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## Procedures Related to the Establishment, Reorganization, and Elimination of a Department

~~Under the authority of the Board of Trustees, the University of Vermont Faculty Senate is empowered to review, recommend, and participate in the formulation of policy with regard to academic organization, including the establishment or elimination of colleges, schools and departments and the reorganization of the general university and college academic structure (Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws, Sect. 1.2.e.).~~ This document lays out the process by which proposals to establish, reorganize, or eliminate a department at UVM are to be initiated, prepared, and reviewed, and specifies the format for such proposals.

### Section 1. Definitions (from the University Manual)

Department.

A Department is a unit of instruction, research and scholarly activity, and service, which (with the exception of the Department of Military Studies) is established within a College or School. Its faculty, instructional offerings, and research are recognized as belonging to a discrete academic discipline or related disciplines or as providing a unique supporting role to other academic programs. In establishing a Department, due consideration will be given to identifying the fiscal resources and appropriate number of faculty members compatible with its instructional, research, and scholarly objectives and responsibilities.

[For the Definition of Colleges and Schools, see the University manual, 204.3.1 and 204.3.2](#)

### Section 2. Procedures for the Establishment or Reorganization of a Department

- a. A proposal to establish or reorganize a Department is initiated by the Dean of that unit in consultation with associate deans, chairs/program directors, and faculty in that unit.
- ~~b. A proposal to establish a new Department may occur as a result of the development of a new area of instruction, research and scholarly/creative activity, the conversion of a Program, or consolidation of several free-standing programs, into a Department, or the reorganization of a College or School.~~
- ~~e.~~ b. New departments should not bear the same or a similar name to other existing departments and there should not be extensive overlap between the new department's areas of instruction, research, and scholarly/creative activity and that of existing departments. This should be addressed in the "Impact" section of the proposal.
- ~~d.~~ c. A proposal to reorganize a Department may involve the merger of two or more departments, the division of one department into two or more, or inserting or removing a distinct academic program from a department. Simply renaming a department is not a reorganization and should be handled via the Curricular Affairs Committee process for Academic Department and Program Name Changes.
- d. [The following procedure focuses on administrative structure and not curricular matters. Generally speaking, the Curricular Affairs Committee should address curricular matters related to the reorganization proposal, such as new program proposals, substantial changes to programs, and program deactivations or terminations prior to moving forward with the processes outlined here. In cases where this is not feasible, proposers should consult with the Faculty Senate President, chair of the CAC, and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs prior](#)

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to proceeding. Program and department name change proposals can be presented to the CAC as contingent upon the completion of the procedures outlined in this and related procedural documents.

~~e. The following procedure is meant to focus more on administrative structure rather than curricular matters, but it is recognized there may be some overlap with consideration of curricular matters. All program related proposals related to establishment, elimination or restructuring of departments (change, new, termination/deactivation, name change) must be written and proposed following approved Curricular Affairs Committee processes and should be submitted to CAC prior to moving forward with the processes outlined here.~~

~~f. Proposals must be reviewed at the college/school level prior to submission in accordance with College or School procedures.~~

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~~college/school procedures (e.g., department, a college-level committee as appropriate, and dean's office; unit faculty in some units i.e. at a college/school faculty meeting).~~

~~g.~~ At each level of the review, the head of the relevant voting body (e.g., department, appropriate College/School Committee, College/School faculty) should submit a letter in support of the proposal, or a letter that summarizes the reasons for not approving the proposal including the results of the body's vote and any additional information relevant to review of the proposal by the Faculty Senate.

~~h.~~ Once college/school-level review of a proposal is complete, proposals should be submitted to the Provost's office.

~~i.~~ ~~The review process and timeline are described in detail following the proposal requirements. Incomplete proposals will be returned with a request for the missing information.~~ The timeline will not begin until a proposal is considered complete by both the Provost's office and the Faculty Senate President.

- ~~j.~~ An ad hoc committee of nine members will review the proposal. The ad hoc committee will include 3 faculty senators elected by the Faculty Senate, and one member each of the Faculty Senate Executive Council (FSEC), the Senate Curricular Affairs Committee, the Senate Financial and Physical Planning Committee, the Senate Student Affairs Committee, the Senate Educational and Research Technologies Committee, and the Senate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Arts Committee, selected by those bodies. When feasible, this committee will review additional proposals related to college, school, or department structure that are submitted during the same academic year. ~~The Senate Executive Council may instruct the ad hoc committee to review any additional proposals relating to academic structure (College/School, School with a College, Department) in that same academic calendar year.~~
- ~~k.~~ Following review by the ad hoc committee, all proposals must also be presented to the Faculty Senate for a vote.
- ~~l.~~ The purpose of these procedures is to balance appropriate faculty oversight and the need to enact administrative actions in a reasonable amount of time. From the time that the Senate received the proposal from the Provost to the point that it forwards the result of its vote can vary significantly, depending on how quickly an ad hoc committee can be established, the time it takes for the proposer to respond to questions from the committee, to the point in the monthly calendar that the committee's report returns to the Faculty Senate Executive Council. In order to ensure that proposals have the best chance to receive full review, they should arrive at the Senate on or before February 15.

