

## **University of Massachusetts Dartmouth-Academic Affairs Division**

### **Procedure for Establishing New Academic Units**

The establishment of a new academic unit (defined as a college, school, or academic department), including those that result from merger or splitting of existing academic units, may significantly affect the nature of the institution, its mission and objectives, its educational program, and the allocation of its resources and, therefore, may require review by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education-New England Association of Schools and Colleges (CIHE-NEASC).<sup>1</sup> Other changes, although important to the campus, do not impact accreditation; rather they fall within the nature and scope of the institution.<sup>2</sup> In either case, principles of shared governance should be respected, and the various stakeholders, including the Provost, the affected academic units, Deans, and the faculty at large should have an opportunity to review the proposal and express their support or opposition.

#### **A. Intent to Develop a New Academic Unit Proposal**

The faculty member(s) or administrator(s) who intend to develop such a proposal should prepare an Intent to Develop proposal of no more than three (3) pages that briefly include:

1. **Introduction:** Presents a short introduction of the proposed unit.
2. **Purpose and description of the academic unit:** Provides sufficient descriptive and contextual information about, and rationale for, the proposed academic unit so that campus and University officials can make an informed judgment about whether the proposal has sufficient merit to warrant the preparation of a final application. Without going into great detail, the Intent to Develop proposal should describe the purpose of the unit.
3. **Relationship to the mission of the University:** Explains the ways in which the proposed unit is consistent with, and serves to advance, the stated mission and goals of the University.
4. **Justification for the unit:** Provides a summary of documented research that addresses whether there is a need for the unit that is not currently being met by other units and documents the sustainability of the unit.
5. **Resource implications:** Addresses briefly whether the resources to establish the unit currently exist, need to reallocate from other units, or will be generated from some other source. Specific attention should be paid to human, financial, and facilities needs.

The Intent to Develop proposal should be submitted to all Deans who will review and forward the proposal to the appropriate Department Chairs. The members of the affected academic units will review the Intent to Develop proposal and will convey their support or opposition, determined by a vote of their members, to the Provost with a copy to the Faculty Senate President. If one or more of the affected academic units is opposed to the proposal, the Provost may decide not to continue with the development of a Full Proposal and the process ends. If the affected units all support the proposal, or the Provost wishes to proceed forward with a Full Proposal in cases

where there is opposition, the Provost will review the proposal to assess if any further information or action is needed. After careful consideration, the Provost will inform those proposing the new academic unit if any further documentation or additional materials are needed before the proposal may proceed to the development of a Full Proposal.

### **B. Full Proposal to Establish a New Academic Unit**

The proposal narrative should be limited to approximately ten (10) pages and may include attachments as appropriate. The proposal should address the following areas:

1. **Purpose and goals:** Includes strategies for achieving goals.
2. **Justification:** Includes quantitative assessment of need and benefits, impact on existing academic units, and why existing academic units cannot meet the need.
3. **Administration and operation:** Includes reporting structure and oversight.
4. **Resources:** Includes faculty and staff (new positions, transfers), operating budget requirements and the sources of these funds, library resources, facilities (office and lab space), and equipment.

The proposer of the new academic unit shall solicit informal feedback, prior to submission, on the substance of the proposal from the departments and/or colleges directly affected by the proposal as well as from the Provost.

### **C. Submission of the Full Proposal**

The proposal, along with all relevant materials, shall be submitted to the Provost with a copy to the President of the Faculty Senate.

### **D. Review of the Full Proposal**

The University Curriculum Committee shall review the proposal, along with the academic administrators and other faculty bodies that the Provost, in consultation with the President of the Faculty Senate, deems appropriate. The departments and/or colleges directly affected by the proposal shall communicate their feedback on the proposal in writing to the Provost and the President of the Faculty Senate. This feedback may or may not include the results of a vote among the department members regarding the proposal, but it must provide an opportunity to express concurring and dissenting perspectives. The Provost and President of the Faculty Senate shall establish an appropriate schedule for conducting those reviews. At each stage of the review process, which occurs sequentially, the proposer shall have the opportunity to respond to any suggested changes or modifications.

The reviews and recommendations from all the levels of review shall be forwarded to the Provost who shall prepare a recommendation to the Faculty Senate and the Chancellor. The Faculty Senate will discuss and vote to approve or not approve the

establishment of the proposed academic unit. The Faculty Senate will send its recommendation to the Chancellor with copies to the Provost and to the proposer.

### **E. Approval of the Full Proposal**

The Chancellor shall follow the procedures in Section II.D.3 of the Board of Trustees Statement of University Governance (Doc. T73-098) in deciding to approve or not approve the establishment of a new unit. The Chancellor shall notify the Commission on Institution of Higher Education-New England Association of Schools and Colleges as appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> See, CIHE-NEASC, Substantive Change Policy. [<https://cihe.neasc.org/institutional-reports-resources/reporting-guidelines/substantive-change-proposals>].

<sup>2</sup>For example, realigning and/or renaming existing departments, schools, or colleges are not so substantial as to require consideration by CIHE-NEASC. As such, those types of changes are not subject to the CIHE-NEASC Substantive Change Policy.

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