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## Plan for Academic Reorganization

The following final plan for Academic Reorganization is based on a year-long process of conversations, consultation, and feedback from faculty, staff, students, and administrators across Sonoma State's campus. It is important to acknowledge that this process has not been an easy one. Our campus community already felt the strain of the challenges we have faced over the last six years, but people have generously taken the time to participate and provide their thoughts and reactions to this plan as it developed. There is still a great deal of work to be done as we implement the changes to our academic structure and leverage those changes to foster curricular innovation, faculty collaboration, interdisciplinary teaching and learning, faculty and staff success, and enrollment increases. Academic reorganization sets the stage for the work we must do to ensure the long-term sustainability and success of Sonoma State.

Below is a summary of the key decisions and changes made as a result of the feedback, with pertinent information and details provided in hyperlinks.

### **Key Academic Reorganization Memos**

All Academic Reorganization memos, records of formal consultations, the FAQ, and communications are available on the Academic Reorganization [website](#). Below is a list of the key memos and their content.

- [May 17, 2023 Memo](#): Provided initial description of the shape of reorganization with Colleges, Schools, and Departments.
- [July 21, 2023 Memo](#): Provided guidelines and a process for School reorganization
- August 7, 2023 - December 7, 2023: Faculty consultation on School and College groupings. A record of formal presentations and consultations is on the Academic Reorganization [website](#).
- [December 7, 2023 Omnibus Proposal](#): Proposed academic structure involved six academic Schools consolidating into three academic Colleges. 37 Departments with potential for collaboration were clustered to form 17 Schools, with each school having a Chair.
- [January 18, 2024 Chair Assigned Time Memo](#): Provided a model for assigning chair time based on APARC's work in 2021-22.
- [January 29, 2024 Scheduling and Work Assignments Memo](#): Process for appointment of Chairs and other Department leadership positions
- [February 28, 2024 Update on Chair Assigned Time](#): Adjusted the model for assigning chair time to allow Schools to split Chair Assigned Time.

### **Presidential Consultation and Emerging Themes for Consideration:**

Formal presidential consultation on reorganization included the following:

- March 7 meeting with Academic Affairs Leadership Team (Deans and AVPs)
- March 28 Listening Session (In Person)
- March 29 Listening Session (Zoom)

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From those meetings and listening sessions, five sets of concerns emerged:

- **Department Chair Position and Workload:** Reductions in assigned time for chairs and the grouping of departments into schools with a School chair is a concern that has been expressed since early Fall 2023 and is reflected in two Senate documents, the Resolution Opposing the Loss of Individual Department Chairs (passed 11/30/2023) and the Senate Response to the Reorganization and the APARC Report (passed 3/14/2024). (See Section 3 below.)
- **Staff Engagement and Morale:** This concern was expressed through the large number of staff who attended the Presidential listening sessions. Staff in the current academic Schools do not yet have confirmation of their roles in the new Colleges and are concerned about workload. They do not feel they have been consulted enough about those roles. The current concern is exacerbated by the recent history of staff departures through Early Exit and Voluntary Separation programs and the hiring slowdown that has prevented rehiring to fill empty positions and led to staff taking on additional workload. (See Section 4 below)
- **Return on Investment:** This recommendation appeared in the Senate Response and suggests a better articulation of budget costs, savings, and potential opportunities for revenue. (See budget information throughout the Plan; the Provost's Office will do a detailed Academic Affairs Budget Forum later this month to provide information and answer questions.)
- **Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty and MPP Leadership Positions in the Colleges:** This was a recommendation of both APARC and the Senate Response. Faculty leadership positions included in the recommendations were School Chairs, Associate Chairs, Other Department leads, and Graduate Program Coordinators. MPP roles include Executive Directors and Associate Deans. (See Section 5 below.)
- **Metrics for Success:** This recommendation emerged in both the APARC Report and the Senate Response, and it re-emerged in the listening sessions with the President. The request is to develop transparent and objective metrics to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the reorganization and the metrics/model for assigned time fairness and reallocation, which should be provided to the Senate in Fall 2024 and regularly reported thereafter (APARC and Senate). (See Section 6 below.)
- **Implementation Timeline:** In meetings with chairs and in the listening sessions with the President, some stakeholders offered the suggestion that the timeline for implementation of academic reorganization should be slowed down. (See Section 7 below.)

