The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) has received a number of proposals to merge and in some places disestablish academic departments and programs. These proposals, in many cases, seem not to originate from academic planning in the Academic Senate, but from the Dean's level, usually in response to budget issues. CPB acknowledges that in this time of budget crisis, there may be a need to prune academic programs. However, CPB believes that there should be principles that guide such a process.

1. Does the proposal make sense from the point of view of academic planning? Justification is needed as to the process by which these decisions were made and the true intent of the process. There should be clear justification as to the benefit of the change, including comparison to other options, such as shared administrative services, that would/may yield the same benefit without the disruption.

2. Does the proposal consider and protect the needs of the faculty affected by the change? All proposals must contain a faculty vote. However, indications that faculty were pressured into agreement by actions by the Dean, should be taken seriously and call into question the faculty vote. In addition, all attempts should be made to ensure that the faculty continues to have a successful career at UC Davis. Faculty should be polled as to what academic unit they feel fits their research and teaching needs. These wishes should be honored, even if they require the faculty to move to another college. Steps should be taken so that new home departments are not penalized when they agree to accept the faculty.

The attached paper discusses reallocation of faculty FTE in detail.
In their current academic planning efforts, colleges are considering a wide range of options including in some cases the possible disestablishment of existing academic departments, primarily for intellectual rather than budgetary reasons. Any such revisions must of course involve review by the affected members of the Academic Senate and Academic Federation and the administration, as well as input from impacted students, according to the guidelines described in the relevant section of the campus Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM 200-20 Establishment/Revision of Academic Units).

Faculty FTE
Members of a college can more fully evaluate a departmental disestablishment or other possibilities when implications are reasonably clear. For example, available data on undergraduate enrollments allow reasonably accurate estimates of the effects of sunsetting a major. Other issues are not so clear. Specifically, how does the campus and college account for the faculty members from a disestablished department? The answer has a large bearing on how well these faculty can be integrated into other programs; including the perceptions, well-being and productivity of these faculty.

Given the current budget situation, departments are very sensitive to issues such as student-faculty ratio. In a number of recent instances, departments have declined offers from other departments to assist with teaching, as this would reduce pay-department student credit hours and student-faculty ratio; the perception is that such assistance may reduce future faculty resources allocated to the department. Departments are likely to have similar concerns about welcoming faculty from a disestablished department, because the increase in faculty FTE will also diminish student-faculty ratio.

The campus must try to avoid these institutional barriers to changes that are otherwise well-supported for intellectual reasons.

Given the strong reputations of UC Davis faculty and, in some cases, overlap between the research and teaching emphases of departments, it seems likely that a substantial number of displaced faculty would be welcomed by mutual agreement into other departments – if the departments are not penalized for accepting additional faculty. This will happen only if a) the faculty bring teaching load from the former department, b) the faculty develop additional courses in the new departments or c) the additional FTE is not “counted” against the new departments. The first case is unlikely, because one of the key intellectual reasons for disestablishing a department is lack of demonstrated demand for its course offerings. The second case takes time, although would be the hoped-for situation in the longer term. Therefore the third option – not counting the added faculty FTE when calculating the department’s student-faculty ratio – is the only one that allows a department to consider accepting a faculty member on the appropriate grounds.

In light of the above, it may be worthwhile to establish guidelines for the transition period, i.e., while members of a disestablished department remain with the campus. The
Committee on Planning and Budget proposes:

- Any shift of a faculty member from a disestablished or merged department to another department must be approved under existing procedures. These involve departmental faculty as well as the college and campus administration. The FTE associated with any faculty member from a disestablished or merged department who is accepted by mutual agreement into another department would be temporarily assigned to the new department, but would revert to the college when the faculty member retires or otherwise separates from the campus.

- Such faculty FTE would not be included when calculating the student-faculty ratio for the accepting department.

- The additional faculty members would be expected to carry a normal teaching load for the accepting department. That is, the chair would assign courses to the transferred faculty member using the same criteria as for other faculty in the department.

In addition, there may be other problems that must be considered. These include:

**Degree Programs**
As mentioned above, it is likely that a proposal to disestablish a department would be paired with one or more proposals to discontinue the department's low-enrollment undergraduate and/or graduate programs. The process for discontinuation is based on the University’s principles of shared governance and is codified in PPM 200-25 Establishment/Revision of Academic Degree Programs.

**Service Courses**
It is quite possible that a department being considered for disestablishment may offer one or more high-enrollment courses that are required or electives for other degree programs. Ideally, such courses would be adopted by other departments. Possible arrangements should be discussed simultaneously with consideration of transferring faculty members.

**Space**
To prevent disruption to the research programs of faculty from a disestablished or merged department, the best short-term scenario would be to reallocate research space to the new departments of these faculty. Office space would initially go with the faculty members as well. Eventually, especially for faculty early in their careers, it may make sense to exchange facilities to allow faculty to be housed in closer proximity with their new colleagues. All reallocations from the old department to the new department or involving other departments would be made by the dean, per the PPM.

**Support Budget**
The costs associated with a faculty member's research and other activities will be borne by the new departments. This will be automatically accounted for if a college utilizes a
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zero-based budget formula, although some front-end adjustment might be appropriate if the formula employs as drivers multi-year running averages of research expenditures, etc., rather than more immediate figures.

In addition, departments each accepting more than a few (2) new faculty may have some transition costs to shuffle administrative structure, in addition to the incremental costs that would be addressed by a budget formula.