

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
MISSION STATEMENT CHANGES AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Effective: January 10, 2018
[Technical Changes made June 2025]

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State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
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I. Statutory Duties Related to Mission Statement Changes at Public Institutions.

The Code of Virginia, Section 23.1-203, charges the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and institutions of higher education with various responsibilities and duties. Those most directly related to institutional mission statement changes are listed below.

- “Review and approve or disapprove any proposed change in the statement of mission of any presently existing public institution of higher education and to define the mission of all public institutions of higher education created after the effective date of this provision. The Council shall report such approvals, disapprovals, and definitions to the Governor and the General Assembly at least once every six years. No such actions shall become effective until 30 days after adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such a report. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to authorize the Council to modify any mission statement adopted by the General Assembly or empower the Council to affect, either directly or indirectly, the selection of faculty or the standards and criteria for admission of any public institution, whether related to academic standards, residence or other criteria. Faculty selection and student admission policies shall remain a function of the individual institutions.” (§23.1-203(2))
- “Study any proposed escalation of any public institution to a degree granting level higher than that level to which it is presently restricted and to submit a report and recommendation to the Governor and the General Assembly relating to the proposal. The study shall include the need for and benefits or detriments to be derived from the escalation. No such institution shall implement any such proposed escalation until the Council's report and recommendation have been submitted to the General Assembly and the General Assembly approves the institution's proposal.” (§ 23.1-203(3))
- “Adopt such policies and regulations as the Council deems necessary to implement its duties established by state law. Each public institution of higher education shall comply with such policies and regulations.” (§ 23.1-203(15))
- “Insofar as practicable, preserve the individuality, traditions, and sense of responsibility of each public institution of higher education in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. The Council, “insofar as practicable, shall seek the assistance and advice of each public institution of higher education in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities.” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203(27-28))

The Council has established the following policies and procedures related to mission statement changes at public institutions in its obligation “to advocate for and promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the Commonwealth...” (Code of Virginia, § 23.1-200)

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II. Policy Statements on Mission Changes at Public Institutions

A. Overview

To ensure that the Council is duly apprised of any proposed change in the statement of mission, the Council recognizes the following distinctions. **Note:** The following distinctions are applicable to modification, expansion, and a new mission statement.

1. Types of Mission Changes

- a. *“Modification”* a change to the text of the mission statement, proposed solely for revisions for clarity and grammar, rephrasing (e.g., minor word changes), editorial changes, and restatement that would not alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, and degree levels offered or curricular offerings.
- b. *“Expansion”* a change to the text of the mission statement including the addition of language, proposed solely to expand the institution's focus (e.g. to increase research or outreach efforts), that would not alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, and degree levels offered or curricular offerings.
- c. *“New”* a substantive change to the current mission statement that results in a new mission that would alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered or curricular offerings (e.g., adding medical education or changing the focus from undergraduate education to graduate education).

2. Levels of Required State Action

- a. *SCHEV Staff Must Review and Approve:* any proposed “modification” to a statement of mission (see **Operational Definitions** below).
- b. *Council Must Review and Approve or Disapprove:* any proposed change in the statement of mission determined as an “expansion” or “new” mission statement (see **Operational Definitions** below). For a substantive change resulting in a “new” mission, Council’s review and “preliminary” approval is required. Preliminary approval is a mandatory step and occurs prior to approval from the institution's Board of Visitors. During the preliminary period, the institution shall provide any supplemental documentation requested (see **Operational Definitions** below).
- c. Council delegates approval of individual community college mission statement changes to the State Board for Community Colleges. Provisions of this policy shall apply to the Virginia Community College System as a whole.

B. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

“Mission Change”: a change in the statement of mission—modification, expansion, or new —of any presently existing public institution of higher education.

“Modification”: a change in the statement of mission proposed solely to restate, clarify, change grammar, or make an editorial change that would not alter the institution’s nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered or curricular offerings and would be executable within currently authorized funds.