### Model for Academic Reorganization

Here are the elements of the Approved Model for Reorganization:

#### 1. Three Colleges

College	Dean
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Education, Counseling, and Ethnic Studies (ECES)	Dean Laura Alamillo
Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts (HSSA)	Dean Troi Carleton
Science, Technology, and Business (STB)	Dean Elisabeth Wade

**Budget Savings:** 3 College model (Net annual savings: **\$540,000** in salary and benefits for 2 Deans; that net total includes increases (\$78,000) required for Operations Managers and Deans to take on additional duties.)

## **2. School Structure**

The College and School structure is provided [here](#). Departments with potential for collaboration were clustered to form Schools led by a School Chair. A small number of Departments have remained as stand-alone entities. For a Revised Table that provides the rationales under which departments were clustered together, see [here](#). The model proposed in the Omnibus Proposal on December 7, 2023 has been modified for the School of the Arts, which has split into two Schools with the facilitation of Dean Carleton and Interim Dean Beebout. The two new Schools are

- School of Performing Arts (Music and Theatre Arts/Dance)
- School of Media and Fine Arts (Communication and Media Studies and Studio Art).

A Center for the Arts that combines both Schools will be considered later.

## **3. Chair Model**

The model for chair leadership in the new structure has been modified considerably from its original conception, largely due to faculty feedback. In light of recent feedback in Senate and in the Presidential Listening Sessions, please note the following changes:

- The President, in consultation with the Provost, has determined the following:
  - Departments with major headcounts between 250 and 500 may have their own department chair, and may choose to continue being part of a School (with two Chairs, one of whom is designated as School Chair) or be a standalone Department. Departments affected by this change in policy include:
    - Biology (chair units will be 8; no change)
    - Computer Science (chair units = 6; addition of 2 units)
    - Kinesiology (chair units = 6; addition of 2 units)

Departments impacted by this change must notify [provost@sonoma.edu](mailto:provost@sonoma.edu) by Monday, April 8, 2024. Electrical Engineering may be impacted by the decision

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in Computer Science. The Provost and Dean will reach out to both schools and all 4 department chairs to discuss their options.

As an incentive for enrollment growth, headcounts for all Departments, along with other metrics, will be evaluated on an annual basis, and Departments having headcounts that surpass 250 will be allowed to have their own department chair within the School setting. Departments that fall below 250 will be required to share school-allocated chair units.

We have developed a [chart](#) that provides a comparison of current chair WTUs per semester, the 4 APARC models, and the WTUs offered by the Provost Office as part of reorganization. Annualized, the reductions in 62 units of chair assigned time (at an average replacement rate of \$2,441 + 60% benefits) equates to **\$242,147**.

#### **4. Staff Positions in the Colleges**

The staffing model in the Colleges is still under development. The goal has always been to make as little change as possible to staff positions, and the Provost's Office will collate the College plans and provide the staffing model as quickly as possible. As a general rule, staff will continue with their current department. In cases where the staff would like to change departments, or where they support multiple departments in different schools, additional conversations will occur with the staff member and their appropriate administrator.

