

## **Guidelines for Proposals to Create an Educational Unit or Alter its Status**

The creation, dissolution, merger, splitting, relocation, or acquisition of an educational unit (College, Department, Institute, etc.) is a major initiative. The Senate Committee on Academic Organization and Structure intends to review such Proposals with regard for the interests of the University, its programs, students, faculty and staff. These Guidelines are offered in furtherance of that goal. It is hoped that their dissemination will minimize misunderstandings and delays in the review process.

In general a proposal will be considered complete only if it contains a detailed rationale with supporting documents, and like a promotion dossier has been made available for inspection by all interested parties for a reasonable time prior to the collection and inclusion of their written recommendations and commentary. We expect that a proper proposal will be documented with the same thoroughness and integrity one expects in a promotion dossier. The Committee will not accept proposals it considers incomplete.

Following are among the considerations we feel must be addressed by such a proposal:

### A. Programmatic Considerations

1. Is the proposal consistent with University, sector, or College strategic plans?
2. What will be the impact on other programs?
3. Does the new organization or structure meet accreditation criteria?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the change?
  - a) Academic-are there other good universities with such a structure or program?
  - b) Financial-for example, what is the scale of savings or expense?

### B. Individual Considerations

1. Faculty
  - a) Does it respect academic freedom, both in form and substance?
  - b) How does it affect the interests of untenured faculty? Are prospects for tenure decreased?
  - c) Are the credentials of affected faculty consistent with their newly constituted unit and adequate to its mission?
  - d) How does the proposal affect resources and opportunity for research, teaching, and service activities? For example, will teaching loads be altered, laboratory space be changed, support staff curtailed?
2. Students
  - a) Will the proposal properly honor commitments to students in the affected programs?
  - b) How will instructional resources be affected? For example, will class sizes increase?

3. Staff

- a) How will reductions and/or relocations be handled? Will the University's rules affect them fairly, or should some dispensation be made?

While we do not seek to describe in detail how such a proposal should be developed to meet these guidelines, we strongly suggest the following steps be taken by an administrator initiating one.

1. A draft of it should be submitted to each affected unit's faculty, students (appropriate independent representative groups of both graduates and undergraduates), and staff. Accompanying the draft proposal should be a rationale and supporting documents detailed enough for all parties to assess its implications relative to the concerns outlined above. If there are standing or ad hoc committee reports, outside consultations, studies, accreditation criteria, or other documents relevant to the proposal, these should be made available as well. Sufficient time should be allotted to permit affected units and their personnel to discuss this package and offer considered internal response. We expect this part of the process to be truly consultative and interactive among the units and their administration, and possibly to result in constructive modification of the draft proposal. We also expect the final proposal to contain evidence that this consultation was undertaken.
2. The final version of the proposal should be circulated to all affected units and their personnel. Each unit should then meet to draft its recommendation or commentary. We believe the rules governing the preparation of a promotion dossier are a good model. Both well understood and effective, these rules call for input from all affected parties, and for external consultation. Each faculty member, staff member and appropriately representative students should be invited (but not required) to provide a written or oral expression of his or her opinion. The committee will look for evidence of effective consultation with all impacted faculty, staff and students, preferably conducted by an elected faculty person (e.g. university senator) or representative faculty group (e.g. faculty council). This consultation may include a confidential vote, multiple open forums, meetings with an appointed faculty committee, etc. A letter from the faculty representative(s) summarizing the sentiments of the affected faculty should be included with the proposal.
3. We require external consultation only if the proposal contemplates an unusual or innovative structure. In case it does, this requirement can be met by letters from other institutions with similar structures which detail their experience.
4. These internal and external letters should be organized, accompanied by a recommendation from the Chair, (or Dean, Director, etc.) and become part of the proposal.
5. The initiating administrator should then submit the proposal up through the chain of authority, where at each level it should acquire a commentary and recommendation

from that administrative authority, together with copies of any new committee reports, studies, outside consultations, etc. which bear on it. The completed proposal will then make its way to the Committee by appropriate routes.

6. The complete proposal should contain copies of all documents made available to faculty, staff, and students as per the requirements above. The idea is to have a complete documentary record of each step in the development of the proposal.

We do not require unanimity or even necessarily majority approval, but we do seek to ensure that all interested parties have had their views considered openly and fairly at all stages of this process. The Committee itself means to consider the views of every interested party, and will try to schedule hearing opportunities for everyone who wishes to speak to us directly.