~~m.~~ Following review by the ad hoc committee, all proposals must also be considered by the Faculty Senate, with Senate action promptly communicated to the President and Provost, with a request that they be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for a vote.

### Section 3. Proposal Guidelines for the Establishment or Reorganization of a Department

a. Abstract

- i. A one-page summary of the essential information from each of the sections below. Please submit this abstract both as an introduction to the proposal and as a separate document; proposals will not be considered complete without the abstract.

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b. Description

- i. For reorganization proposals, please provide a detailed description of the proposed academic structure, including graphic representations of the old and the new structure
- ~~i. Please provide a detailed description of effect on college/school structure of the establishment or reorganization of the department, including graphic representations of the old and the new structure.~~
- ii. For new Departments proposals, please provide a detailed description of the proposed Department. The description should clearly demonstrate how the proposed unit meets the definition of a Department, including having a defined mission in instruction, research and scholarship, and service.
- iii. Where appropriate, describe any history that would be relevant to the current proposal.

c. Goals and Rationale

- i. ~~D~~Clearly describe the rationale behind this proposal including reasons why other options are not appropriate.
- ii. Identify the specific goals of the proposed new academic structure.
- iii. Describe how the goals align with the university's mission, and how the new administrative model will help to achieve the stated goals
- iv. Where appropriate, offer examples of institutions with similar organizational structures and outline relevance of these examples to the goals and/or rationale for the structural changes.

d. ~~History of the academic unit(s) included in the proposal (for restructuring proposals only)~~

- ~~i. When was the academic unit(s) formed?~~
- ~~ii. Have there been any significant changes, including name changes, since the time of formation? If so, provide a summary of these changes.~~

e. ~~Goals~~

- ~~i. What are the goals of the proposed new or reorganized department and how do they align with the mission of the University and the mission of the College?~~
- ~~ii. How will the new administrative model/department achieve the stated goals?~~

f. Impact

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i. Explain how the proposed reorganization or establishment of a department will impact students, faculty, staff and other programs or units at UVM

- ~~i. What will the impact of the proposed academic structure be on:~~
- ~~a. Students, both undergraduate and graduate?~~
  - ~~b. Faculty?~~
  - ~~c. Staff?~~
  - ~~d. The housing college or school's other academic programs?~~
  - ~~e. Other academic units and programs at UVM?~~

g.c. Budget

- i. Include data that is relevant to the financial sustainability of the proposed new or reorganized administrative structure.
- ~~i. What will be the effect of the new academic structure on the budget and operations of the University, housing College/School, and the department's programs?~~
- ~~ii. Include data that is relevant to the financial sustainability of the proposed new administrative structure.~~

h. Benchmarking

- ~~i. How are the programs to be housed in the new/restructured departments at other universities? If similarly structured departments exist, what is known about the history and outcomes for those departments at other institutions?~~

i.f. Evaluation

- ~~i. Please outline how the new administrative structure will be evaluated, including benchmarks. How will the performance of the new or restructured department be evaluated? Please outline existing or additional processes within the housing unit that will be used for evaluation of the department's success, and whether it has met the expected goals outlined above.~~

i. Summary of Communications with academic units likely to be involved in or affected by the proposal.

- i. Summarize communications with the academic units involved in or affected by the proposal, an overview of any significant objections and modifications, if any, made in response to those objections.
- ~~i. Summarize all communications with the academic units likely to be involved in or affected by the proposal, including the details indicated below. Include all written communications (e.g. emails, memos) in an appendix to the request.~~
  - ~~a. individuals involved and roles/positions~~
  - ~~b. primary points of discussion~~
  - ~~c. any alternatives offered~~
  - ~~d. outcome(s) of the communication~~

j. Schedule

- i. Outline the proposed~~What is the proposed~~ implementation schedule?

**Section 4. Process and Timeline for Proposals to Establish or Reorganize a Department**

a. Proposals to establish or reorganize will normally come from a Dean and should be submitted to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. If the Provost determines that the proposal is complete and a reasonable case has been made for academic unit restructuring, the Provost will forward the proposal to the Faculty Senate with a request for review. Proposals from a Dean should be accompanied by a cover memo that summarizes the college/school process thus far.

