Approved by the University Senate, October 5, 2006

Committee on Academic Programs
Procedures for the Creation of New Degree Programs and Majors

The process of creating a new academic degree program or major is an important professional responsibility of the faculty and requires multiple levels of deliberation and approval. According to the Board of Regents, “New degree programs or new major programs of academic work shall not be added to curricula of an institution unless recommended by the president of the institution concerned, the Chancellor, and the Committee on Academic Affairs and approved by the Board. Ph.D. programs shall be limited to research universities” (BR Minutes, 1954-55, pp. 102-03; July, 1996, p. 17). Prior to Board of Regents consideration, the proposal must be considered and approved at several levels within the university. The purpose of this document is to set forth the procedures and processes for university approval of new degree programs and majors at Georgia State University.

1. Because of the protracted nature of the approval process, members of a program or department that is considering the initiation of formal proposal for a new degree program or major are encouraged to first discuss their intent and plans with their college dean and the Provost. According to the Board of Regents Academics Handbook, “All proposals for new degree programs must be consistent with the college or university mission, and must be high on the list of academic priorities as delineated in the institution's strategic plan. It is expected that the institution will have already planned for redirected internal resources toward support of the proposed program prior to asking for new resources centrally.”

2. If a decision is made to proceed, a proposal should be written following the format and content guidelines set forth by the Board of Regents in Section 2.03.02 (New Academic Programs) of the BOR Academics Handbook. These guidelines can be found at: http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.03/2.03.02.phtml. Currently these guidelines require proposing parties to produce initially a “letter of intent” and thereafter a considerably longer “formal proposal.” To allow university bodies to better understand the full implications of the proposal and to streamline the approval process, Georgia State University requires that the formal proposal be produced and employed from the outset. The formal proposal must also include program and learning outcomes for the proposed degree program and describe the way in which program and learning outcomes will be evaluated. It is the formal proposal that will be considered by the various university bodies set forth in the process outlined below, though the letter of intent must be produced by the proposing parties and accompany the formal proposal. Questions about the writing of these documents can be directed to the chair of the University Senate’s Committee on Academic Programs.

3. Proposing parties should note that SACS guidelines set a minimum requirement of 30 credit
hours for all graduate degree programs at both the masters and doctoral level. In addition, Board of Regents guidelines state: “Absent the approval of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, no masters degree program shall exceed 36 semester credit hours” (BR Minutes, 1953-54, pp. 51-52; 1953-54, pp. 220-221; December, 1995, p. 47).

4. Proposals should first be considered and approved by the academic department(s) or program(s) in question. A letter of approval from the departmental chair(s), program director(s), or other individual(s) who would be responsible for the direct administration of the new degree or major must accompany the proposal at subsequent levels of the approval process.

5. Proposals next require the approval of the dean(s) of the college(s) that would be responsible for the administration of the new degree program or major. A letter of approval from the college dean(s) in question must accompany the proposal at subsequent levels of the approval process. Individual colleges may elect to require that proposals first be considered by the college faculty, a college undergraduate or graduate committee, or some other college-level body.

6. Upon approval by the dean(s) of the college(s) proposing the new degree program or major, the proposal should be sent to the Provost. If the proposal is in good order, the Provost will send it to the chair of the Committee on Academic Programs (CAP) of the University Senate. If the Provost sees problems with the document or proposal, he or she will contact the college dean to resolve the issues before University Senate deliberations.

7. Within CAP, the proposal initially will be deliberated on by a subcommittee, most typically the Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council (depending on the level of the new degree or major being considered). The subcommittee may elect to invite the proposing parties to attend a meeting at which the proposal is discussed. The subcommittee then will make a recommendation to CAP. At a meeting to which the proposing parties will be invited, CAP will deliberate and vote on the proposal. At both the subcommittee and full committee levels, requests may be made to the proposing parties that changes be made in the proposal.

8. The Chair of CAP will notify the Provost in writing of the recommendation of CAP. The Provost, on behalf of the President, will then make the decision on whether to forward the proposal for the new degree program or major to the Board or Regents. If the Provost’s recommendation is positive, a letter of intent will initially be submitted to the BOR, as per BOR guidelines. If the BOR subsequently invites the university to submit a formal proposal for the new degree program or major, the Provost will forward the full proposal for consideration by the Board of Regents.

9. Proposing parties should be aware that the Board of Regents will often request additional information from the proposers at this stage of the process and, at times, request that the proposers appear before the Board of Regents to answer questions. Proposing parties also should be aware that this entire approval process can take over a year.