



To: Department Chairs and Faculty Senate

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert W. Schwartz".

From: Robert W. Schwartz  
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Re: Processes for Handling of New Degree Program and Minor Proposals

Date: September 14, 2009

To obtain approval for new degree programs, proposals must be prepared according to guidelines defined by the UM System Office of Academic Affairs. The proposal format requires a detailed market analysis and business plan, and responses to a list of questions designed to ensure that the program is aligned with the institutional mission, does not negatively affect existing programs, and reflects an efficient use of institutional resources. Proposals that are submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs are reviewed and returned to our campus with comments regarding issues that need to be addressed. It is not unusual for a proposal to be re-submitted for approval because the required elements were not adequately addressed in the initial submission.

In response to a request by the UM Office of Academic Affairs, the campus-level review process for new program proposals has been revised. A pre-proposal step has been added to improve the quality of proposals and to ensure that campus resources are available to enable the proposed program. This step requires input from the Provost prior to the development of a full proposal, so that a decision to move forward with the degree proposal can be made with full consideration of the ability of the institution to commit the necessary resources. The role of the Provost in the new degree proposal review process remains the same; it is simply being moved to earlier in the process to eliminate the need for full proposal preparation should it not be possible to commit the necessary resources. The new process also allows better prioritization of degree proposals that will be submitted by the campus to the Office of Academic Affairs.

A copy of the process in text and flowchart format is attached, along with the pre-proposal form. Additional forms required are posted on the UM System Academic Affairs website: <http://umsystem.edu/ums/departments/aa/degrees/>. The website also includes sample proposals for degree programs that have been approved. These sample proposals are a valuable resource when developing a proposal for a new program.

In addition to the revised process for proposing new degree programs, a new procedure for proposing minors has also been developed. Minors only require campus approval, so the process is much less involved. The text and flowchart for the approval process for new minors are also included as attachments.

I believe the processes outlined best serve the academic departments and the academic community, and new degree and minor proposals will be managed during the 2009-2010 academic year using these processes. We will review the processes after this year for improvement opportunities.

cc. W. K. Wray