ACADEMIC AFFAIRS POLICY ON THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF COLLEGES, SCHOOLS, DIVISIONS, AND DEPARTMENTS

The University of Georgia consists of a complex structure of colleges, schools, divisions, and departments. Due to this diversity, a single policy cannot anticipate every situation that may arise at the University involving a change of organizational structure within its academic units. This policy sets forth the principles and fundamental requirements that must be followed to change the organizational structure of an academic unit.

I. Statement of Principles

1. The organizational structure of academic units is tied to the educational mission of the university. Faculty governance plays a central role whenever the organizational structure of an academic unit changes, thereby maintaining an appropriate faculty voice in carrying out the university’s educational mission.

2. A proposal for change in the organizational structure of an academic unit should be justified in terms of the academic mission of the University. If changes are proposed for administrative or fiscal reasons, there should be adequate documentation to show that the change will have no negative impact on the academic mission of the University.

3. Academic units subject to this policy include the university, colleges, schools, divisions, and departments. Because institutes and centers are covered by another university policy, they are not subject to this policy.

4. Changes of organizational structure include creation, dissolution, reorganization, or transfer of academic units or any reassignment or transfer of a group of faculty for the purpose of academic or administrative restructuring.

5. These guidelines are not meant to be invoked upon the reassignment of an individual faculty member. When such reassignments involve two or more faculty members in the same academic unit, a determination must be made whether these reassignments constitute a change in the academic unit’s organizational structure requiring compliance with this policy. The STANDING Committee of the University Council will be the final authority on the applicability of this policy.

6. To ensure the role of faculty governance, the voice of appropriate faculty groups must be heard when considering any change in the organizational structure of an academic unit. While all faculty groups should have the right
to voice their opinion on a proposed change in organizational structure, the voice of faculty groups most directly affected by the change should carry the most weight. For this purpose, each proposal must identify the directly affected faculty groups. Each of these groups must be given a chance to review and vote on the proposal. The STANDING Committee of the University Council will review all proposals before any votes are taken to ensure that all directly affected faculty groups are designated. Faculty members who are not members of a directly affected faculty group may voice their approval or rejection of any proposed change by sending their written views to the STANDING Committee.

7. All parties involved have an obligation to ensure that all faculty groups, whether directly affected or not, have an opportunity to have their voice heard in the consideration of any change in organizational structure. All faculty groups determined to be directly affected by the proposed change are entitled to vote on the proposal. A faculty group that has not been determined to be directly affected may still submit its views (regardless of support or disapproval of the proposed change) to the STANDING Committee of the University Council.

8. If a directly affected faculty group votes to reject the proposed change, the process for review is paused so that an external review can be conducted. Following the final report of the review committee and any subsequent revision of the proposal, the voting of directly affected faculty groups is undertaken anew. Following these subsequent votes, whether positive or negative, the process for review continues as outlined in this policy. At no time can a faculty vote stop this process unless the proposed change is withdrawn as a result of the negative vote.

9. No organizational change shall be implemented prior to approval of the University Council, the University President, and the Board of Regents, when Regents’ policy requires such.

II. Procedures

A. The Written Proposal

Any proposed change in the organizational structure of an academic unit must be in writing and be presented to the university’s president, provost, and directly affected faculty groups as well as the department heads, deans, and vice presidents who are directly affected by such change.

1. Contents of Proposal

The originator of a proposal must set forth the following:
a. Source/originator of the change.

b. Goals/objectives the change is expected to accomplish.

c. Rationale for change. This should include an analysis of the impact of the proposed change on the academic mission of the University. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the strategic plan of the university, strategic plan of the unit to be changed, strategic plan of any unit of which the affected unit is a subunit, and any relevant 5-year plans.

d. Impact on faculty, staff, students, and programs.

e. Resource implications (faculty lines, staff positions, space, equipment, moving expenses, remodeling expenses, etc.).

f. Designation of all “directly affected faculty groups” and an outline of the order in which these groups will vote.

g. Timeline for approval and implementation of the change. This should include a timeline for the votes of the directly affected faculty groups, allowing ample time for their consideration, while, at the same time, ensuring the progress of the proposal.

h. Implementation plan.