“Expansion”: a change in the statement of mission proposed solely to expand services currently offered by the institution that would not alter the institution’s nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered, or curricular offerings and would be executable within currently authorized funds. Terms such as “globalization” and “international” may be added to the mission to expand the institution's outreach.

“New”: a substantive change in the statement of mission which creates a new statement of mission that would alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered or curricular offerings and may or may not be executable within the currently authorized funds. The addition of new discipline areas (e.g., medicine, graduate-level research, law) would typically result from a “new” mission.

“Preliminary” Review/Approval: an action by the Council authorizing a public, four-year institution to conduct a study to change the mission. A preliminary review must address, clearly and completely *new areas of curricular offerings* (e.g., medicine), *change in the character and purpose* of the institution, a *change in primary focus* (e.g., undergraduate education to graduate education), *issues of need* and, issues of costs (e.g., any action that will ultimately require either the purchase, construction or receipt (as donation) of one or more buildings to support curricular offerings). A request for such an approval is a **required** step that allows an institution to seek state (Council) input and permission to continue planning before it receives Board of Visitors approval, expends significant resources, or enters into binding contracts/agreements. The required documentation is detailed in Part III and IV of Council’s “Proposal for Mission Statement Change” form, which appears at the end of this document.

C. Mission Changes

1. Background

The Council recognizes distinctions among modification, expansion, and new missions for proposed change in the statement of mission (see **Operational Definitions** above). This distinction is intended to clarify and streamline the approval process for public institutions’ mission changes. As a result, while the Council will continue formally to approve all institutional mission changes, SCHEV staff have been delegated the responsibility and authority to review and approve a proposed “modification” in the statement of mission. An expansion of a

mission statement or a new mission must be approved by the Council. “Modification” and “expansion” changes to the mission statement must be approved by the institution’s Board of Visitors prior to formal submission to SCHEV. All changes to the mission statement must be submitted to SCHEV staff using the guidelines, instructions, and forms contained herein.

2. “Modification”

If SCHEV staff concurs with a public institution’s determination that a proposed change in the statement of mission fits the definition of a “modification” (see **Operational Definitions** above), the Council delegates responsibility for the review and approval of such a change to SCHEV staff. SCHEV staff will respond within 60 calendar days of receipt of written request of a proposed "modification" in the statement of mission.

3. “Expansion”

If SCHEV staff and/or a public institution determine(s) that a proposed change in the statement of mission fits the definition of an “expansion” change (see **Operational Definitions** above), the institution shall seek Council approval of the proposed change in accordance with these policies and procedures.

Within 60 calendar days of receipt of a written request for a proposed “expansion” change in the statement of mission, SCHEV staff shall prepare a report and recommendation for Council action on the proposed change.

4. “New”

If SCHEV staff and/or a public institution determine(s) that a proposed change in the statement of mission constitutes a “new” mission statement, the institution shall seek Council approval of the proposed change in accordance with this policy and procedures.

When a proposed change in the statement of mission involves a “new” mission, Council shall consider the proposal for “preliminary” review and approval. The preliminary review allows an institution to seek state (Council) input and approval prior to final approval by the institution's Board of Visitors and to continue planning before it expends significant resources or enters into binding contracts/agreements.

D. Policies Relevant to All Mission Changes

1. Public institutions shall inform SCHEV staff in writing of any proposed change in the statement of mission. **All changes in the statement of mission must be submitted for Council consideration and approval prior to initiation and no such actions shall become effective until 30 days after adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such a report.**
2. The Council does not possess the authority to disapprove a statement of mission authorized by the General Assembly.

3. Approval of a change in the statement of mission does not obligate the Council to support capital or operating requests in excess of the amounts provided in the institution's current appropriation.
4. If a change in the statement of mission is intended or implied in a request for a new academic degree program or an organizational change, the mission statement change must be approved prior to initiation of the degree program or the organizational change. Council action on a proposed change in the statement of mission must occur prior to approval of action on a new degree program or organizational change.
5. In accordance with the criteria of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as well as specialized and/or professional accrediting bodies, a change in the statement of mission may constitute a "substantive change" of which an institution must inform its accreditor(s).

