Procedure for Creating a New Undergraduate Degree Program

New undergraduate degree programs must be approved by the department or program faculty, the relevant college or school, the Undergraduate Council, the Council of Academic Administrators, and the Chancellor. In addition, new degree programs must be approved by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Board of Trustees.

According to the Academic Guidelines document published by IHL, all new degree programs must meet the following criteria:

- be consistent with the role and mission of the institution;
- be considered only when all university degree programs within that discipline have professional accreditation (if available) and have met the minimum standards of productivity;
- be considered only when professional accreditation will be sought for this program (if available);
- require no more than 124 credit hours towards graduation if the request is for an undergraduate program unless it meets the standard for exception;
- be consistent with the curricula of similar programs in this discipline and will meet any licensing or certification needs;
- meet local, state, regional, and national educational, social, or cultural needs;
- not be unnecessarily duplicative of other programs within the System;
- be funded through documented resources; and
- include procedures for program effectiveness.

The procedure for new program approval includes the following steps.

**Department Level**
The faculty members in the department or program must create and approve the proposed new degree program and its curriculum. The faculty members must also complete the Authorization to Plan document for IHL approval purposes.

**College or School Level**
Once approved by the department or program faculty, the new degree program curriculum must be considered for approval by the appropriate committee or faculty in the relevant College or School. After approval, the proposed degree program curriculum and the Authorization to Plan document are forwarded to the Undergraduate Council.

**Undergraduate Council**
The Undergraduate Council has broad responsibility for advising on all undergraduate academic policies and activities of the University on its Oxford and satellite campus locations (excluding the University Medical Center), including the approval of new degree programs. Recommendations from the Undergraduate Council and minutes of its meetings are forwarded to
the Provost, who presents these proposals to the Council of Academic Administrators before forwarding all minutes to the Chancellor for approval.

**Council of Academic Administrators**
The Council of Academic Administrators has broad responsibility for all academic activities of the University on all its campuses other than the Medical Center, including the approval of new degree programs. It receives copies of minutes and recommendations from the Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, and other ad hoc and standing committees.

After a proposed new academic program is endorsed by the Council of Academic Administrators, the Provost transmits the Authority Plan to the IHL Office of Academic and Student Affairs by the established annual deadline.

**Chancellor**
Once the Chancellor approves the minutes of the Council of Academic Administrators, the new degree program is approved on campus. The minutes are forwarded to the Registrar’s Office, Office of Publications, and the Office of Information Technology.

The new program is not activated until the IHL Board of Trustees grants final approval.

**Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning**
One electronic copy of the Authority Plan (appendix 7 of IHL Academic Guidelines) document must be submitted by the Provost’s office to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs at IHL by March 1. The requests for new programs will be placed on the April meeting agendas of the Council of Chief Academic Officers and the Council of Institutional Executive Officers. The requests will be placed before the Board of Trustees Educational Policies and Programs Committee in May, which will render a decision to the chief academic officers in May. If granted authorization to plan, the department or program faculty must prepare the New Academic Degree Proposal (appendix 8 of IHL Academic Guidelines) document for submission by the Provost’s office to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs at IHL by July 21. The request will be sent to the Council of Academic Officers and the Board of Trustees Educational Policies and Programs Committee by August 1. If the Board of Trustees Educational Policies and Programs Committee renders a positive decision to the chief academic officers, the New Academic Degree Proposal will be placed on the Board of Trustees’ September agenda.

Once approved by the IHL Board of Trustees, the academic program may be offered as soon as the spring semester following approval or as late as the printing of the next catalog.