing instruction in the areas of Medical Microbiology and Immunology to 2nd year medical students and graduate students. Teaching of these courses will be a joint effort between the appropriate faculty in the Department of Immunobiology and other Departments and Centers in the College of Medicine. The Department of Immunobiology does not participate in undergraduate instruction.

3. In order to be competitive in recruiting and training future scientists and academic physicians, a vigorous graduate program in Immunobiology of disease will be developed. The re-organization and name change will make it possible to attract the best and brightest students into the program.

4. The name change will justify the integration of faculty drawn from basic science and clinical departments that share a common interest in the study of the immunology of disease in a unified department. The name change will also provide new avenues of interaction between the department and the public through various educational and fund-raising activities routinely carried out by the Respiratory Disease and Arthritis Centers.

5. The Department of Immunobiology will be the only one of its kind at the University of Arizona and in the State of Arizona. It will therefore not duplicate the mission of the other State Universities.

In summary, the Department of Immunobiology will be multidisciplinary in nature and will be expected to play a pivotal in addressing the health needs of the people of the State of Arizona through its research and education of graduate and medical students. We respectfully request the name change to reflect our abilities and mission.