

Recommendations Guidelines for Faculty Senate to Consider Regarding 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 recommendations 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.

The Senate requests that any dean or other administrator initiating a departmental merger or split submit a proposal in writing to the president of the faculty senate. The Senate requests the inclusion of an explanation of the goals and benefits of the change and the inclusion of qualitative and quantitative analysis about the change.

The CCSU Faculty Senate recommends that the following items be resolved prior to any department merger or split, whether voluntary or involuntary.

1. Departmental bylaws will be created and approved 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 will also address course scheduling in accordance with the provisions of article 10.7. DEC composition will also be determined.
2. Promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines will be created and approved. 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. Department(s) should work with the dean(s) to create a single proposal for how operating expenses will be distributed. This includes any needed increases to secretarial support (§9.4.1) as well as all other departmental staff. In the case of a merger, the Senate recommends a minimum one-year commitment to maintaining the level of combined existing operating expenses.

Proposed:

The dean(s) should consult with Department(s) (department chairs) to create a single proposal for how the budget for operating expenses will be distributed. This includes any potential increases to secretarial support (§9.4.1) taking into consideration that overall budget and staffing is at the discretion of the dean and administration. In the case of a merger, the Senate recommends that if the combined existing budget for operating expenses is not maintained then a rationale, supporting the decision to change existing levels, shall be shared with the chairs of the two merged departments.

4. Agreements should be reached by the affected departments in discussion with the administration on the physical location(s) of the department. Where will the department chair and secretary be located? Will labs, offices, and other facilities be moved? Office assignments will be clearly designated. If one department is folding into another, how will office space or lab space be assigned?
5. We recommend full discussions take place and agreements be reached prior to submission to the Faculty Senate regarding the following.
 - a. The supervision of existing or future student workers and graduate assistants.
 - b. The management of laboratory fees.
6. Issues related to advising and curriculum in the merged or split departments should be determined in advance. The following are points to discuss.
 - a. *Will curricular changes be determined by program, or by the department as a whole?*
 - b. *The method of assigning advising in the new department. Will advisees be assigned by program or by some other method?*
7. The mechanism for representation of programs, especially smaller programs, in departmental decision-making will be determined in advance.

Other items which should be discussed in advance include the following.

8. Newly merged and split departments will elect senators and representatives to university-wide committees whose membership is by department election in consultation with the Faculty Senate Committee on Committees.

9. Public-facing descriptions of merged departments (e.g., website, open house signage, business cards) should be representative of the new department as a whole.
10. It is recommended the new department(s) meet with representatives of the CCSU Foundation as appropriate.

The Senate requests that when the administration explores the possibility of merging or splitting academic departments, the appropriate dean meets (or deans meet) with the affected faculty to discuss the goals of this action and learn of any concerns.