

Suggestions for fulfillment of the requirements for USF System Policy 10-055

The USF System Policy 10-055 requires communication about proposed changes in academic units by deans and leaders of academic units with faculty and faculty leadership. It is an important process for administrators to communicate changes to both the faculty within the units and the administrations of the individual institutions and the USF System. These Guidelines recommend steps and procedures for participants in this process.

USF System Policy 10-055 states, "It is mutually recognized that the administration holds ultimate authority and responsibility for determining the most appropriate academic structure and organization within the University, including Sec. 447.209, Florida Statutes." The policy also states that "Faculty Councils, Faculty Senates, and the SFC are bound to fulfill their responsibility as advisors on academic affairs to the USF System's and the institution's administrations."

Components of the proposal

Following are the parts of a proposal as specified in USF System Policy 10-055 (in **Bold** print), with descriptive suggestions to expedite the process and documentation of consultation within the required 90 days.

A. A description of the proposed changes.

This description will normally specify changes in the organizational structure, the movement of faculty, any additional faculty lines that will be needed, any movement of faculty lines to administrative lines, and any additional administrative or staff lines required. Documentation could include excerpts from USF institution work plans, position requests by the unit leader, written requests by affected faculty, and/or strategic plans.

B. A rationale for the changes.

The need to move and/or reorganize departments and academic programs because of the changing needs of the academic unit is an important responsibility of academic unit leaders. The rationale is normally presented in the context of a need for growth, adaptation, academic or budgetary efficiencies. Documentation could include USF institution work plans (new majors or programs), academic discipline changes that require reorganization, or the needs from unit growth.

C. A reasonable statement of the financial and budgetary implications of the changes.

When faculty lines are to be converted to administrative lines or faculty lines are being requested to support reorganization or moved to different internal units due to changing needs of the academic unit(s), the councils involved in shared faculty governance need to understand the financial changes to provide informed consultation. A reasonable statement will normally include a description of the budgetary impact, including estimated or actual costs/savings.

D. An examination of the likely consequences of the changes at the college/school, institution, and USF System levels, as well as any regional or societal implications.

These consequences could include as appropriate necessary academic program changes, graduate student funding within programs, accreditation of sub-units, grants held by faculty in the sub-units, community relationships, and outreach programs of the sub-units.

Documentation could include minutes of meetings with community representatives, budgets for

sub-units, correspondence with accrediting bodies, and letters informing faculty of how the reorganization will affect their grants.

E. A clear and specific timeline for the implementation of the changes.

This timeline would include all necessary searches, program changes, and personnel movement.

F. A brief description of the nature of preliminary consultations with the academic entities affected by the changes, including a summary of the responses. This will normally report on discussion at the level of the college and/or department/school, depending on the entity most affected. This section would include appropriate documentation of dates and minutes of meetings, any letters of support or protest of the changes, and evidence that affected unit faculty, the faculty council of the college (or equivalent), and the faculty senate of the institution have all been consulted. The documentation for section F will typically have additions as the document moves through the process of consultation.

The consultation process

The USF System is a diverse organization with different structures of shared faculty governance within units. Thus, the language of this description is general. (See USF System Policy 10-055 for specific language). There are normally four levels of consultation:

1. Affected faculty and staff
2. Unit governance body (determines whether consultation with the unit faculty has been sufficient)
3. Institutional faculty senate (determines whether consultation has been sufficient from the perspective of the institutional faculty)
4. System Faculty Council (determines whether consultation has been sufficient from the perspective of the USF System faculty)

Consultation begins with discussion of changes with faculty and staff who are affected by reorganization changes. Usually changes in one area involve other areas of a unit either through funding or assignments. Thus, discussions of proposed changes need to invite all of the personnel affected and is documented. Formal letters supporting or protesting the proposed reorganization are also included.

