

College Operating Procedures (COP)



Procedure Title: Academic Reorganization
Procedure Number: 03-0101
Originating Department: Provost/Vice President, Academic Affairs

Specific Authority:

Board Policy n/a
Florida Statute n/a
Florida Administrative Code n/a

Procedure Actions: Adopted: 06/04/10; 09/13/10; 2/15/11

Purpose Statement: To reconfigure academic units and reorganize as specialized units called “Schools” within the College pursuing common goals and under the leadership of the College Dean.

Procedures:

Academic Reorganization Proposal

I. Introduction

Florida SouthWestern State College (College) is subdivided into two major academic units, the Division of Arts and Sciences and the Division of Professional and Technical Studies, for the purpose of accommodating broad program areas with common academic interests. The College is further subdivided into units designated as Divisions for the purpose of allowing smaller scholarly communities to devote attention to specific degree programs for students and to offer collegial support along traditional disciplinary lines.

From time to time there arises a need to reconfigure the academic unit and reorganize as specialized units within the College pursuing common goals and under the leadership of the College Dean. Such a unit may be designated as a “School.”

II. Proposal for Academic Reorganization and Designation of School Status

It is proposed that the College change its organizational structure to consist of a framework of “Schools” rather than academic “Divisions.” Since the College opened its doors in 1962, the institution has been organized by Divisions or disciplines, which is the standard practice among two-year colleges in Florida. However, given the College’s growing number of offerings in four-year degree programs, the College has chosen to follow the practice that most four-year colleges use in referring to major instructional units as “Schools.”

The proposed academic reorganization will benefit a complex organization with its new and expanding mission and create new challenges along with potential benefits. Because the College has developed an appreciable number of four-year degree programs, and because the four-year mission of the College is becoming more pronounced, the administration believes that the time has come to request from the District Board of Trustees a change in our academic

structure. This new nomenclature, referring to academic units as Schools rather than Divisions, will enable the institution to more accurately reflect the changing nature of our academic programs. The proposed reorganization will put in place a structure that is the norm for bachelor's degree-granting institutions and reflects a much-needed, logical progression. The new academic structure reflects the College's evolution into a four-year institution that requires a more sophisticated structure for managing program development, focusing faculty talent, and aligns FSW faculty and administrators with peers from other senior colleges and universities.

This new organizational structure positions the College to continue to develop our baccalaureate mission. It is anticipated that over time, this new structure will empower the faculty, facilitate communication, increase accountability for effective teaching and professional growth, and enhance the student experience. At the heart of this model is the distribution of leadership responsibility throughout the organization to the flattest level possible and closest to the students. Department chairs will be the College leaders close to where the instructional and scholarly mission of the College is carried out, and therefore, closest to the students.

Under this new organizational framework, the heads of the various Schools will be Deans or associate Deans and the heads of departments will be called department chairs. The Schools will be subdivided into various departments. With the reorganization, the College will be divided into the following nine Schools: School of Business and Technology, School of Public Services, School of Health Professions, School of Nursing, School of Communication, School of Education, School of Humanities and Fine Arts, School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, and School of Social Sciences.

III. Other Rationale for Academic Restructuring at the College

The need for realignment reflects an organization that has experienced tremendous growth and an expanded mission but organizationally has not yet changed its structures to fully accommodate growth. Over the past few years, a level of middle-management has been added in some discipline areas through the employment of associate Deans; however, this structure is not uniform across disciplines. As a consequence, the district Dean for arts and sciences and Dean of professional and technical studies have had to perform the typical functions of a senior administrator as well as fulfill many of the managerial functions of a mid-level manager (associate Dean or Division head). In a similar manner, several academic/discipline areas do not have chairs or mid level management personnel to serve in the role of front line supervisors that provide leadership to facilitate cohesive academic units with appropriate academic oversight.

The current organizational structure of the academic Division has resulted in ambiguous reporting structures for providing appropriate levels of accountability and program oversight. For example, demand for online courses at the College has increased nearly 150% during the last two years. The College has developed effective research-based practices for online course design and delivery; however, these courses are rarely evaluated, reviewed, scheduled, or developed with feedback from Deans, associate Deans, or discipline chairs with relevant content or curriculum expertise. Thus, the need for clear and consistent accountability and oversight for the quality of the entire college curriculum is critical given the growth and emerging complexity of the College.

This proposal seeks to address organizational issues through ensuring consistency within a three-tiered approach of top administration, middle-management, and direct supervisory levels that address the need for the separate functions and responsibilities of these levels. Providing this consistency will lessen top administrators involvement in the ongoing operations to devote more energy to strategic planning, resource acquisition, and policy development, managing change, interacting with external constituencies, and analyzing competitive and technological trends.

IV. Definitions

1. College – the highest academic sub-unit of a post-secondary institution, offering programs of study leading to a degree, and headed by an academic Dean.
2. School – the subdivision of a college organized for the common purpose of providing higher education in specialized or professional fields that lead to a degree, certification, or licensure, and headed by a director or associate Dean.
3. Department/Division – an academic sub-unit of a college having a common disciplinary or scholarly objective and headed by a chair or other academic administrator.

V. Guidelines for Designating School Status

An academic unit seeking school status will be evaluated using the following guidelines:

1. The unit should offer primarily professional programs, degrees, or certificates.
2. The programs of the unit should be accredited by professional agencies.
3. The program's scope is too narrowly focused and needs broader, perhaps interdisciplinary, focus or conversely, the program scope is too broadly focused and needs tighter focus.
4. Two or more programs have a substantial similarity or affinity of objectives such that economics of operation or improvement in quality may reasonably be expected from their consolidation.
5. The clarity of the program's identity and function will be increased by transfer to or consolidation with another program or institution.