III. Procedures for Submission of Proposals for Mission Changes

A. General Guidelines for Mission Changes (Modification, Expansion, New)

1. Proposals to modify or expand a statement of mission must be submitted to Council at least 10 months prior to the date of proposed change and in accordance with these policies and procedures. "Modification" and "expansion" changes to the mission statement must be approved by the institution's Board of Visitors prior to formal submission to SCHEV.
2. Proposals to "modify" a statement of mission shall be submitted via the attached forms. All requests must include:
 - A cover letter from the president outlining the proposed change;
 - SCHEV's Mission Change Cover Sheet and Part III form;
 - A detailed narrative explaining the mission change to include rationale, justification, and impact on resources;
 - Text of current and proposed mission statement;
 - Impact on academic units, on and off-campus;
 - Impact on academic programs and curricular offerings;
 - Impact on resources;
 - Additional supplemental documentation as needed.

The proposal document shall include sufficient information to document that the proposed change fits the definition of "modify" and thus can be approved at the staff level. The detailed narrative is submitted in a document separate from the cover letter. SCHEV staff reserves the right to request additional information to evaluate a proposed change.

3. Proposals for “expansion” of a statement of mission may be submitted via the attached forms. All requests must include:
 - A cover letter from the president outlining the proposed change;
 - SCHEV's Mission Change Cover Sheet and Part I and Part III forms;
 - A detailed narrative explaining the mission change to include rationale, justification, and impact on resources;
 - Text of current and proposed mission statement;
 - Impact on academic units, on and off-campus;
 - Impact on academic programs and curricular offerings;
 - Impact on resources;
 - Additional supplemental documentation as needed.
4. Proposals for a “new” statement of mission must be submitted prior to final approval by the institution's Board of Visitors and at least 10 months prior to the date of proposed change. Proposals may be submitted via the attached forms and constitute the preliminary review. All requests must include:
 - A cover letter from the president outlining the proposed change;
 - SCHEV's Mission Change Cover Sheet and Part I, Part II, and Part III forms;
 - A detailed narrative explaining the mission change to include rationale, justification, and impact on resources;
 - Text of current and proposed mission statement;
 - Impact on academic units, on and off-campus;
 - Impact on academic programs and curricular offerings;
 - Impact on resources;
 - Additional supplemental documentation as needed.

Proposal documents shall include sufficient information to document that the proposed change fits the definition of “expansion or new.” The detailed narrative is submitted in a document separate from the cover letter. SCHEV staff reserves the right to request additional information to evaluate a proposed change.

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B. Specific Instructions for Mission-Change Proposals (Modification, Expansion, New)

1. Proposal Format

- Use Microsoft Word Times New Roman 12 Font for all text including appendix cover pages and page numbers. At minimum, foot notes should be in TNR 10 Font. All citations must utilize APA format.
- Use one-inch margins; single space, 0 pt “before and after” between narrative text.
- Number all pages of the document. Number appendices or attachments separate from the main document. Attachments/appendices are paginated separately.
- Provide a Table of Contents.
- Print one-sided. Print documents from the Word document format—do not print documents from the PDF.
- Use only SCHEV official forms – edited SCHEV forms will not be accepted. Use SCHEV category headings when provided within this document.
- Include support documentation (e.g., reports, cited documents, study documents) in a labeled attachment/appendix. All non-Word and original documents (e.g., meeting minutes, surveys, strategic plans) are to be included behind a titled cover page and retain the original document’s pagination. Attachment/appendix pagination (e.g., A-1, B-1) should not appear on the pages of original documents.
 - No edits or revisions should be made to original documents.
 - Documents should be sized-adjusted for readability, if needed.
 - Do not copy and paste images/screenshots of documents into Word documents.
 - For electronic submissions, original documents should be scanned for inclusion in the appendix of the PDF electronic copy.
- Use a clip—please do not bind materials.
- For formal submissions, send two hard copies of the documentation. One document must contain an original signature on the cover letter, SCHEV’s “Proposal for Mission Change Cover Sheet,” and the “Part III Information Contact” form. Electronic signatures will not be accepted. For supplemental instructions, see the “[Instructions for Submission of Documentation to Academic Affairs](#)” available on the SCHEV website.