2. Development of Proposal and Submission to the STANDING Committee.

Generally, the proposal shall be developed in consultation with the directly affected faculty groups, but no official votes will be taken during this process. Before the official voting process begins, the proposal will be submitted to the STANDING Committee of the University Council. This Committee will review the proposal to ensure that it includes the above mentioned items and to ensure that all directly affected faculty groups have been identified. When other directly affected faculty groups are identified later in the process, they may be included in step D, below. When the proposal is deemed complete by the STANDING Committee, that committee will report to the University Council that the proposal is underway.

B. Consideration by Directly Affected Faculty Groups

In accordance with the provisions of this policy and as set forth in the proposal, each directly affected faculty group shall hold a meeting to discuss the proposed change and to vote, as individuals, on the proposal.
All votes shall be recorded and reported by the number voting to approve, the number to disapprove, and the number abstaining. The number of faculty eligible to vote shall also be reported. If any directly affected faculty group votes to reject the proposal, the process provided in step C, below, shall be followed. If all directly affected faculty groups vote to approve the proposal, the process provided in step D, below, shall be followed.

C. Faculty Rejected Vote

If at any step in the above described procedure, a directly affected faculty group votes to reject the proposed change in an organizational structure, the procedure shall be interrupted and the following be conducted:

1. **After a negative vote by a directly affected faculty group, the proposal is submitted to UGA Council’s STANDING Committee which convenes an outside review panel.** Following a vote of rejection, the proposal shall be submitted to the University Council’s STANDING Committee so that this committee may convene an external review panel of at least three experts selected from nominations by the academic unit’s faculty, the Provost’s Office, and, if appropriate, the Dean’s Office to which the academic unit reports.

2. **Outside Review Panel**
The visit, investigation, and report of this external panel shall be coordinated by the STANDING Committee. The external panel shall give ample opportunity for all directly affected faculty groups to have their voice heard in the review process. The report of the panel should include a discussion of the academic merits of the proposal as well as a cost/benefit analysis. The external panel shall be asked to complete its report within four months.

3. **Report Delivered to STANDING Committee and the originator of the proposal**
That report shall be delivered to the STANDING Committee and the originator of the proposal. The originator of the proposal will be given an opportunity to make changes to the proposal in accordance with the recommendations of the review panel. In consultation with the STANDING Committee, the originator of the proposal will develop a new timeline for the approval and implementation of the proposal.

4. **Meetings, discussion and votes to follow order described above (step B)**
The amended proposal and report of the Review Panel will be distributed to all affected faculty groups and the meetings, discussions, and votes of the directly affected faculty groups shall proceed as provided in step B, above. All votes, whether to
approve or reject, shall accompany the transmittal of the proposal to the next directly affected faculty group and to the University Council committees.

5. **Vote to Reject after External Review**

A vote to reject will not stop the review of the next directly affected faculty group, but such votes should be taken into consideration at each step of the review procedure. If there is a vote to reject by any directly affected faculty group then the University Council will consider the proposal in two consecutive meetings. At the first of these meetings the proposal will be presented for discussion as an information item and at the second of these meetings the University Council will vote on the proposal. The purpose of this two step process is to ensure that faculty, staff, students and administration throughout the University have ample opportunity to become informed of the change and to voice their opinions about the proposal. At any time, the originator of the change in the organizational structure may withdraw the proposal. A withdrawal of a proposal will render further review unnecessary.

