Policy and Procedures for the Designation of Academic Units as Schools at Queen’s University

Introduction
The attached Policy and Procedures for the Designation of Academic Units as Schools at Queen’s University was drafted in response to the April 2014 request from the Department of Film and Media to have its name and status changed to the School of Film, Media and Cultural Studies. Although SCAD was in agreement to adding “Cultural Studies” to the department’s name it was not in agreement with elevating the status of Film and Media to a “School”. In part, SCAD’s decision was based on the lack of Senate benchmarks and/or policies that the Committee could use as standardized criteria for what constitutes a “School”. In order to fill this policy gap, SCAD undertook an investigation of the issue of academic “School” designations and to draft a policy that would apply across the university.

Analysis and Discussion
The following should be noted:

- In September 2014, SCAD created a small working group to draft a policy for SCAD’s consideration. Members included: L. Daneshmend (Chair), E. Hill (SCAD faculty member), B. Jamieson (SCAD student member) and K. Wiener (SCAD Observer);
- The Working Group met twice over the 2014-15 academic year and the issue was discussed at five out of eight SCAD meetings during this period;
- The Work Group did consider past-practice but unfortunately it did not yield any clarity due to the lack of consistency on how past proposals were dealt with by Senate.
- Exploration of the issue included gathering written feedback from the academic deans and having one-on-one conversations with individual deans (including the Dean and Vice-Dean of Arts and Science) about the draft policy;
- The Head of Film and Media also attended the April meeting of SCAD to clarify the Department’s petition to become a “School”.

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Motion
that Senate approve the Policy and Procedures for the Designation of Academic Units as Schools at Queen’s University, effective October 1, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair, Senate Committee on Academic Development (2014-15)

Committee Members:

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Background
Use of the designation “School” in the naming of units has a long and varied history at Queen’s University. Currently, this designation is applied to thirteen entities at Queen’s, which correspond to four broad categories:

A. Academic units that function as independent academic Faculties and which are headed by a Dean, and have relative autonomy in setting their own budgets related to academic initiatives. There is only one instance of this currently at Queen’s:
   ▪ Queen’s School of Business (1963)

B. Academic units which are a distinct part of an academic Faculty and which are headed by a Director, and whose budgets are regulated by the Dean of the Faculty they report to. There are ten instances of these currently at Queen’s:
   - Six in the Faculty of Arts & Science
     ▪ School of Computing (1969)
     ▪ School of Environmental Studies (1994)
     ▪ School of Kinesiology & Health Studies (1946 - as the School of Physical and Health Education)
     ▪ School of Music (renamed the School of Drama and Music, effective July 1st 2015)
     ▪ School of Religion (2012 – renamed from Theological College)
     ▪ School of Urban & Regional planning (was under School of Graduate Studies; effective July 1 2015 a sub-unit of the new Department of Geography and Planning)
   - Three in the Faculty of Health Sciences
     ▪ School of Medicine (which is like a “mini-Faculty” since it actually contains numerous departments, both clinical and non-clinical)
     ▪ School of Nursing
     ▪ School of Rehabilitation Therapy
   - One in the School of Business
     ▪ School of Policy Studies (was under School of Graduate Studies)

C. Non-academic units which report to an academic Faculty. There is only one instance of this currently at Queen’s:
   - School of English (which reports to the Faculty of Education)
D. Non-academic units which are administrative in nature and provide a shared service across Queen’s. There is only one instance of this currently at Queen’s:
  - School of Graduate Studies
    - Note that the School of Graduate Studies had, until 2014, two academic units with the designation of “School” which reported to it – the School of Policy Studies and the School of Urban & Regional Planning.

Objective
The aim of this Policy is to achieve greater clarity, consistency, and coherence across the University in the way that this key designation is applied.

Scope
This policy applies to proposals for establishing new, Senate approved academic units which have the designation of “School”, or to proposals to restructure or rename existing academic units with the designation of “School”.

This policy does not apply to units designated as Schools which were already in existence at the time of approval of this policy by Senate: i.e. such units will continue to be recognized under this policy.

Authority and Approval Process
Proposals to establish a School are reviewed according to the processes by which new academic initiatives are approved. Specifically,
  - Proposals for the creation of a School within an existing Faculty or Faculties will only be considered by Senate if they have been approved by the appropriate Faculty Board(s) and/or GSEC (Graduate Studies Executive Council – if appropriate);
  - The proposal will then be considered by the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) which will make its recommendation to Senate;
  - Senate approval must be followed by ratification by the Board of Trustees.

Key Attributes
A Senate approved School must possess the following key attributes:
  - Is a distinct part of an academic Faculty or Faculties
  - Is associated with specific, distinctive, designations of degrees or other academic credentials (e.g. B.Mus., B.Cmp., M.Div., MES, MPA, etc.)
  - Is capable of offering programs that are multi-disciplinary; OR, is capable of offering programs that are pan-disciplinary; OR, is capable of offering programs that are professional in nature; OR, some combination of the previous three.
• Is characterized by a common purpose, with dedicated focus to complementary teaching, research and academic activities
• Will be headed by a Director

Assessment Criteria
When assessing a proposal for establishing a new School, including by re-designation or amalgamation, of existing academic units, the following factors should be considered:

• Will establishing the new School support, reinforce, or enhance specific academic priorities and initiatives identified by the parent Faculty or Faculties, and/or by the University?
• Will the new School enhance the student teaching and learning experience?
• Will the new School offer distinctive academic program(s) of graduate and/or undergraduate study which students will be admitted to?
• Will the new School have, or be able to attain, the necessary critical mass of faculty members?
• Will establishing the new School enhance student recruitment efforts?
• Will establishing the new School enhance the ability of the University to secure research funding, or standing with a professional or accrediting body, or to improve fund-raising prospects?
• Has a similar designation been applied to comparable academic units elsewhere?

External Reporting
The creation, restructuring or renaming of a Senate approved School will be reported to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities by the Office of the Provost for information.