

Senate Academic Organization and Structure Committee (SAOSC)
Guidelines for Preparing a Proposal for Change in Organization
May 5, 2011

This document provides guidance on the preparation of proposals to change (modify or create) the organizational structure of an academic unit focused primarily on the academic aspects of the structural change. The recommendations are based on the experience of previous proposal documents and issues that have come up through the vetting process. Your proposal should consider that some members of the SAOSC, Senate Council, and University Senate may not be familiar with the relevant academic disciplines. Some suggested questions may not be applicable to every proposal but after reviewing a number of proposals these areas are often brought up during discussion. The hope is to shorten the time it takes to reach a proposal decision for proposers.

- What is the impetus for the proposed change?
- What are the benefits and weaknesses of the proposed unit with specific emphasis on the academic merits for the proposed change?
- Describe the organization of the current structure and how the proposed structure will be different and better. Current and proposed organizational charts are often helpful in illustrating reporting lines.
- How does the change fit with department, college, and/or university objectives and priorities?
- How does this change better position the proposers relative to state and national peers, as well as University Benchmark Institutions? How does the change help UK meet the Top 20 Goal?
- Who are the key personnel associated with the proposed unit? Provide qualifications of these personnel in a brief form. A complete curriculum vitae for each person is not needed, although pertinent information in tabular format is helpful.
- Discuss leadership and selection process for appointing a chair, a director, or interim leader and search process, etc.
- What is the function of the faculty/staff associated with the proposed change and how is that relationship defined? Discuss DOE, adjunct, full-time, voting rights, etc.
- Will the proposed change involve multiple schools or colleges?
- If the proposed change will involve transferring personnel from one unit to another, provide evidence that the donor unit is willing and able to release the personnel.
- What is the arrangement of faculty associated with the proposed change and how is that relationship defined? Discuss faculty DOE and status as adjunct, tenure track, or tenured. Describe the level of faculty input in the policy-making process including voting rights and advisory.
- Discuss any implications of the proposal for accreditation by SACS and/or other organizations.

- What is the timeline for key events in the proposed change? Student enrollments, graduates, moved programs, closed courses, new faculty and staff hires, etc.
- Proposals involving degree changes and students:
- How will proposed structure enhance students' education and make them more competitive?
- Discuss impact on current and future students. State assumptions underlying student enrollment growth.
- Note that new programs and courses will need to be vetted through appropriate channels beyond this committee.
- What are the plans for student recruitment?
- The committee will likely want to see evidence of adequate financial viability for the proposed unit to be successful. A general description of the new costs and funding should be provided. A letter from the Provost, Dean, and other relevant administrators may affirm commitment to provide financial resources as appropriate. An exhaustive budget is not expected.
- The proposal should document any faculty votes and departmental or school committee votes as appropriate leading up to this point in the process. A Chair or Dean may appropriately summarize supporting and opposing viewpoints expressed during faculty discussions. The committee will want to see evidence of academic merit and support from key parties. Letters of support (or opposition) are encouraged from the relevant senior faculty and administrators. Relevant faculty and administrators include those in units directly involved in the proposed change (including existing units from which a new unit may be formed.)
- Indication of how the new structure will be evaluated as to how it is or not meeting the objectives for forming the new structure. Timing of key events is helpful.
- Letters of support from outside the University may be helpful in understanding why this change helps people beyond the University.
- When submitting a proposal that may be reviewed by multiple Senate committees, anticipate that they will focus on different criteria. The SAOSC, for example, devotes much attention to issues such as the rationale for a unit's existence and structure, staffing sources, leadership selection processes, and evidence of sustained financial viability.