

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE
JOINT REPORT FOR INFORMATION

PRESENTED BY: Fran Walley, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee
Roy Dobson, Chair, Academic Programs Committee

DATE OF MEETING: April 17, 2014

SUBJECT: **Joint Report on Disestablishment Processes of Council**

COUNCIL ACTION: For information only

PURPOSE:

This report is intended to inform Council of its role in considering and approving the deletion of academic programs and the disestablishment of academic entities. The academic programs committee and the planning and priorities committee have key roles in both processes.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

The planning and priorities committee terms of reference state the committee is responsible for:

Seeking advice from other Council committees to facilitate university-wide academic planning.

Recommending to Council on the establishment, disestablishment or amalgamation of any college, school, department or any unit responsible for the administration of an academic program, with the advice of the academic programs committee.

The academic programs committee terms of reference state the committee is responsible for:

Recommending to Council on new programs, major program revisions and program deletions, including their budgetary implications.

Approving minor program changes, including additions of new courses and revisions to or deletions of existing courses and reporting them to Council.

Undertaking the academic and budgetary review of proposals for the establishment, disestablishment or amalgamation of any college, school, department or any unit responsible for the administration of an academic program and forwarding recommendations to the planning and priorities committee.

The [*Curricular Approval Changes Chart*](#) on the academic programs committee website summarizes those program deletions required to be submitted to Council for approval as:

- Deletion of a degree or degree-level program or template.
- Deletion of a field of study at the major, honours or graduate level which has significant academic or financial implications.

Program deletions and the disestablishment or merger of academic entities require consequential changes to the listing of programs and academic units in Part Three of Council's bylaws.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

Disestablishment of Academic Entities

The Board of Governors disestablishes departments, divisions (academic), colleges and schools on the authorization of Council (except when the Board considers it necessary because of financial exigency and then the Board is required to consult with Council). Decisions of Council to authorize the disestablishment of a department or college/school must go to Senate for confirmation. If they are not confirmed by Senate, they cannot be implemented for at least a year. Senate may also consider and recommend to the Board and Council for consideration whether or not a department or college/school should be disestablished because of lack of relevance to the province.

The amalgamation and division of departments is a Council decision. Although Board approval is required for the creation of a new department, as the Board must authorize the release of the resources necessary to establish the department, Board approval is typically not required for the amalgamation/division of a department as existing resources are available. However, if the decision were to entail any significant new resources, then Board approval would be considered.

The recommendation to Council to disestablish an academic entity is made by the planning and priorities committee, in consultation with the academic programs committee. Given the infrequency of the disestablishment of academic entities, these decisions have been undertaken on an individual basis and proponents provided with direct guidance as to the type of information required by the planning and priorities committee. In the coming months, guidelines for the disestablishment of departments and academic divisions will be created and presented to Council for information. At this time, developing a common template for the disestablishment of colleges or schools is not contemplated as any decisions at this level would continue to be developed on an individual basis.

Some of the factors the planning and priorities committee considers in contemplating structural changes to disestablish academic entities are academic rationale, impact on faculty and other personnel, impact on undergraduate and graduate programs and students, impact on other academic units, financial and other non-human resource implications, consultation undertaken and letters of support.

The authority to disestablish an academic unit is retained by Council. Consequently, faculty council approval is not required to disestablish a department. Although faculty council approval is usual and signals the support for the decision to merge/amalgamate a department, it is not essential in order to enact the governance chain required. That said, the outcome of any faculty council consideration and vote on the matter provides key information to the planning and priorities committee regarding the support within the college for the disestablishment or merger. Likewise, department approval to enact the process to merge or amalgamate departments is not required, although departments may meet to consider and vote on the matter, and the outcome of this vote may be considered in the consultation process.

Irrespective of whether faculty council approval is obtained or not, the consultation process followed in any structural change is a key factor. The level to which the change is supported at the college level, the departmental level, and the degree to which minority views exist is of particular interest to the planning and priorities committee. The planning and priorities committee may consult with other Council or college committees and, where deemed appropriate by the committee, meet with proponents and/or detractors of the decision.