The process begins with the submission of the proposal to the faculty council (or equivalent) of the “most affected college(s) or school(s) from the initiating dean.” The faculty council must discuss the reorganization at its next meeting. If no meetings are scheduled, the president or chair of the affected faculty governance body or the academic leader of the institution “may call special meetings to expedite the process, including during the summer months.”¹

The 90 day period for the review process begins with submission of the reorganization proposal to the affected faculty council (or equivalent). This body may request comments in writing from the most affected academic entities. It will consider written comments at the next meeting as well as make comments and recommendations for consideration by the initiating dean. It is recommended

¹USF System Policy 10-055

that at the outset of this process the initiating dean contact the presidents of the institutional faculty senate and System Faculty Council to allow for any needed consultation on the process.

The restructuring proposal and the comments and recommendations of the affected faculty council (or equivalent) are submitted to the faculty senate of the institution where the change will occur and to the System Faculty Council with a copy to the initiating dean. Both bodies have a duty to report on the a) sufficiency of the consultation, and b) the implications of the proposed changes at the institution and system levels to the academic leader of the affected institution and the Provost and Executive Vice President of USF System. When possible, the review by the System Faculty Council will occur after review by the institutional faculty senate.

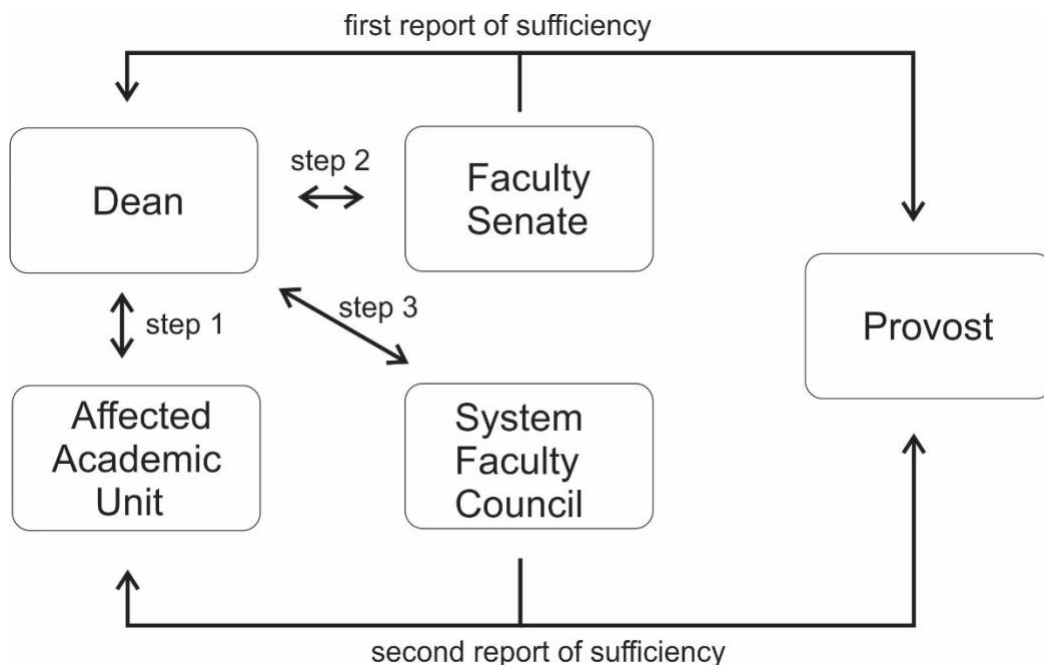


Diagram of Preferred Order of Consultation and Reporting.

Step 1. Dean consults with affected academic unit faculty about proposed change. This may involve a local (e.g. College) governance body.

Step 2. Dean presents the Faculty Senate with evidence of sufficient consultation. The Faculty Senate reports back to the Dean and at the same time to the Provost.

Step 3. Dean then presents the System Faculty Council with evidence of sufficient consultation along with the report from the Faculty Senate. System Faculty Council reports back to the Dean and Provost.