Note. For “new” mission statement changes, a signed PDF of the document on a flash drive is submitted upon final approval. No electronic copy is submitted for modified and expanded mission statement changes.

- Address all proposal correspondence to the Director of Academic Affairs. Address all envelopes/packages to Administrative Assistant, Academic Affairs and Planning.
- For draft documents, submit one hard copy labeled (watermark) "draft." Include a completed SCHEV Mission Statement Change Cover Sheet. Include a cover note from the SCHEV liaison that indicates the nature of the submission and, the liaison's contact information (name, telephone number, and email address). Institutions seeking to submit draft documents should consult SCHEV staff for guidance.

All requests that require institutional Board of Visitors (BOV) approval must be formally submitted to SCHEV within one year of the BOV approval date.

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2. Proposal Requirements, Components, and Forms

Proposals for mission statement changes must include the following components:

(i) a cover letter signed by the president or chief executive officer; (ii) a “Mission Change Cover Sheet”; (iii); a table of contents; (iv) a narrative to explain the proposed change; and a “Part III Contact Information” form.

i) Letter from the President or Chief Executive Officer

A letter signed by the president or chief executive officer must accompany the proposal for mission statement changes. The letter must:

- indicate the institution’s legal name, indicate the nature of the request, the proposed effective date, and the BOV approval date. BOV approval is required for all mission changes.
- provide a description the change and the reason for the change;
- indicate the impact of the change on academic units;
- indicate the impact of the change on academic programs;
- describe the institution’s commitment to the change in terms of resources (e.g., personnel, faculty, financial, and physical resources);
- describe funding plans for the change, including specified items and amount of the funding. Include a description of what the institution will stop doing or do differently in order to fund the change, if applicable. Indicate the institution’s ability to establish and support the change with existing resources. Indicate whether state support will be needed or not needed.;
- include contact information (name, title, email address, and telephone number) of person(s) other than the institution’s president or chief executive officer who may be contacted regarding the mission statement change proposal.
- the signature block must include the signatory’s typed first and last name (and middle initial, if normally used) and full official title. The signature, either written or secured electronic, must appear between the closing valediction (e.g., “Sincerely,”) and the typed name. If written, the signature must be legible. If electronic, the signature should be sized for readability.

ii) Mission Statement Change Cover Sheet

The SCHEV Cover Sheet for Mission Statement Changes must be used to submit proposals for mission statement changes. The cover sheet must be signed and dated by the chief executive officer (see below).

iii) Table of Contents

Provide a detailed table of contents. The table of contents should reflect the headings and page numbers of the primary document and the headings and page numbers, if paginated for the attachments. Attachments/appendix items are paginated separately from the primary document and from other attachments/appendix items.

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**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
PROPOSAL FOR MISSION STATEMENT CHANGE
COVER SHEET**