Program Deletions

In 2008, Council approved an updated Program Termination procedure. As stated in the [Information Guide for Course and Program Deletions](#), “program termination may be initiated by: the president or provost of the university; the college that administers the program or the academic programs committee of Council. Programs considered for termination will typically be characterized by one or more of the following:

- continually low student enrollment, as indicated by official University census data and consistent with “[Issues and Criteria when Considering Viable Enrolments at the University of Saskatchewan \(2007\)](#)”,
- inactivity in the program for periods longer than five years (perhaps caused by program suspension),
- significant program weakness in one or more of teaching, research and scholarly work or other activities specific to the program (i.e. outreach and engagement) or
- persistent lack of necessary resources (staff, faculty or finances) or inefficient use of available resources.”

The process requires submission of the [Report Form for Program Termination](#), review by the academic programs committee and approval by Council. APC considers the academic

value of the program, the quality of the program, impact of termination on students and how they will be advised to complete their programs, the impact of termination on faculty and staff, including the implications of the provisions of collective agreements, impact of termination on research, financial and/or resources impacts, the impact of termination on other programs, departments or colleges, and in particular whether related programs will be affected by the termination, external impact, and, where appropriate, the effect upon interdisciplinarity and outreach activities.

In addition to the web links provided above, the [Forms and Guidelines page](#) on the University Secretary web site is a useful resource. Questions on process may be directed to the Office of the University Secretary, as the office responsible for university-wide governance.

SUMMARY

The intent in reporting to Council on Council's role and authority with respect to disestablish academic entities or delete programs is to provide clarity on the process involved, to assure Council that a standardized process to the degree possible will be followed, and to inform Council of where assistance may be obtained regarding initiating the process.

Fair and objective assessment will be applied by the academic programs and the planning and priorities committees in their assessment of any decision items for disestablishment of either an academic entity or a program. For program decisions, this assessment will include consideration of the resources available to support and sustain the program. To the degree possible, the committees will work together to bring related decision items to Council, so that Council considers structural changes and program decisions either in conjunction or in tandem. In addition, as much as possible, an effective date by which decisions approved are to be concluded will be provided to Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. The Roles of the University's Governing Bodies Relative to Structural Change
2. Web links (click on link or type in url):

[University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995](#)

<http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/governing-documents/index.php>

[Form and Guidelines Page on the University Secretary website](#)

<http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/forms/index.php>

[Curricular Approval Changes Chart](#)

http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic_programs/index.php

Information Guide for Course and Program Deletions

http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic_programs/documents/Program_termination_procedure.pdf

Report Form for Program Termination

<http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/forms/Report-Form-Program-Termination.doc>

Viable Enrolments Report

http://www.usask.ca/secretariat/governing-bodies/council/committee/academic_programs/documents/Viable-enrolments2007.pdf

The Roles of the University's Governing Bodies Relative to Structural Change

- *prepared by the University Secretary*

The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995 provides that the Board is responsible for overseeing and directing all matters respecting the management, administration and control of the university's property, revenues and financial affairs. So decisions related to how the university allocates its budget are to be made by the Board.

The Council is responsible for overseeing and directing the university's academic affairs. So decisions related to academic programs are to be made by Council.

The Senate is responsible for confirming certain academic decisions and for recommending to Council and the Board on any establishment or disestablishment. So these types of decisions are to be submitted by Council to Senate for consideration.

When it comes to establishing or disestablishing any college, school, department, chair, endowed chair or institute, Council can authorize the Board and the Board can then provide for such establishment or disestablishment. The Board also has the ability to provide for disestablishment without the authorization of Council. For the Board to enact disestablishment without Council approval, the Board must consider it necessary because of financial exigency, inform Council of its decision and allow Council at least 60 days to respond.

Attached are excerpts from the Act that speak to the responsibilities of each of the university's governing bodies and the authority of the president.

Structural Decisions at the University of Saskatchewan according to *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*

Possible actions by the Board regarding structural change

Responsibilities of the board

48 The board is responsible for overseeing and directing all matters respecting the management, administration and control of the university's property, revenues and financial affairs, other than those matters that are specifically vested in the minister pursuant to this or any other Act.

