

## Faculty Senate Resolution #14-56

Approved by the Faculty Senate: April 15, 2014

Held for further study by the Chancellor: May 21, 2014 ([with comment](#))

Rejected by the Chancellor: May 31, 2016 ([with comment](#))

### Recommendations from the Subcommittee on Unit Code Policy

Subcommittee Members: Patricia Anderson (Education, Vice Chair of Unit Code Screening Committee), Charles Boklage (Medicine, member of Faculty Governance Committee), Edson Justiniano (Physics, Chair of Faculty Governance Committee), Andrew Morehead (Chemistry, Vice Chair of the Faculty and member of Faculty Governance Committee), and Edmund Stellweg (Biology, Chair of Educational Policies and Planning Committee).

Resource Persons: Derek Maher (Philosophy and Religious Studies, member of Faculty Governance Committee) and Mark Sprague (Physics, Chair of the Faculty and member of the Faculty Governance Committee)

On March 24, 2014, Prof. Mark Sprague, Chair of the Faculty, requested that the Faculty Governance Committee (FGC) appoint a subcommittee to review current policies and practices on Code Units and Unit Codes (included below). At its meeting of March 26, 2014, the Faculty Governance Committee appointed a diverse panel composed of faculty from several Colleges and with representation from the FGC, Unit Code Screening Committee (UCSC), and the Educational Policies and Planning (EPPC).

The subcommittee met on April 7, 2014 and, in what follows, we present the consensus reached.

It is the view of the subcommittee that any discussion about the adoption of unit codes of operation must begin by reviewing the history and principles that guide our current practices. Part IV of the *East Carolina University Faculty Manual*, "Academic Units, Codes, and Seven Year Unit Program Evaluation" provides an excellent rationale and justification for the partition of the faculty into code units:

*"By virtue of their professional disciplinary and inter-disciplinary expertise, East Carolina University faculty members are responsible for creating and implementing degree programs, associated curricula, and for performing numerous other activities essential to educating students, advancing knowledge and serving the university and the community. To fulfill this responsibility effectively, faculty members organize into self-governing departments, schools or colleges. **The resulting organizational boundaries are neither arbitrary nor a reflection of individual interests. Disciplinary and interdisciplinary boundaries derive naturally from differences in the subjects studied and the methods required to generate new knowledge of these subjects.** The operations of a faculty group organized around shared subject matters and research methodologies are governed by a document referred to as a "unit code." ECU uses the expression "code unit" to refer to a department, school or college whose operations are governed by a unit code. **Differences between unit codes arise because of the subject matter and research methods of different code units. These differences require unique procedures that govern teaching, research, service and other assignments as well as the specific code unit's criteria for appointment, reappointment, promotion and tenure, for example.** The unit code document is created by a group of faculty members and approved by the appropriate tenured faculty, the Unit Code Screening Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the Chancellor. In this process, the administrator to whom the unit administrator reports (a dean, vice-chancellor or provost) reviews a draft code and may provide advice."*

The highlighted sentences are particularly relevant to the issues that this subcommittee was asked to address. These principles in fact must instruct any discussion focusing on issues involving code units.

Recommendations:

**1. The appropriate level for a code unit.**

Unit codes at the college level would not be appropriate except where there is significant disciplinary overlap in degree programs and Promotion and Tenure (P&T) and other personnel action criteria. Consider business, which has a BSBA with five concentrations and MBA and MSA degrees. There is a significant amount of overlap (the undergraduate degrees differ by 18-24 hrs. in the concentration) between degree requirements. Similarly, expectations for P&T and criteria for faculty evaluation are largely equivalent (and heavily influenced by the accrediting body). On the other hand, the overlap between Biology and English is non-existent beyond some chance the foundations courses overlap. Even sciences like Biology, Chemistry and Physics, which share cognates, only overlap by 12-18 hours at the undergraduate level and not at all in the required classes at the graduate level. Likewise, expectations for P&T, faculty evaluation and graduate faculty status are widely varied due to acceptable rates of publication for the field, presence or absence of a PhD program, differential teaching load, state support, and available federal support in the three fields.

There will be significant issues with a large enough school or college code to contain what will ultimately be embedded codes from the extant units. The inclusion of the diverse set of operating procedures, different committee structures, and different criteria for faculty status and evaluation will make the combined code quite unwieldy. There is also the not insignificant challenge of achieving quorum for votes of the faculty. English (HCAS) has more faculty members than a couple of ECU's colleges, and nearly as many as the College of Business.

For professional schools in which there is significant overlap in degree curricula and faculty expectations, code units at the college level make sense. For schools and departments in which the curricula and expectations are widely divergent, code units at the department or school level make more sense.

We find little likelihood of improvement in efficiency and uniformity via any of the changes suggested in the recently published University Committee on Fiscal Sustainability "*Draft Report with Proposed Recommendations*" or in the alternatives proposed in Prof. Sprague's memorandum. Such changes are unlikely to reduce administrative loads but more likely will increase them. If the real issue is quality control of P&T recommendations, deans have signature authority over such recommendations in the present configurations. If there are any situations in which that is not the case, changing that would be much more straightforward and efficient than changing the whole existing structure.

**2. Procedures for transfer of faculty members between departments within the same code unit.**

We recommend that ECU require code units at the School or College level to incorporate and apply the procedure currently specified for transfers of faculty between code units at the departmental level to transfers between departments within Schools or Colleges. Presently these procedures are described in the *East Carolina University Faculty Manual*, Part IV, Section I (III.3. and III.4.) The appropriate Faculty Senate committee(s) should review, in AY 2014-2015, the language in this section to ensure its clarity and applicability to all clienteles.

