

SENATE ACTION FORM

No. 1250

Subject: Organization of Academic Units within a College

Reference to Senate Minutes dated: May 1st 2023

Senate Action:

MOTION: Approve the Organization of Academic Units within a College policy document.

VOTE: Approved without objection.

Response requested:

Approval for placement in University Catalog, Undergraduate and Graduate

Approval for placement in University Regulations

Recommendation to Board for placement in Board Policy Manual

None (sent as information item)

Other action requested/comments:

Dawit Senbet

May 16th, 2023

Faculty Senate Chair

Date

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Administrative review of Senate action (unnecessary for information items):

Reviewed by **VPAA/Provost**. Check if comments attached

Reviewed by **General Counsel**. Check if comments attached

Presidential action:

Approve Reject Return to Senate for discussion/modification (comments attached)

President/Designated Administrative Officer

May 31, 2023
Date

Date of Board approval (if applicable): not applicable

PLEASE RETURN SIGNED ORIGINAL AND ATTACHMENT TO THE FACULTY SENATE OFFICE, CARTER HALL 2004, BOX 75.
Faculty.Senate@unco.edu

Attachment to Senate Action #1250
Approved by the Faculty Senate

FACULTY SENATE MOTION

Subject: Department/School Definitions

Originator/Date: APC 3/20/2023; Revised 4/4/2023

Placement(s): University Regulations

Revised by Codification and sent to APC on 4/17/2023

Approved by APC on 4/17/2023 and sent to Faculty Senate 5/1/2023

Motion: Adopt the changes to university regulations as outlined below.

Purpose/Rationale: University Regulations currently does not contain definitions of the different types of academic units: Schools, Departments, and Free-Standing Programs. There are functional definitions of these for purposes of the faculty evaluation process, but these definitions do not clarify how an academic unit could become one of the unit types.

Complicating the issue is the question of the title of the unit leader for these units. Prior to Senate Action 1229 of April 2022, it was assumed that schools were led by directors, departments were led by chairs, and free-standing programs were led by coordinators. The senate action allowed for the unit leader of a school to be a chair. However, in practice, any unit for which it was desired to have a unit leader called a chair was renamed to be a department, so currently no schools are led by chairs. Part of what the policy below will codify that schools will always be led by directors, and departments and free-standing programs will be led by chairs.

The primary motivation for Senate Action 1229 was to relax the requirement that a unit leader of a school be on a full-time administrative contract. Both currently and prior to the senate action, a *director* is a full-time administrator (a faculty member on full-time administrative reassignment). As such, they were not evaluated under the faculty evaluation process, did not accrue time toward promotion or sabbatical, were not eligible for some faculty grants, and were not members of the voting faculty. In addition to some unit leaders of schools wishing to be classified as faculty, there were schools with directors on less than 1.0 FTE administrative reassignment, which made their status as faculty or administrator murky.

Providing definitions of “school,” and “department,” will clarify the process for a unit changing between these designations. The policy outlined below will require some level of agreement between the faculty and administration about changes to the name and organization of units.

While the proposal below does not require further changes to board policy, the intent of the committee is to propose a policy during AY 23-24 by which school directors are also classified as faculty. Since this will require a full vote of the voting faculty (as it would change the faculty constitution), this will be taken up as a separate motion.

Current Practice: Currently, all schools are led by directors (even though this is not required by policy), and all departments are led by chairs. Whether a unit is classified as a school or department is largely historical, and with the change required by Senate Action 1229, a few units that were schools became departments. There are schools that are multi-disciplinary and schools that consist of one program area (what constitutes a *program area vs a discipline* is also vague). There are schools with external accreditation, and schools without. There are schools that have fewer faculty or are otherwise “smaller” than some departments.

Additionally, school directors are all full-time administrative staff and not members of the voting faculty, while all chairs are members of the voting faculty. The policies for the selection of directors and chairs are very similar, although directors are on 5-year terms, while chairs are on 3-year terms. Directors are evaluated by their dean (with a requirement that the dean seek faculty input); chairs are evaluated as faculty, and their chair service is evaluated both by the faculty and independently by the dean.

Proposed Language: For placement in University Regulations, as (a new) Article 13.

Article 13: Organization of Academic Units Within a College

The policy below governs the structure of an academic college.

3-13-101 Definitions

- (a) Academic Unit: A school or department, housed in an academic college.
- (b) Chair: the unit leader of a department.
- (c) Department: An academic division of a college housing at least one academic program.
- (d) Director: the unit leader of a school.
- (e) Academic Program: a graduate or undergraduate degree, certificate, or minor.
- (f) School: An academic division of a college housing at least one academic program.

3-13-102 Department and School Distinction

Generally, larger units with greater administrative complexity are called schools and smaller units with lower administrative complexity are called departments. This distinction may also depend on discipline-based traditions and other factors. Factors that contribute to size and administrative complexity may include, but are not limited to, the number of program areas, the number of academic programs, external accreditation requirements, the number of faculty and staff, and student credit hour production.

3-13-103 Reorganization and Naming of Academic Units

The following process applies to the renaming of an existing unit, as well as any change in organization of academic units, including combining multiple academic units into a single unit, dividing one academic unit into multiple units, dissolving an academic unit, moving a unit from one college to another, moving an academic program between units, or any combination of the above.

3-13-103(1) Process

- (a) Reorganization or renaming of academic units in a college or between colleges may be initiated either by their respective dean(s), or by a majority vote of the faculty of the affected unit(s).
- (b) The dean and faculty of the unit will discuss the rationale for the change, including factors listed in 3-13-102 when determining whether the unit(s) shall be classified as a department or school.
- (c) If there is agreement between the dean(s) and a majority of the faculty of the affected unit(s), then the proposal shall be forwarded to the CAO for final approval. In cases where units are combining, or a unit will be divided into distinct units, the support from the majority of faculty in each unit is required.
- (d) If agreement cannot be reached, the faculty of the affected unit(s) and their dean(s) shall both provide the CAO with a rationale for their position.
- (e) The final decision for any reorganization or renaming of units rests with the CAO.

Other changes to University Regulations:

3-3-301 Chair Selection and Evaluation.

A chair is the unit leader of a department **or free-standing program, or the unit leader of a school whose faculty workload includes instruction and/or professional activity in addition to chair service.**