D. **Faculty Approved Votes**

If all directly affected faculty groups vote to approve the proposal, it shall be sent to the **STANDING** Committee of the University Council. The **STANDING** Committee will once again consider whether all directly affected faculty groups have been identified and given an ample opportunity to vote. If the **STANDING** Committee finds that more directly affected faculty groups should be consulted, the **STANDING** Committee will forward the proposal to those groups for review and a vote before forwarding the proposal to the Curriculum Committee. If the **STANDING** Committee finds that all directly affected faculty group have been given the opportunity to vote, it will forward the proposal to the Curriculum Committee of the University Council. The Curriculum Committee shall follow its procedure for consideration, vote, and transmittal through the Executive Committee to the agenda of the University Council. If the Curriculum Committee decides a change to the proposal is necessary, it shall return the proposal to the **STANDING** Committee and the originator. If, at any time in these procedures, the Executive Committee finds that implementation of the structural change has begun before approval of the University Council, the Executive Committee will not forward the proposal until such implementation has been reversed.

E. **Consideration by the University Council.**

The University Council will vote on the proposal and forward its recommendation to the President.
III. Glossary

The following terms are used throughout this policy.

**Academic Unit** – the university, colleges, schools, divisions, and departments. Because the organizational structure of institutes and centers are covered by another university policy. Any reference to the term *academic unit* in this policy does not apply to institutes and centers.

**Directly affected faculty group** – the faculty members of an academic unit that have a direct interest in or are directly impacted by a change in the organizational structure of its own academic unit or another academic unit. Normally, directly affected faculty groups are tenure-track faculty. However, in cases where an academic unit has non-tenure-track faculty, these faculty might be considered to be a separate directly affected faculty group. Such groups will vote separately from the tenure-track faculty, and the votes will be reported separately.

**Creation** – the process by which a new academic unit is developed. A creation may or may not involve other processes of changing an organization’s structure.

**Dissolution** – the process by which an existing academic unit ceases to exist and its faculty, students, staff, space, and other resources are reassigned. A dissolution always involves another process, such as creation, transfer, or merger.

**Faculty approved** – the outcome of any vote by a directly affected faculty group where there is a greater number of “yes” votes than “no” votes. Abstentions do not count in the determination of “yes” and “no” votes.

**Faculty governance**– faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies

**Faculty rejected** – the outcome of any vote by a directly affected faculty group where the number of “no” votes is equal to or greater than the number of “yes” votes. Abstentions do not count in the determination of “yes” and “no” votes.

**Faculty vote** – the expression of approval or rejection of a change in organizational structure. This vote shall be taken through the use of secret ballots. When faculty votes are required, the vote of a directly affected faculty group, which is lower in the organizational structure, must be known to the next higher level directly affected faculty group prior to that group taking its vote. Any directly affected faculty group that does not vote within the time period specified in the proposal, as approved by the STANDING Committee, shall be considered to approve the proposal.

**Implementation** - the allocation of associated faculty, staff, space, budget, and other resources and to the selection of an administrator for the new unit.
**Merger** – the process by which two existing academic units are joined to form a new unit. This process requires the dissolution of at least one of the original academic units and may involve the creation of a new unit.

**Originator** – any faculty member, in the role as a member of a directly affected faculty group, or any dean, any vice president, the provost, or the president, in their administrative capacity, may originate a proposal to change the organizational structure of an academic unit.

**Reassignment** – the change of a faculty member’s designated academic unit.

**Reorganization** – the process by which an academic unit that is composed of subunits makes changes to more than one subunit at the same time. Reorganization may involve dissolution, creation, transfer, and merger of units.

**Transfer** – the process by which an academic unit is moved from being part of one administrative structure to part of another.
The term, *directly affected faculty group*, is difficult to define with precision because the number of situations involving a change in organizational structure is limited only by a lack of imagination. In an attempt to illustrate the broad application of this term within this policy, four scenarios are set forth with a description of the directly affected faculty groups within each scenario.

