

**Academic Affairs Policy #7**  
**Title: Establishment of Schools**

**Date of Current Revision: January 12**  
**Primary Responsible Officer: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs**

**1. PURPOSE**

The administrative structure of units within the academic affairs division is the basis for personnel, budgetary, governance and other decision-making processes at the university. This policy provides the criteria and procedures for the establishment of schools within the Academic Affairs division (AA).

**2. AUTHORITY**

The Board of Visitors has the authority to enact policies for the university. Where this authority has not been exercised by the board, it is delegated to the president. The president has delegated to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs the establishment of policies and procedures in AA.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

**Academic Unit:**

An academic department or its functional equivalent.

**Academic Unit Head:**

An academic department head, school director or the functional equivalent of that position.

**Academic Institute or Center (AIC):**

An administrative, organizational, and/or budgetary unit existing within AA for the purpose of organizing complex academic activities of faculty, staff and students from backgrounds in different disciplines to work on common projects and opportunities, and to provide for a unified coordinated approach to the work of the university through interdisciplinary efforts of the faculty, staff and students who serve and staff them. See Academic Affairs Policy #1.

**College:**

The largest and primary administrative organizational unit within AA, composed of academic units.

**Department:**

Generally, an academic discipline-based administrative organizational unit within AA.

**School:**

An instructional organizational entity that has a special curricular or programmatic function and identity. A school may be the organizational and functional equivalent of an academic unit, an AIC or a college, depending on the circumstances.

**4. APPLICABILITY**

This policy relates to all existing and proposed academic units, departments, schools, colleges and other administrative entities in AA.

## 5. POLICY

### 5.1 Designation as a School

No existing or proposed organizational entity (a department, academic unit, college, center, institute or group of any of these units) within AA may be designated a school unless this policy is followed.

### 5.2 Criteria for Consideration as a School

Criteria for being considered a school include the following. Proposals must address both content and structural criteria, but all elements listed are not required.

#### 5.2.1 *Content criteria*

- Established around disciplines that lead to a professional degree or are oriented toward training for specific professions or graduate degrees
- Developed around a unique cluster of programs
- Includes two or more academic departments offering related degree programs
- Contains academic fields in which the designation of "school" is recognized nationally or shows university strengths in fields in which the university is usually not recognized
- Enhances disciplines/professions contained in the unit
- Increases possibilities for outside funding
- Enables students to clarify their coursework in relation to career goals and professional opportunities
- Offers multiple degree programs

#### 5.2.2 *Structural Criteria*

- Consists of more than one department and has critical mass of faculty and students
  - Minimum number of faculty and students may be specified
  - Minimum number of programs or departments may be specified
- Should have unique features not adequately addressed by existing structures (interdisciplinary, professional nature of discipline; traditional treatment at comparable institutions; exceptional strength or national reputation of program)
- Reporting relationships must be clearly defined
  - Headed by director
  - Responsible to a college dean or vice provost who has final responsibility for all academic decision making
- Used to designate a structure which has been approved to eventually evolve into a college
- May establish progression standards
- Cannot exist within another school

## 6. PROCEDURES

### 6.1 Proposal

An existing unit seeking approval to be called a school, or a combination of units seeking authority to establish a new school, must prepare a proposal. The proposal should address how the new school meets the criteria and include a description and rationale for the new school. It should address the following areas:

1. Proposed name
2. Participating academic entities
3. Mission, including goals, objectives and benefits
4. Organizational structure
5. Operating budget, including description of existing budgetary resources to be used
6. Additional resources required to support the proposed school

### 6.2 Review and Approval

Proposals for establishment of a new school should be reviewed following this process:

1. Academic unit review. All units (including faculty and academic unit heads) involved in the establishment of the school must review and approve the proposal.
2. College review. College C&I committees and the dean should review and approve the proposal. If more than one college is involved, each must approve.
3. Committee on Academic Programs must review and approve the proposal.
4. Academic Council must review and approve the proposal.
5. Only with the provost's formal approval will a new school be named. If the new school will change the structure of the academic division, the president and BOV must approve the establishment of the new school before it becomes effective.
6. SCHEV will require the university to submit a plan to establish a new school if the establishment effects a change of the university's mission, scope, curriculum and budget.

## 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic units are responsible for reviewing and approving any proposal to establish a new school involving the unit.

Academic unit heads are responsible for reviewing and approving any proposal to establish a new school involving the academic unit.

College C&I committees are responsible for reviewing and approving any proposal to establish a new school involving the college.

Deans are responsible for reviewing and approving any proposal to establish a new school involving the college.

The provost is responsible for reviewing and granting final approval for any proposal to establish a new school and for presenting the proposal for approval by the president and BOV if the proposal changes the structure of the Division of Academic Affairs. The provost is also responsible for presenting the proposal to SCHEV if SCHEV approval is required.

## **8. SANCTIONS**

Sanctions will be commensurate with the severity and/or frequency of the offense and may include termination of employment.

## **9. EXCLUSIONS**

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs may grant exceptions to this policy in the best interests of the institution.

## **10. INTERPRETATION**

The authority to interpret this policy rests with the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Approved by the provost: January 18, 2012