

Faculty Senate Guidelines for Department Mergers and Splits

Per article 5.14 of the 2021-2025 collective bargaining agreement between CSU-AAUP and the Board of Regents of the Connecticut State Colleges and University System, “departments of a university shall be established by the University administration with the advice of the Senate according to criteria of commonality of interest and academic purpose.”

For the purposes of these guidelines, a departmental merger is the combination of existing departments, programs, or “divisions or other major groupings of departments with some common interest” (§5.14) into a single new department. A departmental split is the removal of members of an existing department and their assignment to new or existing departments.

In the wake of a series of department mergers and splits in recent years, the CCSU Faculty Senate recommends that the following items be resolved prior to any department merger or split, whether voluntary or involuntary.

1. Drafts of departmental bylaws will be created by the affected departments. In the case of mergers of existing departments, majorities of both preexisting departments will negotiate how the merged department will operate. For split departments, each will agree on their own bylaws. Determination will be made by the faculty of the new department(s) as to who will be chair. Bylaws should also address course scheduling provisions.
2. Draft promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines will be created. Each AAUP member assigned to a new departmental unit may choose to be evaluated for P&T either per the guidelines of their original department or per the guidelines of the new department. Members will choose one set of guidelines and will maintain this selection. This is particularly important in newly merged departments whose constituent parts may use different student opinion surveys. New department guidelines will be flexible enough to permit the evaluation of each of its members. An analogous plan will be established for faculty not yet hired. They should know, in advance, by what guidelines they will be evaluated, and that should be made clear in their appointment letter.
3. An agreement with the applicable academic dean(s) will be established as to how operating expenses will be distributed. This includes secretarial support (§9.4.1) as well as all other departmental staff. In the case of a merger, the senate recommends a minimum of one-year commitment to maintaining the level of combined existing operating expenses.
4. Environment is to the learning process. Therefore, decisions on the following points should be made among the departments and administration involved in any merger or split.
 - a. The physical location(s) of the department. Where are the department chair and secretary located? Will labs, offices, and other facilities have to be moved? Office assignments will be clearly designated. If one department is folding into another, how will office space or lab space be assigned?
 - b. The supervision of existing or future student workers and graduate assistants.
 - c. The management of laboratory fees.
 - d. The method by which curricular changes are determined in the new department. Will they be determined by program, or by the department as a whole?
 - e. The method of assigning advising in the new department. Will advisees be assigned by program or by some other method?
5. Newly merged and split departments will elect senators and representatives to university-wide committees whose membership is by department election.

6. CCSU Foundation Funds – Donor intent needs to be followed at all times. Funds donated to a department that merges with another must still support only the former department. The current practice of (a) re-titling the former department funds as “Program” funds and (b) creating a new fund for the new, merged department should be observed.
7. The mechanism for representation of programs, especially smaller programs, in departmental decision-making will be determined in advance.
8. The departmental website should be representative of the new department as a whole. Departments folded into existing departments should be permitted to maintain their old web pages as program pages (rather than department pages).

The dean or other administrator initiating the departmental merger or split will submit the proposal in writing to the president of the faculty senate explaining the goals and benefits of the change with quantitative analysis.

In the event of disputes between departments the faculty senate shall create an *ad hoc* committee to mediate those using the guidelines above. The *ad hoc* committee will also work with the appropriate dean(s) to ensure that these principles are met, and that the spirit of collegiality and shared governance are honored.