Powers of the board

49(1) The board may:

....

(j) subject to sections 50 and 51, appoint the president, the vice-president or vice-presidents, the secretary, the faculty members and any other officers and employees that are required to be appointed by this Act or that it considers necessary for the purposes of the university, fix their salaries or remuneration and define their duties and terms of office or employment;

(k) provide for the establishment of any college, school, department, chair, endowed chair or institute if authorized by the council;

(l) provide for the disestablishment of any college, school, department, chair, endowed chair or institute:

(i) if authorized by the council on academic grounds; or

(ii) subject to subsections (2) and (3), if the board considers it necessary because of financial exigency;

....

(2) Before exercising its power pursuant to subclause (1)(l)(ii), the board shall consult with the council.

(3) A decision of the board pursuant to subclause (1)(l)(ii) is not to be implemented until:

(a) the board has reported the decision to the council; and

(b) the council has advised the board respecting the effect of the decision on the academic program of the university or 60 days have passed from the date the board reported the decision to the council, whichever is the earlier.

Possible actions by Council regarding structural change

Responsibilities of council

60 The council is responsible for overseeing and directing the university's academic affairs.

Powers of council

61(1) The council may:

....

(e) where it considers it appropriate on academic grounds, authorize the board to provide for:

(i) the establishment of any college, school, department, chair, endowed chair or institute;

(ii) the disestablishment of any college, school, department, chair, endowed chair or institute;

....

(f) prescribe curricula, programs of instruction and courses of study in colleges, schools or departments;

....

(n) review the physical and budgetary plans for the university and make recommendations respecting those matters to the president or the board;

(o) make recommendations to the president, the board or the senate respecting any matters that the council considers to be in the interests of the university;

Some decisions of Council go to Senate for confirmation

Decisions of council

62 (3) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the following decisions of the council are to be reported to the senate at its next meeting and are not to be implemented until either the senate confirms the decision or 12 months have passed following the end of the fiscal year in which the decision was made, whichever is the earlier:

(a) a decision to change academic and other qualifications required for admission as a student;

(b) a decision to change the number of students who may be admitted to a college or a program of study;

(c) a decision to authorize the disestablishment of any college, school, department, chair, institute or endowed chair;

(d) a decision to authorize the dissolution of any affiliation or federation.

Possible actions by Senate regarding structural change

Powers of senate

23 The senate may:

....

(j) receive proposals respecting the establishment of any college, school, department or institute and recommend to the board and the council whether or not the proposed college, school, department or institute should be established;

(k) receive proposals respecting the affiliation or federation of any educational institution with the university and recommend to the board and the council whether or not the proposed affiliation or federation should be made;

(l) consider and recommend to the board and the council whether or not any college, school, department or institute should be disestablished or any affiliation or federation of the university with another educational institution should be dissolved because of lack of relevance to the province;

Possible actions by the General Academic Assembly regarding structural change

Power to require council to reconsider

71(1) At a special meeting called for the purpose, the assembly may require the council to reconsider its decision to authorize the board to provide for any of the following on academic grounds:

(a) the establishment of any college, department or institute;

(b) the disestablishment of any college, department or institute;

....

....

(7) A request pursuant to this section to have the council reconsider a decision has no effect unless the motion approving the request is approved by at least two-thirds of the members of the assembly who are present and vote at the special meeting.

(8) If the assembly approves a request in accordance with subsection (7), the council shall reconsider the decision that is the subject of the request at the next meeting of the council.

(9) The decision of the council that is the subject of a request by the assembly is deemed to be revoked unless that decision is confirmed by at least two-thirds of the members of the council who are present and vote at the meeting of the council.

Authority of the President

73(1) The president is responsible for supervising and directing:

(a) the academic work of the university its faculty members and student body and its officers and employees employed in connection with that work; and

(b) the business affairs of the university and its officers and employees employed in connection with those affairs.

(2) The president may exercise any powers and shall perform any other duties that are conferred on or assigned to the president by the board.

...