According to the bylaws of the university, the “…functions of the University Faculty shall be to consider questions of educational policy which concern more than one college, school or separate academic unit, or are general in nature…”

Responsibility of: Committee on Academic Programs and Policies. The Committee concerns itself with academic programs and policies which are independent of or extend beyond the single or joint jurisdiction of a school or college faculty; policies governing the use of, and plans for, university-wide academic facilities and services, such as libraries, classrooms, and computers; and proposals for new degrees (including the combination, modification or abandonment of old degrees. It reports to the Faculty Senate.

April 8, 1998, Records, pp. 8949-8950S, Appendix A
May 13, 1998, Records, pp. 8081-8082S
October 14, 1998, Records, pp. 8123-8138S
November 11, 1998, Records, pp. 8147-8159S
December 9, 1998, Records, pp. 8162-8167S

At the April 1998 meeting, Professor Howard Howland, Neurobiology and Behavior, presented background on a motion he hoped to bring to the floor in May concerning current discussion surrounding the restructuring of biological sciences.

The Senate, at its May 1998 meeting, voted in favor of a resolution urging the administration not to disband the Division of Biological Sciences without further consultation. The resolution carried as follows:

Resolved: The Senate urges the University Administration not to disband the Division of Biological Sciences without further and full consultation with the faculty of the Division and the University, with the Faculty Senate and with outside experts, and without the same thorough and careful deliberation used in the creation of the Division in 1964.

At the October 1998 meeting, the Senate heard a presentation on the recent report on the Division of Biological Sciences.

An introduction from Bert Garza was read since he was unable to attend the meeting:

"First, I want to thank Dean Cooke for arranging this meeting, the members of the panel for agreeing to participate in this discussion, and to each of you for coming to share your views."
"It is important to begin by recognizing that we have common goals at this meeting, the strengthening of basic biology on this campus and, in so doing, strengthening the broader life sciences and better serving our students, faculty, and the public that supports us.

"It also is important to address two principal concerns that faculty have raised. One is that decisions already have been made by the central administration and, thus, that this consultation is an empty exercise. The other relates to the timing of the decision-making process.

"In response to the first concern, I assure you that no decision has been made on the matter before you. Furthermore, it is the expectation of all members of the academic cabinet that past positions relative to the structure of the Division of Biological Sciences taken by any of us have been set aside. I am assured that all members of that advisory body are approaching the closing stages of this review with an objective mindset and that all are striving to serve the University's best interests rather than that of any single unit.

"In response to the second concern, the Task Force headed by Associate Deans Coffman and Martin was commissioned in the summer of 1997. Its report was issued in March of 1998. Failure to come to closure on recommendations made by this group and others is taking an increasingly heavier toll on faculty morale, their ability to plan, the University's capacity to support individual faculty, departments, colleges, centers and institutes in implementing key decisions intended to strengthen their programs, as well as how we are perceived by our peers as we compete for students, prospective faculty, research opportunities, etc. Therefore, the university community has a strong interest to come to closure on this matter in a timely way.

"I hope each of you read the report of the Task Force appointed to review the Division of Biological Sciences' organizational structure, the organized response of several faculty to that report, and the report of the external team that recently visited the campus. It is my view that the latter report entangled three distinct issues: (1) the future organizational structure of the Division of Biological Sciences, (2) the stature and organization of the broad area of life sciences throughout the University, and (3) issues of university governance that affect over 400 faculty positions.

"I suggest that this afternoon's discussion focus on the first of these matters, i.e., on the organizational structure of basic biology/Division of Biological Sciences keeping our common goals in mind.
"Some of you also have had the opportunity to read self-studies prepared by various sections within the Division of Biological Sciences and other life science departments. Please bring perspectives developed through those self-studies to the discussion.

"Your recommendations are sought regarding alternative structures and/or characteristics that a new or existing structure(s) should be designed or modified to meet. Input from this and other meetings that are planned, various reports that have been submitted and written comments from various groups and individual faculty will be distilled and broad outlines of alternatives will be presented at a meeting called by the Faculty Senate on October 21.

"The strongest and most common recommendations made are that whatever organizational structure is implemented, it should:

1. Do more than just reorganize the proverbial chessboard.

2. Anticipate advancements in knowledge that drive excellence in research, teaching, and extension rather than the alternative of letting organizational structures principally determine future directions.

