

Title: Organization and Structures at the University of Kentucky

Category: Academic Affairs

Responsible Cabinet Member: Provost

Purpose

To ensure that changes to the University's academic organizational structure are made in a transparent, consistent and well-documented manner that upholds the integrity of academic programs and governance. This policy provides clear definitions of academic units, outlines the conditions under which changes may occur and establishes a standardized process for reviewing, approving and implementing such changes. The goal is to align organizational structures with the University's mission, enhance the quality of student education, support faculty success and promote efficient stewardship of resources.

Scope

This policy applies to all changes involving the University's academic organizational structure, including the creation, reorganization, renaming, merger or elimination of academic units. It covers the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the review, approval and implementation of these changes, with appropriate oversight by the Provost and, when required, the Board of Trustees. The policy pertains to all academic units and related governance processes at the University.

Definitions

When determining the appropriate organizational structure, consider the following:

- Those who we serve (students, patients, etc.)
- Structure
- Programs
- Faculty
- Leadership
- Budget

"Academic Unit" means any organizational entity that supports instruction, research or service, including institutes, centers, academies or interdisciplinary structures, whether or not such entity independently offers degree programs.

"Educational Unit" means an academic unit authorized to offer degree or certificate programs.

"Provisional Academic Unit" means an academic unit established on a pilot or time-limited basis for purposes of innovation, coordination or interdisciplinary programming, which does not independently confer degrees.

College: A college is the largest overarching academic organizational unit on the academic campus. Within many colleges, there are typically additional structures, which may include schools, departments and/or divisions. Academic programs are typically not housed at the

college level but are housed within the schools or departments in the college. If a college does not have schools or departments, then the faculty's academic home is at the college level; for those colleges with schools, departments or divisions, then faculty will have their academic home at the school or department level.

School: A school is usually nested within a college and contains multiple departments, divisions and/or multiple academic programs but can also report as a unit directly to the Office of the Provost. A school can serve as an academic tenure home. A school would typically have a director and report to either a dean of the college, or the Provost or their delegate.

Department: A department may be nested within a college or a school and is a smaller and more specialized unit. A department would typically have a chair and report to the dean of the college. A department can serve as an academic tenure home.

Division: A division is typically the smallest academic unit and can live within a department, school or at the college level. A division is not a formally recognized academic unit but is useful when there is a need to subdivide large academic units (departments, schools or colleges) or to serve as an organizational structure for faculty who bridge departments. A division may or may not have a director/head. A division cannot serve as the sole academic home for faculty; faculty whose primary appointment is in a division must have an academic home/appointment at a school, department or college level.

Process

These definitions and processes apply to any proposal for changes to academic organization and structure, including creation, consolidation, transfer, closure, merger, name change, type change or reductions.

Proposal Includes (where applicable):

- Rationale of how this will enhance student education.
- Disposition of faculty, staff and resources (financial and physical).
- Consultation with the faculty of the unit to which the faculty lines are proposed to be transferred or where a unit will be reduced.
- Evidence of communication with unit faculty, staff and/or administrators, department/college committees and the dean.
- Input from deans as representatives of all colleges across campus.
- Clear communication on how faculty appointments promotions will proceed (e.g., statements of evidence and rules documents, etc.).

Steps:

- Completed proposal submitted to the Office of the Provost.
- Office of the Provost conducts initial review and may request additional information.

- Office of the Provost may consult relevant advisory groups if the structure change falls within their purview.
- If approved, creation and closure of an academic unit, as well as the combination of two academic units into one academic unit, will then be moved on to approval of the Board of Trustees (BOT). (*For the change of names of an academic unit or a move of a unit from one college to another, BOT approval is not required, but the BOT should be advised of these decisions.)