1. Institution			
2. Nature of Proposed Change (i.e., modify, expand, or new). Please indicate the change here. Attach a detailed description of the change as a separate document. Attach copies of the institution's current mission and resultant mission.			
3. Purpose of Proposed Change. Please indicate in a few words the reason for the change here or simply indicate "See attached." Provide a detailed explanation of the rationale for the change as a separate document.			
<p>4. Type of Proposed Change (check one). Part III must be completed for any change.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"> <p>MODIFICATION <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please explain background for change, text changes to mission, and how the change fits with the current academic programming in a separate document.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"> <p>EXPANSION <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please complete and submit Part I of this form.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"> <p>NEW <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please complete and submit Part I and II of this form.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>MODIFICATION <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please explain background for change, text changes to mission, and how the change fits with the current academic programming in a separate document.</p>	<p>EXPANSION <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please complete and submit Part I of this form.</p>	<p>NEW <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please complete and submit Part I and II of this form.</p>
<p>MODIFICATION <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please explain background for change, text changes to mission, and how the change fits with the current academic programming in a separate document.</p>	<p>EXPANSION <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please complete and submit Part I of this form.</p>	<p>NEW <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please complete and submit Part I and II of this form.</p>	
5. Date of last mission change (e.g., December 1, 2021):			
<p>6. What was the nature of the last change?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">MODIFICATION <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">EXPANSION <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;">NEW <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	MODIFICATION <input type="checkbox"/>	EXPANSION <input type="checkbox"/>	NEW <input type="checkbox"/>
MODIFICATION <input type="checkbox"/>	EXPANSION <input type="checkbox"/>	NEW <input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Date of Approval by the Board of Visitors for the proposed change. (REQUIRED)			
8. Proposed Effective-Date of Mission Change. (e.g., December 1, 2021) (REQUIRED)			

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

iv) Narrative Description

Proposals for mission changes must include a detailed narrative description to address (at minimum) the areas and statements below. **Note:** The format for the proposal is **not** bulleted. A guide with the section headings to format the proposal can be found on page 13 of this document.

- Include a description of the nature of the proposed change.
- Provide a background narrative to succinctly summarize and describe the history of actions taken to determine whether a mission statement change should be requested. The narrative should describe referenced actions in chronological order. If any authorized campus committees (not Board of Visitors) approved the mission statement change, committee names and dates of approval should be indicated in each case. **Note:** the background narrative is not the rationale to justify the proposed mission statement change. Statements about the rationales or justifications for the proposed organizational change—including rationales adopted by decision-making committees or other bodies— should be communicated in the “rationale” section of the proposal.
- Indicate the purpose of the proposed mission statement change.
- Provide the current and proposed mission statement. Include a narrative to describe how the proposed change aligns with the definition of a modification, expansion, or new mission change.
- Include a detailed rationale to provide justification for the mission statement change. Include support documentation as an attachment/appendix when needed. Attachments/appendices should be referenced in the proposal document at the end of the rationale section.
- Indicate whether new academic units (departments, schools, colleges, divisions, or an off-campus site) will be proposed with the mission statement change. Indicate the name, location, and proposed effective date of the unit. **Note:** an organizational change proposal will be required.
- Indicate whether new academic programs (degrees and certificates) will be proposed with the mission statement change. List the academic programs and provide the designation level, program name, CIP code, and anticipated date of initiation. **Note:** a proposal for a new academic program will be required.
- Indicate the impacts on the institution’s resources. Provide an explanation of the resources and a detailed description of the expenses needed for the mission statement change. Describe miscellaneous expenses needed for the change. Include a line-item budget to show the costs for paper products, promotional materials, website changes, and other specified items. Indicate whether the institution has adequate resources to support and maintain the mission statement

change. Indicate whether state support will be needed or requested to support the proposed mission statement change.

- Include additional supplemental documentation as needed.

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Format/order of section headings for proposals submitted to SCHEV

This outline is provided for convenience and guidance in formatting mission change requests submitted to SCHEV. Key section headings are provided. The parenthetical information gives guidance for text/explanation narrative and is not included in the formal document.

Note: Additional headings (e.g., accreditation) may be needed to provide additional information. Such headings should be included as needed. Specific requirements regarding format and content can be found on pages 6-8 and 11-12 of this document.

Institution

(Legal Name)

Nature of Proposed Change

(What change is proposed?)

Background

(Provide a detailed succinct history of actions taken to determine whether a mission statement change should be requested. The narrative should describe referenced actions in chronological order and indicate dates or time frames, personnel, and what occurred. If any authorized campus committees (not Board of Visitors) approved the mission statement change, committee names and dates of approval should be indicated in each case. Note: background narrative is not rationale or justification for the mission statement change and does not include statements about the rationales or justifications. Such information is written in the rationale section of the proposal.)

