



Date: May 1, 2025

To: Andre Avramchuk, Chair of Academic Senate

From: Kevin Baaske and Talia Bettcher on behalf of Executive Committee

Copies: R. Roquemore

Subject: Proposed Policy Modification for Chapter III of the Faculty Handbook:
Formation, Dissolution, Relocation or Merger of Departments/Division/Schools

The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate has reviewed the “Formation, Dissolution, Relocation or Merger of Departments/Division/Schools” policy and recognized that it did not explicitly include any program that is “sufficiently complex (e.g., which involves the appointment of faculty members, the scheduling of courses, supervision of staff, and other duties typical of a department chair) and is not wholly contained within an existing department” (Faculty Handbook Ch. 3, “Review of Directors of Interdisciplinary Programs”). While there exists policy for the suspension and discontinuance for academic (i.e., degree) programs (Faculty Handbook Ch. 4, Policies and Procedures for Academic Program Discontinuance), the current policies are insufficient as to all standalone programs that function autonomously, whether interdisciplinary or not. Since it is possible that such autonomous programs might be formed, dissolved, relocated, or merged, it is proposed that the current policy be amended as follows:

Line 2: [EDITORIAL:] making “DIVISIONS” plural by adding an “S.” Also, adding “AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS” to the policy title.

Lines 5, 7, 8, 9/10, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 35: adding the words “autonomous program” or “autonomous programs” after “school” or “schools,” respectively.

Line 6: making sure the term “autonomous programs” applies to this policy only and does not contradict other policies related to various programs.

Line 19-22: a definition of an autonomous program is provided.

Lines 25-26: clarifying that a 20-day period means 20 workdays, when faculty are on duty, and that the Provost, appropriate committees, and affected faculty are advised of the proposed change in the beginning of such period.

Line 34: clarifying that a challenge from the affected unit means a vote of that unit’s faculty, and that the results of such a vote must be anonymous.

1 **FORMATION, DISSOLUTION, RELOCATION OR MERGER OF**
2 **DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS/SCHOOLS/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS**

3 (Senate: 8/14/73, 8/27/02, 8/11/09; President: 8/20/73, 11/13/02, 8/31/09; Editorial
4 Amendment: 9/99)

5 Departments/divisions/schools/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS are considered
6 equivalent units for the purposes of THIS University policy and the Collective
7 Bargaining Agreement. Departments/divisions/schools/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS
8 are units within a college. Schools/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS may not include
9 departments as subunits. The head of a department/division is designated as the
10 chair; the head of a school/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAM is designated as the
11 director. Chairs and directors are equivalent positions within the administrative
12 structure and are selected according to the University policy for selection
13 department/division chairs and school directors. They report to the dean of the
14 college. Criteria for the designation of a unit as a school could include such issues
15 as:

- 16 ▪ professional accreditation or licensing/certification requirements for
17 graduates
- 18 ▪ established practice for the naming of the discipline in higher
19 education
- 20 ▪ the reorganization of logical subunits within a college
- 21 ▪ enhanced potential for procuring grants or contracts
- 22 ▪ improvements in services to students, faculty, staff and community.

23 AN AUTONOMOUS PROGRAM IS A RECOGNIZED COURSE OF STUDY THAT IS
24 SUFFICIENTLY COMPLEX (E.G., WHICH INVOLVES THE RECRUITMENT OF FACULTY
25 MEMBERS, SCHEDULING OF COURSES, CURRICULUM OVERSIGHT, SUPERVISION OF
26 STAFF, OR OTHER DUTIES TYPICAL OF A DEPARTMENT CHAIR).

27 A college through its dean, after consultation with the affected college faculty, shall
28 have authority to recommend directly to the President modifications of
29 department/division/school/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAM relationships following a 20-
30 WORKday waiting period during AT THE BEGINNING OF which time the Provost and
31 Vice President for Academic Affairs or designee, the Faculty Policy Committee, the
32 Educational Policy Committee, the Fiscal Policy Committee and affected faculty are
33 advised of the proposed change. Such changes may involve formation of a
34 department/division/school/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAM, a realignment of disciplines
35 between departments/divisions/schools/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS, dissolution of
36 departments/divisions/schools/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS, merging of
37 departments/divisions/schools/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAMS or the relocation of a
38 department/division/school/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAM to another college. In the
39 event of a challenge by the MAJORITY ANONYMOUS VOTE OF THE FACULTY OF THE
40 department(s)/division(s)/school(s)/AUTONOMOUS PROGRAM(S) in question, any of
41 the above-named committees, or the Provost and Vice President for Academic
42 Affairs or designee, the matter will be adjudicated by the Academic Senate. Final
43 approval, in any case, shall rest with the President.