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- ~~a. Completed proposals should be submitted to the Provost's office after college/school review.~~
- ~~b. If the Provost determines that the proposal is complete and a reasonable case has been made, the Provost will forward the proposal to the Faculty Senate with a request for review. The Provost has **two weeks (14 days)** to make a decision on whether to forward the proposal.~~
- ~~b. The proposal abstract will then be circulated via email to all faculty, academic deans, and department chairs with a link to a survey to submit feedback/comments. The proposal must be circulated during the 9-month contract period. The survey will be available for **three weeks** (the ad hoc committee may access comments on a rolling basis). The full proposal will be made available by the Faculty Senate office to any faculty member upon request.~~
- ~~e. The proposal abstract will then be circulated via email to all faculty, academic deans, and department chairs with a link to a survey to submit feedback/comments; the survey will be available for **30 days**. The full proposal will be made available by the Faculty Senate office to any faculty member upon request. The 30-day comment period shall fall wholly during the normal appointment period for 9-month faculty, and no more than five days of a 30-day comment period should occur between fall semester grades admission and the start of spring-semester classes.~~
- ~~c. At the time of circulation, an ad hoc committee (membership described above) will be appointed and begin its work to review the comments and evaluate the proposal. The committee may ask clarifying questions from the proposal's authors, or request additional relevant information needed to make a recommendation to the Senate. This review period will last for **30 days**.~~
- ~~d. At the time of circulation, an ad hoc committee (membership described above) will be appointed to manage a process of comment on and revision of the proposal and to make a~~

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report and recommendation to the Senate. All feedback collected from the electronic survey described above will be made available to the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee will also invite faculty comment on the proposal either in writing or in person. The ad hoc committee will summarize faculty comment to the proposers for the purpose of responding to commentary and/or revising the proposal. Additionally, the ad hoc committee may ask the [Provost/proposers] to respond to specific comments. Additionally, the ad hoc committee will meet with the dean of the responsible unit and program faculty, and may request additional information. The comment and revision period will last for 40 days from the time the ad hoc committee is constituted, though the committee will extend the period for comment and revision if members judge that revisions to the original proposal are significant enough to warrant another round of commentary. The comment and revision period must fall wholly during the normal appointment period for 9-month faculty, and no more than five days of that period may occur between fall semester grade submission and the start of spring semester classes.

Upon completion of the comment and revision period, the ad hoc committee will write a report summarizing commentary received, any additional information gathered during the comment period, and the revisions (if any) made to the proposal on the basis of the commentary. The committee will also recommend to the Senate one of the following:

- That the proposed action be implemented as described in the proposal;
- That the proposed action be implemented with adjustments or conditions;
- That the proposed action be implemented only if certain concerns are resolved;
- That the proposed action not be implemented at the present time, or in the present form;
- That information pertinent to the evaluation of the proposed action is not available and that the Senate request clarification.

The report will provide a justification for the ad hoc committee's recommendation and specify any relevant adjustments, conditions, concerns, or matters still requiring clarification.

The ad hoc committee will complete its work within 20 days of the end of the comment and revision period, unless significant issues arise that require additional time for the ad hoc committee to complete its review.

- d. The Chair of the ad hoc committee will write a memo that includes the decision of the committee and a brief summary of the rationale for the decision. The report should include a summary of commentary received, communication between the committee and the proposer, and other information received during the commentary period. The memo and the ad hoc committee's report will be sent to the Faculty Senate President, the faculty Senate executive Committee, the Dean of the College/School (for reorganization proposals), and the Provost within 5 days of the committee's vote.
- e. The memo and the ad hoc committee's report will be sent to the Faculty Senate President and the Dean of the College/School within 5 days of the committee's vote. A copy of the memo will be sent to the Provost for information purposes only.
- e. Once reviewed and accepted by the FSEC, the proposal will be placed on the agenda for a vote at the next faculty senate meeting. Materials including the ad hoc committee's memo report, recommendation, and any other information deemed relevant by the FSEC will be sent to all Faculty Senators immediately to allow sufficient time for consideration prior to the Faculty Senate meeting.

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- f. ~~The ad hoc committee memo and report will be considered by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) at their next meeting. The FSEC may accept the ad hoc committee's position or send the matter back to the ad hoc committee for further discussion, with specific instructions about what aspects of the report require additional consideration and a deadline for the ad hoc committee's response. If additional consideration is requested, the FSEC will consider it at their next meeting.~~
- f. Results of the Faculty Senate vote will be communicated to the President and Provost **the day after the Faculty Senate meeting.**
- g. ~~Once accepted by the FSEC, the proposal will be placed on the agenda for a vote at the next Faculty Senate meeting. Materials including the ad hoc committee's memo report, recommendation, and any other information deemed relevant by the FSEC will be sent to all Faculty Senators immediately to allow sufficient time for consideration prior to the Faculty~~

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~~Senate meeting.~~

~~h. Results of the Faculty Senate vote will be communicated to the President and Provost the day after the Faculty Senate meeting. All proposals must also be approved by the Board of Trustees.~~

~~g. All proposals must also be approved by the Board of Trustees.~~

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### Section 5. Elimination of a Department

- a. Elimination of a Department requires Board of Trustees approval and would follow the required shared governance procedures required for either:
  - i. the approval by the Board of Trustees of an academic reorganization.
  - ii. the elimination of all of the academic programs offered by the Department.