

## **Western Carolina University**

### **Policy on Reorganization of Academic Units**

#### **1. Initiation of a proposal to rename or reorganize an academic unit or academic units.**

This reorganization policy applies to all academic units including colleges, schools, and departments. Proposals for the creation of new colleges or schools, reorganization of existing colleges or divisions including the shifting of departments or other academic units from one college to another, from one school to another or from one school to a college; the partial or complete merger of two or more departments; creation of new departments; dissolution of departments; and changes of college, school and department names may be initiated by a majority of faculty in the affected academic units or by the Department Head, Dean, Provost, or Chancellor. The initiator of the proposal, or their designated representative, shall act as the principal advocate for the proposal throughout subsequent discussions and review. Proposals may be withdrawn at any point in the process by the initiator.

#### **2. Principles guiding the reorganization of an academic unit or academic units.**

Reorganization involving academic units must support the mission and strategic plan of the university and of the colleges or departments impacted. The faculty, staff, and administration of Western Carolina University are dedicated to shared governance and recognize the necessity of faculty knowledge and participation in academic decision making. All reviews and deliberations about reorganization should be conducted in a collegial and constructive way. Any reorganization proposal should seriously consider disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationships and shall also investigate impacts on stakeholders in non-academic units.

Academic administrators and faculty must actively solicit and consider the concerns of affected faculty, staff, and students while developing reorganization proposals, and must give these groups adequate notice, information, and time to enable them to evaluate those proposals and make their concerns known. Evidence about the impacts on budget, personnel, other departments and offices, accreditation, and the curriculum must be in writing and available at all levels of review.

All requests for reorganization must include a detailed budget of savings and costs of the changes to be presented to the faculty, staff, and students at the beginning of the process. The following points shall be addressed: salary adjustments; cost of positions required; cost of remodeling space, purchasing furniture and other equipment, moving, etc.; cost of new promotional and recruitment materials, new website design, and other such items; and cost of faculty and staff time in working out the reorganization (see Section 3 for more details).

In extreme cases (e.g., financial exigency as defined in the Faculty Handbook Section 4.09.E or other financial crisis), the Chancellor may request a reorganization. In this eventuality, the

Chancellor should consult with the affected groups to the greatest extent possible following the processes outlined in this policy.

### **3. Preparing a proposal for review of a reorganization plan.**

A proposal requesting that a unit or units be reorganized must include the following items:

- Rationale for the proposed reorganization
- Goals and objectives of the proposed reorganization
- Centrality of the reorganized unit(s) to the mission of the university
- Alignment of the reorganized unit(s) to the strategic plan of the university
- A detailed financial cost/benefit analysis of the reorganization
- Impact on resources (e.g., positions, space, equipment, time, computer systems, facilities)
- Impact on the curriculum and programs across the university
- Criteria used to select the unit(s) for reorganization
- A before and after organizational chart for all units affected
- Implementation plan and timeline
- Potential impacts on collegial review processes
- Impact on faculty, students, and staff
- Impact on quality of degree programs, student retention, and graduation rates
- Impact of reorganized unit(s) on other units and programs
- Impact on external constituents

### **4. The reorganization proposal review process.**

The review of proposals requesting renaming or reorganization of an academic unit or units will resemble the timing of the curriculum review process. However, at each level of review there must be a recommendation, vote, and comments recorded about the merits and weaknesses of the proposal by a faculty body whose membership does not consist entirely of appointed members or administrators including department heads. Each college should include in their bylaws the procedures for selecting the members of such a review body. For a name change of a unit affecting only one department or college, the recommendation will be made at the college level and forwarded to the Provost for ultimate approval by the Chancellor. This review and final action will be recorded on the AA-10 form and must also include an AA-6 to document curricular impacts to other academic units. Review at each level shall take no longer than one month.

For more complex changes in organizational structure, the AA-10 will be used and additional levels of review and solicitation of input will be requested. These proposals must be put together in a careful and deliberate way prior to submission for academic review. Proposed changes affecting only one school or college such as the creation, splitting, or joining of departments will employ an AA-10 form completing only the first parts of the form. A completed AA-10 form will be used in cases involving the proposed reorganization or creation of a college or colleges or

in any restructuring in which more than one college is involved, such as in the move of a department to a new college. In most cases, the request for reorganization will come from the department(s) and/or college(s) with an interest in improving the quality and efficiency of their missions. In the review process, faculty, staff, and students in the affected departments and colleges will be consulted and forums open to all must be held. The Faculty Senate will vote on any reorganization involving multiple colleges and on those proposals deemed to be contentious (e.g., one or more units did not support a proposal for reorganization while one or more units were supportive).

