Guidelines and Checklist for Department Name Changes, Splits and Mergers

Academic departments may find it necessary or desirable to change their organizational status by re-naming, splitting into two or more departments, or merging with another department. Reasons for such changes vary, for example,

- Academic discipline changes
- Industry standards or expectations change
- Academic programs within a college require re-alignment
- Student demand and profile exceeds capacity of the current department
- Small degree programs/departments need to merge to reduce costs to retain program offerings

All such changes impact the Academic Program Catalog in CMS and may also impact curriculum articulation, academic advising, student records, admissions, and/or financial operations, data reporting requirements, academic scheduling and/or personnel management structures. Therefore, such changes require review and approval, consultation and notification, following the process below (per senate policy S06-7 and S13-9).

As with all changes to Academic Program Catalog in CMS, the deadline for completing the review and approval process is November 1st to be noted in the Catalog for the following academic year. Because the impact on the catalog is similar for each type of change, the same form may be used to apply for department name changes, splits, and mergers.

**NOTE:** Changing a Degree Name is not the same as changing a Department name. *Degree name changes require Chancellor’s Office approval; contact Graduate and Undergraduate Programs for guidance.*

**Process**

1. Agendize and discuss proposed change(s) in a department meeting. Record the vote and include in the memo justifying the requested change.
2. Write a memo outlining request (see specifics for request types below).
3. Send Request to Dean, who may require College Curriculum Committee Approval/Notification.
4. Dean submits request to Office of GUP. The Dean’s authorization allows the subsequent review process to proceed.
5. The UGS and GS&R (if applicable) Committees reviews. If approved, the request is forwarded to Curriculum & Research.
6. C&R reviews and, if approved, the C&R Chair forwards a memo, via the AVP of GUP, to the Provost for final approval.
7. Provost has final approval and may seek additional clarification.
8. GUP updates the Academic Program Catalog and notifies Academic Scheduling, forwarding an instructor relocation list, if necessary.
9. Department updates in-house materials (business cards, stationery, websites, etc.) and makes appropriate announcements to students (current and prospective) and other campus units.

**Forms to submit**

- Department Memo explaining and justifying the name change, including:
  1. Disciplinary standards:
     a. Data from other Colleges/Universities and CSU departments that have changed names due to more current understanding of a subject of
discipline; e.g., the change from *Foreign Languages* to *World Languages* because the term ‘foreign’ has a different connotation than it did 20 years ago.

b. Adding a new degree may lead to renaming a department to reflect the new profile more accurately.

c. Data from professional organizations within the discipline (if available) regarding name change.

2. Industry standards:
Corporate understanding of terminology is not necessarily academic understanding of a degree name; e.g., *Corporate Financial Management* is not understood by many companies to include an accounting component in the curriculum. Documentation may include letters of support from companies and/or organizations within the field.

3. Survey of students:
Students often have strong opinions about their degree names; e.g., students in *Corporate Financial Management* asked that the name be changed to include accounting to make them more competitive for positions based upon the accounting element being named in the degree. Similarly, *Speech* became *Communication Studies*. Student surveys may be formal or informal.

4. Data on how the new name impacts current and future coursework and faculty expertise.

5. Evidence of faculty support for the new name, including any discussion of alternative names.

6. Letters of support from other potentially impacted departments/programs; e.g., if the name change includes words/terms that overlap with the use of those terms in other programs. Thus, any program seeking to add “media” to the name would need to consult with both Journalism & Mass Communication and Art & Design to discuss their proposal prior to submitting the request to the UGS Committee.

□ Splits and mergers require additional supporting materials:

1. List of how/if faculty will be separated into each “new” department; evidence of faculty approvals in all affected departments (including meeting minutes with votes recorded)

2. Description of necessary curricular changes; e.g., course distribution, prefix changes, cross-listings, etc.

3. Plan for notification and advising of current and prospective students

4. Academic Major/Minor Program Change Form (found on the UGS website under forms)

5. Splits and Mergers typically call for changes in the academic organizational tree structure as well as financial tracking/reporting changes (e.g., *dept id*). For Splits and Mergers the Department Organization Change form must also be completed. (see [Department Organizational Change Checklist and Request](#))

For Questions or more information visit the GUP website, contact the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs ((408) 924-2447, email curriculum@sjsu.edu), or you can also contact Nicole Loeser (nicole.loeser@sjsu.edu or 4-3484).