

Karen: welcome

Reminder of lunch with President Schill

- Reminder on interacting with Mike; i.e. let's not ask the same questions we have already asked
- He might be interested in whether we are looking around at other parts of the campus in a larger restructuring
- He will likely be asking us questions as well as answering our questions

Tina Boscha and Mike Price present on the Teaching Working Group

- Will send slides/one-page document following the meeting

The Working Group reported first on advantages followed by disadvantages of the current CAS structure. They noted the following:

Advantages:

- Fosters and promotes inter-departmental opportunities
- One college contains all units with a universal focus on the tradition of a liberal arts education
- Centralized budget model allows for larger programs to support smaller ones

Disadvantages:

- Department-based structure disallows for the circulation of faculty across campus to teach in interdisciplinary programs and for the innovation in cross-disciplinary collaborations and forms of teaching that defy boundaries of disciplines.
- The budget is centralized, so subsidy decisions are exogenous to individual departments.

There was discussion among task force members about whether interdisciplinary work is truly a function of or prohibited by structure, or whether it is more related to the people within specific areas (or even people in leadership roles, such as the provost) or other causes such as enrollment pressures.

"Interdisciplinary" here is used to describe more than just programing or research, but—for example—faculty partnering with the Honors College, First-Year Interest Groups, or other efforts within the institution. There was some discussion among task force members about how the budget model factors in to perceptions of structure obstacles or not, with the group generally noting that college structures are in fact more permanent than budget models, which change with some relative frequency.

Discussion of interdisciplinary teaching and budgeting

Janelle – how does the structure of CAS relate to students being able to take classes across disciplines?

Tina – likely not working as effectively as we could be.

Discussion about FIGs as an instance of cross-unit teaching collaboration, looking at this with other universities, general ed credits

Karen – going back to the vision of CAS – if we need a college vision for development or for research, we also need a vision of liberal arts and undergraduate education; what is the unrealized potential of a liberal arts college. Do we want to make that potential come to life in an improved CAS or start over with something completely different?

Joe – has been able to work across departments and colleges (business school and Honors) without an issue; Karen – easy when there is no enrollment pressure. Departments that are in heavy demand – it is more difficult to release faculty to teach elsewhere.

Question again – is this structural? Would a different structure change both the easy and difficult cross-disciplinary?

Spike – attitude from Dean and Provost is what makes it work or not.

Melissa – reminder that current budget model is not absolute, so we need to be careful how we factor the budget model in to our understanding of advantages and disadvantages of any model; the budget model changes more quickly than the rest of the university.

Throughout the discussion, the presenters observed that career teachers do not seem to be valued adequately by the university. We thank them for their excellent work but show them the door first when the budget has to be cut. TTF cannot be cut; NTTF are vulnerable; yet NTTF are only a small fraction of the personnel budget.

Rocío – when we consider budgets and budget reductions, we need to consider administrator salaries—which are much higher than faculty salaries—as a place to save money. What does it say about what’s important at UO if administrators earn such high salaries?

The Working Group presented on some potential solutions and new directions for CAS centered on teaching and teaching excellence, particularly given modern pressures on teaching.

1. A renewed focus on core education as integral to liberal arts, potentially including:
 - a. Teaching opportunities to provide students some of the key transferable skills they will need once they enter their major and/or professional schools
 - b. Redesigning core education courses using backwards design beginning from the student and including evidence-based practices
2. Create a dean of instruction role within CAS
 - a. Work with the provost’s office on improving and promoting teaching excellence and supporting all faculty
 - b. Incentivize all faculty – career and tenure-line – to high standards of teaching
 - c. Support professional and curricular development for core courses, particularly at 100 and 200 levels
 - d. Send a message that instructional quality and learning are priorities

The task force discussed the recent change within CAS to eliminate a dean of undergraduate studies position a few years ago, noting that this was largely due to the growing work centrally within the provost’s portfolio (the Division of Undergraduate Education and Student Success). There was also some discussion about culture and what role that plays more broadly – meaning,

are structural changes beneficial to reaching the ideas articulated above, or is it a cultural issue that cannot necessarily be remedied by new positions or revised structures.

The Working Group talked quite a bit about embedded cultural issues across the institution (not just in CAS), particularly as it relates to career faculty vis a vis tenure-track faculty. This includes, for example, the tone and tenor used when talking about career faculty, the relative difficulty in holding TT faculty accountable on standards, and the notion that career faculty are often on the front line of budget cuts.

Tina wondered whether the effort to be an AAU school contributes to an investment in research over teaching and asked why it matters if we stay in the AAU.

Answers included reputation, prestige (key for recruitment of faculty and graduate students), that it signals “we are training researchers, and that can be important to incoming students who know the value of that” (Mike), research-led education (Joe). Karen pointed out that in addition to the AAU prestige, we aspire to the AAU values about *both* research and teaching. We might see a lower-quality of student if we weren’t in the AAU (Joe).

3. Create a school of core education as a subset of CAS
 - a. First-year students within broad plans of study take a standardized set of courses (akin to UO’s new “Flight Paths”)
 - b. A structure similar to the Honors College, with faculty-in-residence devoting a portion of their FTE to the unit
 - c. Create consistency in courses and value the undergraduate teaching mission
 - d. Foster interdisciplinary faculty mentorship (faculty-to-faculty and faculty-to-student)
 - e. Facilitate better engagement with students
 - f. Refocus resources on student success and support
 - g. Provide a better mechanism to interact and work with the surrounding community

There was some discussion about whether such a school fits best within in CAS or could/should be situated in the larger institution. Whether it should be internal or external to CAS was not something the Working Group analyzed specifically since this was an analysis done under the auspice of a CAS task force; the subgroup representatives indicated that they were mostly interested in ensuring this type of work was done at UO. It was noted that the three principles under #3, above, should in fact apply more broadly, but it was also noted that a large percentage of core education work occurs in CAS courses.

The subgroup elevated the issue back to the higher-level question of whether some of the points raised regarding teaching excellence are in fact structural. They noted that it is less about structure and far more about culture.

Richard asked Juan-Carlos if these difficulties of budgets and teaching occur in a college like SOJC, too, in response to the idea that no amount of restructuring will change the obstacles to improved teaching. Juan-Carlos indicated that they do not have departments in SOJC, so the curriculum already embraces the whole college. It’s difficult to compare CAS with SOJC, but teaching capacity is crucial in his college, and he has to put resources where SOJC can serve students.

Juan-Carlos wonders if the divisions in CAS have academic visions and if CAS can create its larger vision out of those.

Betsy returns to the Working Group's emphasis on the first two years of college. If we can offer students key skills, focusing on what a student needs to have when they graduate and enter the larger world, they will stay here through their four years because they will have found real value here. Attention to lower-division education will improve retention.

Working Groups gave brief reports before the meeting ended.