



FACULTY SENATE PROPOSAL FSR-2018-2019-005

I. Proposal Name:

Request to Redesignate a Department as a School, or a School as a Department

II. Stated Proposal:

To formalize the process to redesignate a Department as a School, or School as a Department.

III. Justification:

There is no universal standard within the broad scope of academic administration defining the difference between a “Department” and a “School”. Within a university setting, academic units have an array of names: “Center,” “College,” “Faculty,” “School,” and “Department” are all commonly used monikers to describe academic discipline groups with administrative links. Although there are no set standards, some overall themes emerge. A “School” is often larger than a “Department” and contains multiple programs or sub-units. A “School” frequently has a graduate program or programs with certifications. It is more common for academic units with a professional-studies focus to be designated as a School.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education considers an application by a Department to become a School as an enhancement. However, UCO regards the terms “School” and “Department” as equivalent. School Directors and Department Chairs receive the same stipend and reassignment time. The faculty within a school have exactly the same rights, privileges and expectations as those within a department. Schools and Departments have identical rights and responsibilities within a college. Reasons to apply for a change in name often involve the perception of the unit by outside entities. If common practice within a discipline promotes the use of “School” over “Department” and a name change would allow significant advances in recruiting, retention or procuring donations, an application to change the name of a department to a school may be considered.

Application Process

Changing the name of an academic department requires the approval of the faculty and chair of the department, dean of the college, provost, president, the Regional University System of Oklahoma, and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher education. UCO values collaboration at all levels of the institution with the intent and goal of benefitting all stakeholders.

All proposals to change the name of a Department to a School (or that of a School to a Department) shall follow the process outlined below:

- 1) Before proposing redesignation, a department chair must receive consent, by vote, of a super-majority (75% or more) of the full-time, non-temporary department faculty. After consultation with the dean of the college, the department chair will complete and submit the Redesignation Name Change Request form to the dean.
- 2) After careful consideration, the dean of the college will approve or disapprove the request via written notification to the chair of the department within 30 business days of the receipt of the Redesignation Name Change Request form. The notification should reflect the basis for the dean's decision. If disapproved, the chair may resubmit the Redesignation Name Change request, addressing the concerns of the dean. If approved, the dean will forward the formal application to the provost for consideration.
- 4) The provost shall render a recommendation to the president within 45 business days of the receipt of the formal proposal. The provost may request internal stakeholders, including but not limited to the Deans' Council, the Faculty Senate, and the Provost's Advisory Council (PAC), to provide input on the proposal within this review period. The president of the university may also seek the advice of the cabinet.
- 7) If approved by the president, a recommendation for the name change will be submitted to the Regional University System of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for consideration.
- 8) A Redesignation from Department to School will coincide with the appropriate academic year to allow for implementation of university processes (e.g. Banner).

Formal Application Requirements

The formal application should address each of the following.

Criteria Required:

- **Benchmarking to Peers:** the unit requesting the name change should provide a minimum of five examples of similar academic units that are designated as schools at peer institutions.
- **Benchmarking to National Aspirational Peers:** the unit requesting the name change should provide at least five examples of high-achieving aspirational peers that are designated as Schools.
- **Demonstration of Excellence through Singularities:** the unit requesting the name change should provide examples of features which are unique to their department at an institutional, state or national level. These may include awards, student research, degrees offered, specialized accreditations, or other characteristics that create a marked differentiation between themselves and other departments on campus.
- **Describe how the name change will affect the entity in terms of prestige:** the unit requesting the name change should provide examples of the positive effects the name change would have on the perception of the unit to outside entities.
- **Describe how the name change will affect the entity in terms of growth and recruitment:** the unit requesting the name change should provide examples of the

positive effects the name change would have on their ability to recruit more students, and students of higher academic standing.

- **Describe how the name change will affect the entity in terms of fundraising opportunities:** the unit requesting the name change should provide examples of additional or enhanced opportunities for fundraising and development that will result from the name change.
- **Describe how the name change will affect the entity financially:** the change should be cost neutral in relation to staff, faculty or other budget considerations in conjunction with the name change.
- **Describe if and how the name change will affect specialized accreditations (if any)**

The unit requesting the change must agree that, in terms of the faculty handbook, and in all other UCO policies, Departments and Schools are seen as internally equivalent.

Submitted by Senator Goulding. Recommended for Approval by the Faculty Handbook Editorial Board and Faculty Senate Handbook Committee.

Passed unanimously on the 9th day of May, 2019.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rusty S. Archibald", written over a horizontal line.

Faculty Senate President