3. Be flexible. Biology is and will be moving too fast over the foreseeable future to permit institutional torpor.

4. Be faculty-driven. The organizational framework must include reward structures and institutional roles that motivate faculty teaching, extension, and research within and across academic units.

5. Assure excellence. It must enhance collaboration and coordination across departments and colleges in key steps of the hiring, tenuring, and promotion processes. And,

6. Assure congruence among goals, responsibility, accountability, and resource availability in the implementation of university-wide interests and in the updating of facilities within colleges and, equally importantly, across colleges in support of interests that transcend single colleges.

"It will be very helpful to have your reactions to these characteristics and/or your assessment of their relevance to a specific solution any of us may recommend."
The panelists assembled for this presentation made comments of three or four minutes each.

Professor William Fry, Plant Pathology, said he has had a long association with the Division of Biological Sciences. There are nearly 500 faculty who contribute to biology and there are all kinds of benefits to have basic biology be strong. The undergraduate majors in biology are crucially important to those in applied units. Team building with interdisciplinary components is an important issue.

Professor Howard Howland, Neurobiology and Behavior, outlined his remarks:

- The undergraduate curriculum is a nationally recognized success.
- With the advent of modern molecular biology, there are more reasons for biologists to collaborate.

In effect, it would be foolish to abandon the Division without replacing it with a stronger central unit.

Philip Lewis, Harold Tanner Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, said the options could be reduced to three:

- Retain the Division model with a smaller number of sections and with enhanced authority for the director.
- Concentrate responsibility for hiring biologists and structuring programs in central administration.
- Transform the Division into two or three large departments with reporting relations to the relevant college deans.

Daryl Lund, Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, said whatever structure is ultimately approved, should foster collaboration and strategic planning in basic biological sciences. Strong department leadership is essential, as is preservation of the undergraduate program. External reviews should be done to help focus on improvement. A structure should not provide additional rewards or additional hurdles for faculty in tenuring and other activities. The deans should ultimately be charged with responsibility for improving basic biological sciences, and this process should move forthwith.

Don Smith, Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, said a deeper understanding of how to integrate biology and medicine should be a component of a new structure.
Professor Charles Walcott, Director, Division of Biological Sciences, said biology has grown since the Division was formed 30 years ago and has spread into many disciplines. The Division has not been responsive to these changes. A strengthening of a core of biology would have the responsibility to reach out and promote interaction with all the biologists on campus.

Following the presentations, the floor was opened to comments and questions.

A resolution was put forth by the University Faculty Committee because of their concern that a decision was imminent by the end of October. They believed that there hadn’t been adequate opportunity for life sciences faculty to fully express themselves.

Following a vote, the resolution carried as follows:

WHEREAS, the Task Force Report (Division of Biological Sciences: Structural Review, March 1998) has been discussed within the Division of Biological Sciences but neither it nor the Response to the Task Force Report on the Division of Biological Sciences Structural Review (March 1998) has been available to or discussed by faculty with interests in the life sciences who hold appointments outside of the Division of Biological Sciences, and

WHEREAS, about one-third of Cornell’s faculty is engaged in research in the life sciences and, therefore, any decision made based on these reports or on the Report of the External Review Committee for the Biological Sciences (September 1998) and will affect a high proportion of Cornell’s faculty directly or indirectly, and

WHEREAS, reviews of the programs of affected units are currently underway, and

WHEREAS, there is no pressing deadline by which any structural reorganization of the Division of Biological Sciences must take place, and

WHEREAS, informed discussion of options by interested and affected faculty members may result in a better and more widely accepted solution than those already proposed; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Faculty respectfully requests that the Administration make no decision on the future existence and/or structure of the Division of Biological Sciences until such time as the faculty as a whole has had an adequate opportunity to provide informed input on this important issue.

In November 1998, Vice Provost Garza presented the two remaining options concerning the reorganization of the Division of Biological Sciences. Discussion ensued on the options as presented.
• Elimination of the Division and creation of new departments reporting to the colleges (Option J)

• Retention of the Division of Biological Sciences with a director appointed by the Provost, with the responsibility for allocating faculty lines and resources (Option K).

President Rawlings, at the December 1998 meeting, remarked on the decision to disband the Division of Biological Sciences and move into a departmentalized structure. He indicated that the Provost would play a major role in insuring that colleges collaborate closely in creating the new departments and in supporting the undergraduate biology major. He then responded to questions.