Purpose of Proposed Change

(Provide a statement to indicate the purpose of the change.)

Mission

(Provide the current mission and the proposed mission statement. Describe how the change aligns with the definition of a modification, expansion, or new mission change. Denote text changes in a blue color.)

Rationale for Proposed Change

(What are the reasons for the proposed change? Include a detailed narrative with support statements describing justification for the mission statement change. Provide conclusion statement(s) to indicate the effects/outcomes (why the change is needed) of the mission statement change if approved. Support documents should be included as appendix items, if needed.)

Academic Units

(Describe the impact on academic units in association with or as a result of the mission statement change. Indicate whether academic units would be established, reorganized, or closed in association with or as a result of the mission statement change. List the academic units and

provide the name, location, and proposed effective date. Additional information may be needed to describe any organizational changes.)

Academic Programs

(Describe the impact on academic programs in association with the mission statement change. Indicate whether academic programs will be developed and proposed in association the mission statement change. List the academic programs and provide the designation level, program name, CIP code, and anticipated date of initiation. Additional information may be needed to describe any academic program changes.)

Resources/Budget

(Indicate whether the mission statement change will have an impact on the institution's resources. Provide a detailed explanation of any costs to change the mission statement. Include a line item budget to show the cost for each expense and indicate the total cost of expenses. Indicate whether the institution has adequate resources to establish and maintain the mission statement change. Indicate whether a request will be made or not made for state funding to support any changes associated with the proposed mission statement change.)

Attachments/Appendices

(Include all referenced documents. When applicable, include Virginia General Assembly legislation and/or appropriation acts.)

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Part I: Supplemental Information

1. If a study was conducted to determine the feasibility of the proposed mission change, please summarize its findings and attach a copy of the full report. If no such feasibility study was conducted, summarize a needs assessment (the institution's need for the change and/or the needs of the Commonwealth) and attach a detailed description of the necessity for the proposed mission change.
2. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the anticipated effect(s) of the proposed change on the institution's scope, curriculum, and budget. If the proposed change will involve the establishment of new academic programs (e.g., certificates, degree programs), summarize and attach a detailed description of new academic programs. A full proposal for new academic programs will accompany to the proposed change.
3. If the proposed mission change will involve the reorganization of an existing academic unit or the merger of two or more currently-separate units, summarize here and attach a detailed description of the impact of the change.
4. If the proposed change will involve the **establishment of a new academic unit or units** (e.g., department, school, college, institute), summarize here and attach a detailed description of new academic units and the anticipated operating costs, including costs of and number of administrative personnel, support personnel, faculty, and other costs and miscellaneous costs. Please discuss and describe whether the institution will be request new state appropriations.
5. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the effect(s) of the proposed change on the state's system of higher education including state priorities.

Part II: New Mission Information

1. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the institution's character and purpose including the institution's goals and the impact of the new mission on the character and purpose including the goals.
2. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the institution's current functional emphasis instruction, research, or public service and the new functional emphasis, instruction, research, or public service.
3. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the current and proposed Carnegie classification, degree levels offered, and relative emphasis given to undergraduate and graduate instruction.
4. If the proposed mission change will include an escalation to a degree-granting level higher than that level to which it is presently restricted, summarize here and attach a detailed description of the study conducted. The study must include the need for and benefits and/or detriments to be derived from the escalation.

Part III: Contact Information

1. Name(s), title(s), and contact information for institutional personnel who may be contacted to answer questions and/or supply additional information regarding this proposal.

Name Email Telephone

Name Email Telephone

2. Printed name(s) and dated signature(s) of person(s) who completed this form.

Printed Name

Signature Date

Printed Name

Signature Date

3. Printed name and dated signature of the president or chief executive officer.

Printed Name

Signature Date