**3. Should ECU implement college or school-level tenure and promotion committees?**

Several of the college level code units still designate their departments as code units for the purpose of P&T and other personnel actions. This reflects, even in closely aligned departments, the difficulty of arriving at uniform criteria for P&T and the difficulty of achieving quorum with larger units for the purpose of voting. Clearly, “super-units” created through the artificial amalgamation of current code units will not have common criteria, even leaving aside the issue of which departments have graduate programs and which do not. In addition, there is a wide diversity in resourcing of different programs.

Colleges and schools could have tenure and promotion committees above the unit code level, and such committees could make recommendations to the appropriate Dean or Director. The value of any such a higher-level committee would be in providing support for units to follow their own criteria, and would likely place pressure on departments not to recommend promotion or tenure for weaker candidates. However, for the same reasons we recommend against the artificial consolidation of the code units themselves we refrain from making a blanket endorsement of “super” P&T committees. It is patently evident that any such committee would face the impossible task of applying common criteria to faculty in disciplines with widely diverse scholarship methodologies. In addition, such a committee would only function effectively if representative and elected by the faculty.

As mentioned earlier, in item 1 above, deans and higher-level administrators possess signature power over all P&T decisions. These administrators can and must use this sizeable level of discretion to ensure that the academic code units under them strictly adhere to their own adopted criteria. During the AY 2014-2015 the proper Faculty Senate committee(s) should study the appropriateness of creating a mechanism by which the next higher level administrator could communicate to the UCSC any perceived weakness of the P&T criteria in a unit code under their purview when it comes for UCSC approval.

**4. Guidelines and governance documents for programs that exist outside or between code units and for entities with faculty working outside academic code units.**

Unit codes provide the structures and mechanisms for managing all academic and personnel concerns within the university in accordance with ECU’s tradition of shared governance. Suitable guidelines and governance documents (following expectations expressed in Part IV of the *East Carolina University Faculty Manual* ) must be prepared for programs that exist outside or between code units and for entities with faculty working outside or between academic code units. All academic programs that function without unit codes must prepare guidelines and governance documents that include a definition of voting faculty, specify how faculty are qualified and selected for inclusion in the program, and define the roles of administrators and committees of those programs. Any such program with academic offerings must establish a curriculum committee that will review curriculum and submit offerings to the Faculty Senate, and the Chancellor by way of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Curriculum Committee, as appropriate. Entities that preside over dedicated probationary-term or tenured faculty lines through joint appointments with academic code units must establish a personnel committee, procedures, and criteria for faculty evaluations, and clearly identify a mechanism for feedback to the home (tenure) units of the jointly appointed faculty.

# Request that Faculty Governance Committee (FGC) appoint a subcommittee to review current policies and practices on Code Units and Unit Codes.



## Faculty Senate

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members of the Faculty Governance Committee  
**FROM:** Mark Sprague, Chair of the Faculty  
**DATE:** March 24, 2014  
**SUBJECT:** Subcommittee on Unit Code Policy

For the last several years we have wrestled with many issues involving code units and unit codes. It is time for us to examine issues related to unit codes and make recommendations to guide us as we consider modifications to our *ECU Faculty Manual* policies on unit codes. Therefore, I am writing to charge the Faculty Governance Committee with forming a subcommittee on unit code policy. This subcommittee should consist of representatives from the Faculty Governance Committee, the Educational Policies and Planning Committee, the Unit Code Screening Committee, and the Faculty Officers. The subcommittee will make high-level policy recommendations through the Faculty Governance Committee to the Faculty Senate on the following matters and other unit code issues deemed necessary by the subcommittee:

*East Carolina University is a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina. An equal opportunity/affirmative action university, which accommodates the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

1. Recommend a process for the transfer of faculty members between departments within the same code unit. Many code units consist of multiple departments with departmental tenure and promotion committees as well as departmental criteria for tenure, promotion, and annual evaluation. Transferring faculty members between departments could affect their expectations and evaluations.
2. Recommend the appropriate level for a code unit. Some have suggested that for efficiency and uniformity all codes should be at the college level. Others have said that the differences between some departments necessitate separate codes. Consider both of these suggestions and determine what is best and most sustainable for ECU.
3. Make a recommendation on roles of a college or school consisting of separate code units in governance, and the promotion and tenure process. Can these "super-units" have criteria to which all of their constituencies must adhere? If so, how should these criteria be decided, and where should they be housed? Recommend whether these super-units should have college or school-level tenure and promotion committees.

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4. Recommend guidelines and governance documents for programs that exist outside or between code units (e.g. the Bachelor of Science in University Studies, the Ph.D. in Coastal Resources Management, the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Biological Sciences, and the Multidisciplinary Studies Program).
5. Recommend the content of governance documents for entities with faculty that exist outside unit codes (e.g. the proposed School of the Coast and the Honors College). What defines the role the faculty of those entities, and how are these faculty members evaluated?

The subcommittee should present a report containing its recommendations to the full Faculty Governance Committee, who will present final recommendations to the Faculty Senate before the end of the 2013 -2014 academic year.

Please contact me at 328-1862 if you have any questions. Thank you.

c: Ed Stellwag, Chair of Educational Policies and Planning Committee  
Christine Zoller, Chair of Unit Code Screening Committee  
Faculty Officers

