

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

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

The following procedures govern review of proposals to change administrative structure rather than curriculum. Generally speaking, where administrative structures and curriculum are both concerned, 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 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.

- 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. At each level of the review, the head of the relevant voting body (department, appropriate College/School Committee, College/School faculty) should submit a letter in support of or lack of support for the proposal including information relevant to review by the Faculty Senate and the results of the body's vote. The letter should include reasons why the proposal was supported or not supported by the voting body.
- c. The timeline will not begin until a proposal is considered complete by both the Provost's office and the Faculty Senate President.
- d. 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.

- e. 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.
- f. Once college/school-level review of a proposal is complete, proposals should be submitted to the Provost's office.
- g. An ad hoc committee of nine members will be constituted to gather faculty commentary, review the proposal and make a recommendation regarding the proposal to the Faculty Senate. The ad hoc committee will include 3 faculty senators elected from the Faculty Senate by electronic vote, 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. At the discretion of the Executive Council, a single committee may review additional proposals related to college, school, or department structure that are submitted during the same academic year.
 - Following review by the ad hoc committee, all proposals must also be presented to the Faculty Senate for a vote.
- h. 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's office 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.

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.
- b. Description
 - i. For reorganization proposals, please provide a detailed description of the proposed academic structure, including if possible graphic representations of the old and the new structure
 - ii. For new Department 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. Describe the rationale behind this proposal including reasons why this is preferred over other options.
 - 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. Impact
 - i. Explain how the proposed reorganization or establishment of a department will impact students, faculty, staff and other programs or units at UVM
- e. Budget
 - i. Include data that is relevant to the financial sustainability of the proposed new or reorganized administrative structure.
- f. Evaluation
 - i. Please outline how the new administrative structure will be evaluated, including benchmarks.
- g. 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.
- j. Schedule
 - i. Outline the proposed implementation schedule.

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

- a. Proposals to establish or reorganize a Department 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.
- 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 **two 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.
- c. At the time of circulation, an ad hoc committee (membership described above in Section 2g) will be appointed and begin its work to review the comments and evaluate the proposal. The committee may solicit comment (either in writing or in person) from faculty, and 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. Upon completion of the comment and review period, the ad hoc committee will meet to

discuss and vote on a recommendation to forward to the Senate. This recommendation should be one of the following:

- The Senate recommends that the proposed action be implemented as described in the proposal;
 - The Senate recommends that the proposed action be implemented with adjustments or conditions;
 - The Senate recommends that the proposed action not be implemented at the present time, or in the present form;
- e. The Chair of the ad hoc committee will write a report that includes an executive summary outlining the decision of the committee and a brief summary of the rationale for the decision. In addition, the report should summary of commentary received, communication between the committee and the proposer, and other information received during the commentary period as well as a discussion of the proposal and fuller discussion of the committee's recommendation. 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 7 days** of the committee's vote.
- f. 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.
- g. Results of the Faculty Senate vote will be communicated to the President and Provost **the day after the Faculty Senate meeting**.
- h. All proposals must also be approved by the Board of Trustees.

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:
- a. the approval by the Board of Trustees of the academic reorganization of a College.
 - b. the elimination or movement out of the Department of all of the academic programs offered by the Department.