

The task force met for the first time on December 13, 2018. After introductions, President Schill and Provost Banavar provided an overview of the group's charge. (*Note: The [charge is available online](#) as a memo from the president and provost to the task force.*) Schill reiterated for the group that there is no preconceived outcome in their minds, and that they hope this group can collaborate to identify whether we have the best structure possible to allow for excellence in teaching, research and scholarship. He noted that if we never question what we do, we will never be able to move forward. The question of CAS's structure seemed appropriate at this time. When Schill arrived a few years ago, he noted, the size and scope of the college seemed disproportionately large, but it was not the right time to ask such a question because of recent tumult, an interim dean soon to become permanent, budget rebalancing, and a host of other issues before the college. Schill noted that now seemed like an appropriate time to ask this question both because it is a useful analysis before entering into another search for a permanent dean and because of the changed nature of campus since his arrival.

Provost Banavar thanked the task force members for their service. He noted that this effort is really about the university's goals around teaching and research excellence, and that it's not about saving money, finding efficiencies or some other financial motive. He also encouraged the task force to think creatively about possible solutions, noting that Brad Shelton's role on the task force is to help provide a link to budgetary and administrative structure analyses so that the task force itself does not have to undertake this part of the analysis itself.

A question was raised regarding how much latitude the group has to think about structures and units currently outside of CAS. Schill encouraged the group to think widely and creatively. He reminded the task force that its job is not to come up with a recommendation, which should provide space for analyzing various options without constraints.

A question about the use of a consultant for this process, someone who may not have "skin in the game", was raised. Schill articulated that the vision needs to be "ours" (the UO's), and that a consultant may have good insight into what other schools do but would not understand the culture and pulse of the UO and its goals. Though he is seeking a solution that emerges from our own faculty, staff, and students, he encouraged the task force to conduct outreach and talk to third parties to gain such insights, perhaps by divvying up phone calls and research, as well as using student employees in the provost's office to help supplement research needs.

A question was asked about whether the group could reach out to others on campus who perhaps have expertise in areas such as governance or business models to provide some insights into how various management structures might work or certain principles that work or not. The president and provost indicated that they should indeed do so if they felt it would be valuable.

One member offered advice that the group not be afraid to get into the weeds because academic structures from the business/management structures cannot be truly separated; even though they are focused on different goals, they are inherently linked. She noted that it may be worthwhile to think about multiple types of structures, each with a different purpose (i.e., the management structure may not necessarily need to align with the academic structures). Schill reiterated that he and the provost are flexible about solutions and open to various analyses from the task force.

A member asked for clarification about whether the meetings would be announced publicly in advance and whether they will be in a space with room for observers. The answer to both is “yes” – meetings times are already posted online and they will be held in a room with plenty of space.

A member asked why the president and provost did not ask for a specific recommendation. They explained that they felt that a recommendation would too narrowly focus the conversation at this early stage—that the task force would be so focused on one particular solution, it might not creatively or robustly look at alternatives.

A member asked whether the faculty assembly or the University Senate would vote on an ultimate decisions and Schill explained that there will be robust consultation but there was no plan for a vote. *(NOTE: Schill later issued an email to the task force clarifying that his answer was too quick and too short; that there is no plan for a vote at this time because it is not even certain that there will be anything to vote on, but that if there is a plan for major structural change, he anticipates a vote within the Senate.)*

The task force then turned to an internal conversation about questions, research requested, and next steps. Several requests for information and questions arose:

- Whether there are or would be more specific metrics other than the general “excellent in teaching and scholarship” by which to conduct the analysis.
- More information about the organizational structures on campus apart from just CAS.
- Position descriptions for deans, associate deans, etc., not just in CAS.
- When the task force would actively solicit input from students (the student representative noted she would help conduct feedback sessions and collect information from students).
- Whether there is a strategic plan with regard to graduate education in CAS or more generally.
- More information about decision-making structures at the UO and the relative levels of authority regarding things such as budgeting, space allocation, and the like.

Shelton provided a brief explanation of the work the small group of academic CFOs will conduct on analyzing financial and administrative structures. He noted that other people may be brought in to help with questions and information requests from the task force.

There was some discussion about the role of financial analysis, efficiency analysis, etc. in this work. There was talk about how to incorporate the flow of resources (as opposed to just administrative structures) into the analysis, how much to factor in *financial* costs, and what best to focus on relative to optimizing structures.

One member observed that empathy and belonging were crucial to educational and scholarly excellence and would be important topics to consider. One summarized the goal as trying to optimize for leadership, and there was a general discussion about how we identify, discuss, and assess true high-level objectives that support maximization of teaching and research.

Other points of consideration raised included: impacts on interdisciplinary work, how we consider (or not) programs vis a vis their financial picture, the line between identifying solutions as part of the analysis and not making a recommendation, how to consider approaches that respect unique natures of programs, how best to move or realign programs to improve impacts.

The group agreed to arrange a training session apart from the scheduled task force meetings for those members who want a deeper dive into organizational structures, budgets, and other administrative information.