

Summary of changes to procedures for structural changes to units made by the administration and Faculty Senate leadership during Summer 2021¹

At the May, 2021, Faculty Senate meeting, procedures related to structural organization at the college, school, and department level were considered by the Faculty Senate. During this meeting, several substantive amendments to the procedures were proposed from the floor, and passed as part of the final documents forwarded to the Provost and President.

This proposal of procedures for managing Faculty Senate input on structural changes at the college, school, or department level constituted a recommendation of policy under section 1.2.c of the Faculty Senate bylaws:

1.2 To review, to recommend, and to participate in the formulation of policy with regard to:

c. Academic organization, including the establishment or elimination of colleges and departments and the reorganization of the general university and college academic structure.

Upon review of the final version of the procedure documents, the Provost and President requested the opportunity to meet with Faculty Senate President Thomas Borchert and immediate past President Christopher Burns to discuss and collaboratively revise the proposed procedures. Among the issues raised and discussed at these meetings were:

- **Whether all of the information outlined in the proposal section (section 3) was indeed necessary for the ad hoc committee to do its work.** The procedures were based on the guidelines for considering the termination of programs, an area where the Senate has authority under section 1.1 of the bylaws. Given that the Senate's role is different (under authority provided in section 1.2 as noted above) for the procedures described in these documents, the administration recommended streamlining certain sections, in particular section 2, which outlines the structure and content of the proposal for structural changes coming from a Dean, or in the case of the proposal of a new free-standing School or College, from the Provost.
- **The complex structure of the Faculty Senate procedures (Section 4).** The administration expressed concern that the comment periods, time allotted for the ad hoc committee's work, and feedback loops (i.e. provisions for extensive back and forth between the committee and the unit as well as the committee and the FSEC) would interfere with timely consideration of changes. Changes were proposed to allow for gathering of campus feedback and the initial work of the ad hoc committee to overlap. Some feedback loops were removed as they could have considerably extended the process without substantively changing the advisory work of the ad hoc committee.

¹ Establishment, Reorganization, and Elimination of Colleges and Schools; Establishment, Reorganization and Elimination of a School within a College; Establishment, Reorganization, and Elimination of Departments within a College or School

- **Clarification of the role of the Faculty Senate procedure in the larger process of considering structural changes to units at the college, school, or department level.** While the Faculty Senate process should provide information to the larger University faculty community regarding the proposed changes, and allow for discussion and careful consideration of potential impacts of the proposed change, the ad hoc committee and Faculty Senate serve in an advisory role to the Provost and President in these matters. Changes to Section 4 reflect this in clarifying what the ad hoc committee will produce, the nature of their recommendations, and next steps once the ad hoc committee concludes its work.