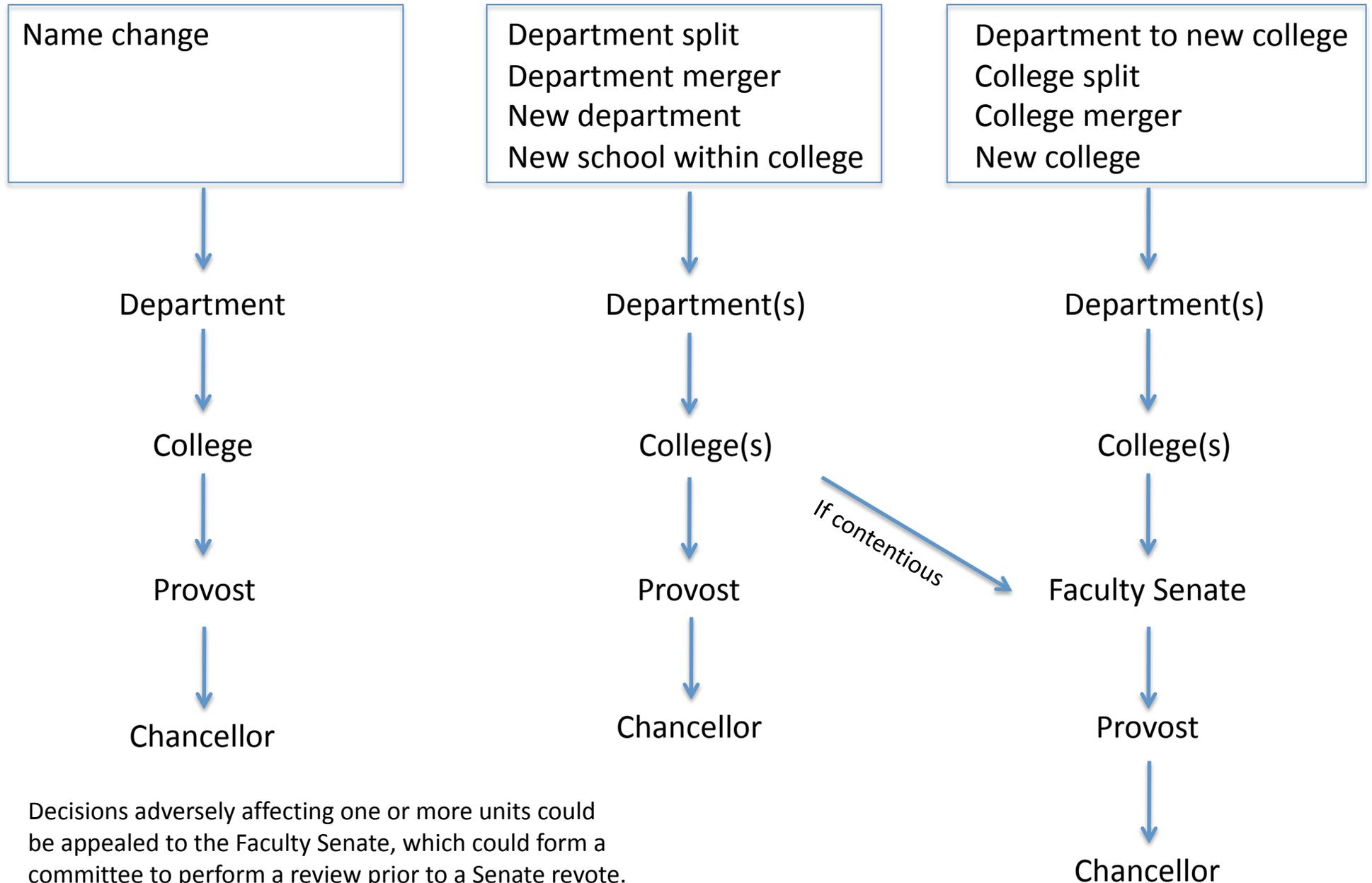
In the case of a reorganization proposal review being conducted due to a financial emergency as described in Section 2, the above process on the AA-10 should still be followed, however, the timing of each level of review could be expedited. In the event that such a reorganization leads to the termination of employees, the Faculty Handbook (Section 4.09.E) will serve as the guide for policies and procedures to follow. When possible, attention shall be given to identify alternate positions on campus for terminated faculty and staff.

The timeline for review for each level will be no more than a month, with an overall timeline of not more than six months. Due to the administrative changes precipitated by a major reorganization (Banner recoding, webpage changes, stationery replacement, etc.), the final decision on a proposal must be made by the Chancellor by 1 May to ensure that the new unit(s) is/are in place by 1 July (the start of the fiscal year).

#### **5. Appeal of a decision of a reorganization proposal.**

If a repeal is requested, the Faculty Senate may form an *ad hoc* committee consisting of faculty, staff, and student representatives from unaffected and affected units. This committee will review the process followed and all input gathered at the various levels and will then make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate to accept or reject the proposal. The Faculty Senate will vote on the recommendation and forward its recommendation to the Provost who will send it to the Chancellor for consideration and a final decision.

# Review Process for Requests to Reorganize or Rename Academic Units



Decisions adversely affecting one or more units could be appealed to the Faculty Senate, which could form a committee to perform a review prior to a Senate revote.