

# 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.c.). 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.

## **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.

## **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.
- c. 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. 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.
- 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/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 should submit a letter in support of the proposal, or a letter that summarizes the reasons for not approving the proposal including 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 five members, to include representatives from the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Executive Council (FSEC), the Senate Curricular Affairs Committee, the Senate Financial and Physical Planning Committee, and the Senate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Arts Committee, will review the proposal. The members of the ad hoc review committee and a Chair of the committee will be appointed by the Faculty Senate President. The committee members may not hold primary or secondary appointments in academic unit(s) that are the subject of the proposal.
  - k. 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.

### **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.
- b. Description
  - 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.
- c. Rationale
  - i. Clearly describe the rationale behind this proposal including reasons why other options are not appropriate.
- 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
  - 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. Budget
  - 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. Evaluation
  - i. 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 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. What is the proposed implementation schedule?

### **Process and Timeline for Proposals to Establish or Reorganize a Department**

- 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.
- c. 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.
- d. At the time of circulation, an ad hoc committee (membership described above) will be appointed to review the proposal. All feedback collected during the comment period will be made available to the ad hoc committee. During their review, the ad hoc committee may ask the 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 as part of their review. Upon completion of their review, the ad hoc committee will write a report summarizing any additional information gathered during the review process, take a vote to support or reject the proposal, and provide rationale to explain their position. The ad hoc committee will complete its work within **14 days** of the end of the comment period, unless

- significant issues arise that require additional time for the ad hoc committee to complete its review.
- e. 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 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.
  - 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.
  - 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 and report, 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.
  - 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.

### **Elimination of a Department**

- a. Elimination of a Department requires Board of Trustees approval and would follow 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.