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University Statement on Department of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics

Dec. 22, 2008

The College of Engineering today announced that the Department of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (TAM) will merge into the Sibley School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE). Effective January 1, 2009, the Director of MAE will assume responsibility for all TAM resource decisions, including budget and space allocation.

Engineering Dean Kent Fuchs called the decision difficult but necessary in order to invest resources in strategically important areas. "This decision will allow Cornell to strengthen mechanics in the college, building on the heritage of faculty excellence in both TAM and MAE," he said. "In focusing our resources at this time, I know the college will emerge even stronger than we are now." President David Skorton expressed his support for the decision: "This merger is the result of considerable planning and discussion within the College of Engineering," Skorton said. "I support this difficult decision. It is an example of the kind of strategic thinking we will rely on to make the best long-term decisions for the university, particularly as we face extraordinarily challenging financial times in the short term."

Dean Fuchs is appointing a faculty transition committee to develop detailed plans for implementing the merger. The graduate field of theoretical and applied mechanics and its associated degree programs are expected to continue. The college will maintain funding commitments to TAM students. TAM staff will merge into MAE in the transition. The Department of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics, one of 12 academic departments and schools in the College of Engineering, was established in 1964. Cornell is the last of the top-ranked colleges of engineering to maintain a TAM department.

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