

Summary Notes

Arts and Sciences Town Meeting 8/27/08

After opening remarks from Interim Executive Dean Joan Leitzel and the three divisional deans, which were recorded on video, Dean Leitzel began the Q&A session with questions received in advance that had been solicited by members of the Arts and Sciences Staff Advisory Committee from Arts and Sciences staff. Most of these questions related to possible staff reductions, the timing, the process, which positions might be eliminated, which areas would be most affected, the role of attrition, etc. Her responses are below unless another dean's name is indicated.

- There is no road map yet. However, the university is committed to its valued, productive employees. If there is a reduction in positions in one area, both Arts and Sciences and HR are committed to identifying other opportunities for affected employees. We will be advised on matters related to administrative structure and business processes by consultants from an external firm that has worked with Ohio State in the past and with other major universities.
- Some changes have already occurred in the Office of the Executive Dean:
 - Former associate executive dean for curriculum and instruction, Ed Adelson, has become the interim director of the School of Music. Katie Potterf, program coordinator, has also moved to the School of Music.
 - Terry Gustafson will now serve as associate dean for Arts and Sciences with responsibilities for curriculum and assessment, interdisciplinary programs, and the honors program.
 - Phyllis Newman, senior fiscal officer, is moving to Arts and Humanities to work on special projects with those programs.
 - Brad Harris, associate vice president and chief administrative officer for Health Sciences, will join Arts and Sciences as the chief administrative officer on September 1.

- Giff Weary: It is important to note that the consulting firm will give us recommendations, but we in the Arts and Sciences will make the decisions.
- Matt Platz: One example of what is currently happening is that in Biological, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences a communications vacancy in MPS is being filled by a task force headed by Andrea Ward-Ross working with Sandi Rutkowski in Biological Sciences; they are working on redesigning the MPS web site.

Name of the consulting firm and what other schools they had worked with

- That announcement should be made next week. We'll place the name on the Arts and Sciences web site when the agreement is finalized.

Relationship between the Arts and Sciences restructuring and the Graduate School's review of doctoral programs

- The review of doctoral programs helps Arts and Sciences set priorities. Similarly, the college strategic plans are identifying program priorities. This information will be foundational to Arts and Sciences decision making. Now the Arts and Sciences divisional deans and executive dean are all located in 186 University Hall with the Graduate School housed right above it, making for easy communications.
- Joan Leitzel and Pat Osmer will co-chair the life sciences review and the environmental sciences review that were recommended as next steps following the review of graduate programs.

Concern with skewed data and bias informing past decisions and wondering about the fairness of the process

- I'm not sure what data are being called into question, or to what extent the recommendations to restructure Arts and Sciences flowed from institutional data.
- What is clear is that the president and provost are committed to strengthening the role of Arts and Sciences within the university.

Big picture goals for the faculty to keep in mind as they go about their work

- Joan Leitzel: There are three goals for our current review: strengthen academic programs, position Arts and Sciences for significant leadership roles in the university, and develop an administrative structure and business processes that are efficient and cost effective.
- Giff Weary: Achieving academic excellence and moving Ohio State forward.
- Matt Platz: From a local perspective, we have not optimized life sciences and environmental sciences so we will have a faculty task force look at issues; we can't impose a new organizational structure without faculty approval and enthusiasm.
- John Roberts: We need to work toward eliminating competition; the "we" and "they" mentality is our enemy. We have to maximize our advantages within the budget model; that we're all working together in 186 University Hall speaks volumes.
- Joan Leitzel: There is concern that the institutional budget model encourages competition rather than cooperation. Now Arts and Sciences has the opportunity to develop its budget model within the institutional model; this model should be one that supports Arts and Sciences priorities and goals.
- If you find there's not a place for your voice, then that's a problem we'll want to address.

More about the timing of changes—any before consultants are done?

- Giff Weary: It may be that most administrative changes will happen above the department level.
- Matt Platz: I'm aware of three faculty initiatives to consider reorganizations; these may proceed on a faster timeline than the larger Arts and Sciences reorganization.
- John Roberts: My expectation is that most departments will change very little, but the consultant's report will guide us at all levels.
- Joan Leitzel: We recognize that much of the most important work of a university happens at the department level. Students identify with their departments, and ideas are generated at the department level that will be needed in this review.

Value added by the “uber” dean; how do we measure the advantages?

- I’m not sure I know the answer yet, but I expect to have that figured out at least by next March.
- We can learn from other universities; I plan to look especially at the UCLA model.
- The Executive Dean may have more of a role working with the center of the university and with external connections than with the internal operations of the academic units.

Comments from an MPS staff member excited about possibilities of shared services in HR, finance, purchasing, etc., and hoping that senior staff will consult with internal sources where there is a wonderful wealth of knowledge from day-to-day work.

Repositioning Arts and Sciences within the university; “us” vs. “them;” rewards flow toward enrollment, how do we promote research?

- Arts and Sciences carries the university’s heaviest load of instruction.
- We are a research university, and ideally research will strengthen instruction. In a strong research university, faculty are of high quality and there are increased opportunities for undergraduates.
- Arts and Sciences can now promote stronger multi- and inter- disciplinary initiatives in coursework and in research.
- The TIE initiatives are good examples of how funds for research can be made available for faculty coming together from different units; we’ll look for more opportunities of this sort.

More questions will be answered as we come together again or post on web site.