The Evaluation of Proposals for New Schools:
Process and Elements of a Template
Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, April 22, 2008

The creation of a School is a significant event in the life of any university. A new school offers a remarkable opportunity for the University to build upon its existing strengths. To ensure that a proposed school's success meets its promise, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate has outlined both a process for the evaluation of a proposal for a new school and a template for the proposal itself. The Faculty Senate advises the President, the Rector and the Board of Visitors concerning educational policy, and has the authority to "develop, revise, [and] approve…academic policy related to the conferring of degrees" (UVA Policy on Policies). Any group wishing to propose a new school should seek the advice and review of the Faculty Senate via the Academic Affairs Committee; the proposal should provide information addressing the topics and questions that follow. This template refers to degree-granting Schools only, not Centers, Institutes, or other types of university-level initiatives that do not offer degrees.

A School has four definitional elements:

1. *Instruction* – The school shall offer instructional programs, at least one of which leads to a degree; instructional programs reflect the stated mission and goals of the school.
2. *Research* – The school shall pursue an active program of research and scholarship consistent with its mission, through which its faculty contribute to new knowledge.
3. *Service* – The school shall pursue service opportunities consistent with its mission.
4. *Primary Faculty* – The school shall have a defined faculty, at least some of whom have primary appointments in the school, sufficient to fulfill the school's mission, goals, and objectives.

Potential sources of new school proposals are:
   a. The state government;
   b. The University Administration, including the Development office, and/or
   c. Other existing entities within the University, such as schools and departments, or individual faculty members.

The primary concern from the point of view of the University's faculty is making a sound decision regarding whether to recommend that the School should proceed – this requires transparency in the deliberations. Governmental initiatives are fundamentally transparent, given the nature of the legislative process. On the other hand, the two other sources of initiatives might not be. These process recommendations are meant to ensure such transparency. Senate review will occur in two phases.

Phase I: Discovery or Conceptual Phase

Once an idea is identified as warranting the structure of a new School, this first phase of Senate review will begin. The Faculty Senate recommends that all School initiatives come before a committee of the Senate at an early stage. With respect to development activities, notification of this committee as early as possible is essential.

Required documentation at this stage would cover the first two of the foundational elements of proposals for new Schools, namely, I. Missions and Goals, and II. Need (see below). The following process should be followed:

1. While the school is still at the conceptual stage, a schedule of meetings between the Faculty Senate committee and the proposing group, or its representatives, should be held to set forth expectations.

2. An open and transparent search for stakeholders and affected parties in new School proposals will be undertaken early on (through notification of Deans, announcements in *UVA Today* and the *Cavalier Daily*, via email, etc.) by the proponents of the proposed School in conjunction with the Faculty Senate. Once identified, these individuals and groups should be included in the planning meetings.

3. A meeting open to the entire University community will be held at some point relatively early in the process to debate the initial proposal.

The proposal will be refined in response to the information gained in Phase I. Once the proposing group and the Faculty Senate committee agree that adequate initial review has occurred, conceptual approval will be granted to move the formal proposal forward.

Phase II: The Approval Phase

In Phase II, the complete School proposal, including template elements I – VIII, will be submitted to the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee. In addition, the full proposal will be widely disseminated to affected parties within the University community, with a request for responses and recommendations to be delivered to the Academic Affairs Committee for vetting, prior to consideration by the Faculty Senate as a whole. Once Academic Affairs has approved the proposal, it will be sent to the full Senate for a formal vote. This vote will be transmitted to the President and the Board of Visitors.

Elements of a Proposal for a New School

I. **Mission and Goals – The school shall have a clearly articulated mission with supporting goals and objectives.**

In addressing the mission and goals of the proposed school, questions to address include:
- What is the intellectual purpose of the school?
- What body of knowledge does the school encompass?
- How does the proposed school further distinguish the University of Virginia?

- What degrees are to be offered?
- What will be the nature of the research contributions of the members of the school?
- What service will be delivered to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the broader world?

II. **Need for School – Data from local, regional, and national sources demonstrate the need for and interest in the proposed school.**

- Demand for the academic program/Needs assessment/Market analysis
    - Does the proposed school address a core need that UVA should meet to compare favorably with comparable universities?
    - Employment opportunities for the school's graduates
- Review of competitive programs at comparable institutions
- Results from preliminary vetting of proposed school
    - Student target market
- Impact on existing academic programs at the University of Virginia

III. **Academic Programs – The school shall offer instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals.**

- Fit with UVA's mission
    - How will the new school fit within the context of existing academic programs?
    - Affiliations with other campus units envisioned?
- Curriculum
    - Degrees to be offered: names and descriptions
    - Examples of potential course offerings
    - Practical experiences planned for students (such as research, internships, and/or capstone experiences)
- Anticipated non-degree programs
- Accreditation plan, if applicable

IV. **Faculty – The school shall have a defined faculty sufficient to fulfill the school's mission, goals, and objectives.**

- Staffing model
    - Anticipated number of primary faculty
    - Distribution across disciplines, if applicable
- Faculty teaching load (for both primary and secondary faculty appointments)
- Plan for faculty participation in school governance

V. **Students** – **The school shall have student recruitment and admissions policies and procedures designed to locate and select qualified individuals.**

- Source of students
- Criteria for admission

VI. **Resources** – **The school shall have other human, physical, and financial resources sufficient to ensure success in pursuit of its mission.**

- Physical facilities
- Administration
  - Support staff requirements and responsibilities
  - Relationship with existing UVA administrative staff responsibilities
- Plan for student advisement
- Financial analysis and budget projections
- Budgetary support (List all sources of support, including tuition and start-up funds)
  - Plan for sustainability of the school
- Development Plan

VII. **Implementation Plan** – **The school shall prepare a 5-year implementation plan for faculty recruitment, development of degree programs, student enrollment and growth.**

- Time-line for process for developing school, with particular focus on:
  - Degree program and curriculum development
  - Faculty staffing
  - Student enrollment and degree production
- Space plan
  - Temporary
  - Long term

VIII. **Evaluation** – **The school shall have an explicit process for evaluating and monitoring its overall quality against its mission, goals, and objectives, and for assessing the school's effectiveness in serving its various constituencies.**

- Identify critical success factors
- Benchmarks for success – learning outcomes
  - Student evaluation metrics
- Advisory boards
  - Internal
  - External