**Scenario #1** – A department is being asked to consider allowing the reassignment of 1/3 (or some significant portion) of its faculty to another department within the same college. The faculty within each department involved is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty of other departments within the college also should be considered directly affected faculty groups. The entire faculty of that college or school is a directly affected faculty group. The originator shall propose and the STANDING Committee of the University Council will finalize any other directly affected faculty groups from outside the college. If the reassignment involves graduate faculty or might impact graduate programs, the faculty of the Graduate School (through the Graduate Council) is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty of each of the university’s other colleges and schools probably are not directly affected faculty groups. NOTE: The subgroup of faculty being reassigned is not a separate directly affected faculty group, but those individuals, either separately or collectively, must be allowed to express in writing their views on the merits of the reassignment.

**Scenario #2** – A department in one college is being asked to transfer to another college. The faculty within the department involved is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty in the other departments within both the sending and receiving colleges are directly affected faculty groups. The originator shall propose and the STANDING Committee of the University Council will finalize any other directly affected faculty groups from outside the college. The entire faculty of each college is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty of each of the university’s other colleges and schools are directly affected faculty groups. The faculty of the Graduate School (through the Graduate Council) is a directly affected faculty group.

**Scenario #3** – A college or school is creating, merging, or dissolving a number of departments within its larger structure. The faculty within each existing department is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty within all other departments in the college or school are directly affected faculty groups for each proposed change. The originator shall propose and the STANDING Committee of the University Council will finalize any other directly affected faculty groups from outside the college. The entire faculty of the college or school is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty of each of the university’s other colleges and
schools are directly affected faculty groups. The faculty of the Graduate School (through the Graduate Council) is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty of the university is an appropriate faculty group.

Scenario #4 – The creation of a new college or school within the university's organizational structure is proposed. In anticipation of this creation, certain departments are likely to be moved from an existing college or school to the new one. The faculty within the departments that are to be transferred are directly affected faculty groups. The faculty within all other departments in these colleges or schools are directly affected faculty groups for each proposed change. The originator shall propose and the STANDING Committee of the University Council will finalize any other directly affected faculty groups from outside the college. The entire faculty within the colleges from which the departments are to be transferred are directly affected faculty groups. The faculty of each of the university's other colleges and schools are directly affected faculty groups. The faculty of the Graduate School (through the Graduate Council) is a directly affected faculty group. The faculty of the university is a directly affected faculty group.
Originator of a proposal to change the organizational structure of an academic unit submits a "correctly prepared" proposal to UGA administration (president, provost, deans, department heads) and to directly affected faculty groups (DAFGs) for discussion, review and further development of proposal.

Proposal and all documentation sent to UGA Council Standing Committee (SC) which reviews the document to ensure that criteria are met and that all DAFGs have been identified. SC notifies UGA Council that proposal is coming. Document sent to DAFGs.

DAFGs consider the proposal, propose changes, and take a vote.

All DAFGs vote to approve proposal.

Some DAFGs vote NOT to approve proposal.

Documents sent to Council Standing Committee which convenes an (outside) Review Panel and coordinates their activities.

Panel reviews all documents and makes recommendations which are sent back to the originator.

Originator may make changes to accommodate the report and sends the documentation back to the faculty for a vote. Vote by: 1) Department(s), 2) the College, 3) other colleges

Proposal and documentation are sent to the Standing Committee which determines if all DAFGs have given input and if all documentation is included. Committee determines if appropriate faculty groups have voted.

If Curriculum Committee suggests major changes, proposal is sent back to originator. Much of the Process is repeated.

The Standing Committee forwards proposal and documentation to Curriculum Committee of UGA Council which reviews documents, makes recommendations and sends proposal to the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee reviews, puts on Council agenda and sends to Council.

University Council considers the proposal once if the DAFGS have voted to approve the proposal. However, if there was a vote to reject the proposal by any DAFG after review by the External Review Panel, the Council will review the proposal twice; once for discussion and the second time for a vote.

Proposal forwarded to President with UGA Council recommendation.