#### **5. Transitional MPPs in the Colleges**

One of the issues under discussion since Fall 2023 and mentioned in the Omnibus Proposal is the need for transitional MPPs in the Colleges. Each of the three new Colleges will have a Dean and an MPP Operations Manager. The current School of Business and Economics has traditionally had other MPP positions that are generally funded from non-state funding. Two of those positions will continue and one will not:

- 1) WBI (Wine Business Institute) Executive Director funded by endowment for Wine Business Institute; this position will continue and the Provost's Office has initiated a search. The cost is covered by donor funding (90%) and state-side funding (10%).
- 2) The Dean of SEIE was restructured as Executive Director of Extended Education for Academic Year 2023-24 and will continue; 100% of the cost is covered on self support.
- 3) The Director of MBA Programs position was discontinued in September 2023, with a consequent decline of 1.0 FTE MPP, and will be restructured as a faculty academic coordinator. The coordinator will receive assigned time for this work, in line with other graduate program coordinators. Cost of assigned time would be covered by graduate program revenue in Extended Education and MBA fee revenue, so is not supported by general fund allocation.

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To ensure that savings from reorganization goes to meet the budget deficit, no new, *permanent* MPP positions will be created in Academic Affairs for the next two years. After investigating the complex needs of the new Colleges, we have determined to provide transitional support to the three College Deans. This transitional support, to be staffed from the faculty, will be in the form of interim positions funded for the 24/25 academic year, with the option to renew in the 25/26 year as approved. If, in the Spring 2026 academic year, the positions are determined to be essential, a national search will be conducted for each.

The transitional positions are listed below:

- Interim Associate Dean – Library
- Interim Associate Dean – College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts
- Interim Associate Dean – College of Science, Technology, and Business
- Executive Director – Schools of Performing Arts and Media and Fine Arts

The funding for each of these interim positions is one-time funding and will come from their current faculty salaries and vacant MPP position savings that are being held in Academic Affairs as we anticipate enrollment growth. This model also protects three tenure-track salary lines.

Funding Source(s): The Dean of the University Library is a position we expect to rehire as enrollment increases (but no sooner than the 2026-27 academic year), and the Provost has agreement from the University Budget Office to maintain the line as base funding. However, at the current enrollment, the position is vacant and the Library is reporting through the Dean of the School of Education. As a result, portions of the permanent salary line are being reallocated, on a one-time basis and to supplement current employee salaries to support the interim positions. As part of the transition, \$123,947 is being allocated across the 4 interim positions. The College of Education, Counseling, and Ethnic Studies will maintain its Faculty Associate Dean position and be re-evaluated on an annual basis to determine the possibility of a full-time MPP Associate Dean.

An additional one-time increase will be provided from the permanent Dean of the Library funding to create the following two salary levels commensurate with size and scope of responsibility:

- Interim Executive Director & Interim Associate Dean (Library) - \$141,750
- Interim College Associate Dean - \$168,000

For further budget details, see this [chart](#).

## **6. Measuring Success**

One of the questions that has been asked during the process is whether there are examples of other models of reorganization, and which models have proven most successful. This question is addressed in the FAQ for Academic Reorganization, Question #28, found [here](#). There is little

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empirical research on the success of academic reorganization, but see the following recent article:

Cherry, Brian D., Brent Graves, and Nathan Grasse. 2023. "Causes, Processes, and Effects of Academic Reorganization at Public Master's Universities in the United States." *Perspectives: Policy & Practice in Higher Education* 27 (2): 51–59. doi:10.1080/13603108.2022.2121779.

This is an area where Sonoma State could certainly lead nationally and in the CSU in determining and measuring metrics for success. Faculty recommendations about metrics and ways to measure them would be welcome by the Provost Office.

Key metrics might include, but are not limited to:

- Perceptions of process
- Perceptions and analysis of workload of department chairs
- Perceptions of job satisfaction for chairs and staff
- Impact of collaborations and accomplishments in curriculum and enrollment increase in schools

## **7. Timeline for Reorganization**

While the timeline for reorganization is tight, we will need to move forward as planned. The Provost plans to meet regularly with School leaders, both Chairs and other leaders, as well as with staff and faculty, to address implementation concerns and questions as we move forward. The [high level timeline for implementation can be viewed here](#) on the Academic Reorganization website.