

CAS Task Force on the Structure of the College Executive Summary of Survey #3

Survey #3 once again invited faculty, staff, and students to respond to several questions that the president and provost have asked us to consider (https://provost.uoregon.edu/files/cas_task_force_memo_12.12.18.pdf): “What are the disadvantages of the current structure relative to the college’s ability to deliver on its teaching and research mission?” After having examined advantages to the research mission of UO and disadvantages to the teaching mission of UO in the first two surveys, #3 asked questions about disadvantages:

1. Discuss the disadvantages of the current structure relative to the college’s ability to deliver on its teaching mission?
2. How might various changes enhance, or alternatively, lessen those disadvantages?
3. Discuss the disadvantages of the current structure relative to the college’s ability to deliver on its research mission?
4. How might various changes enhance, or alternatively, lessen those disadvantages?

This survey also asked two new questions that arose during the task force discussions:

5. If you are in CAS, regarding teaching, do you want to collaborate more than you already do across divisions within CAS? If so, what are the current barriers to cross-division teaching?
6. If you are in CAS, regarding research, do you want to collaborate more than you already do across divisions within CAS? If so, what are the current barriers to cross-division teaching?

123 people responded to the survey. The first four questions elicited answers reinforcing the previous survey results that most responders value the liberal arts, believe the UO should promote and encourage liberal arts across campus, but find that scarce resources prevent the university from being able to support a liberal arts research agenda, curriculum, and pedagogy adequately. The difficulty of sustaining our widely held value is seen to be evident in large class sizes, heavy teaching loads, lack of support for interdisciplinary team teaching, lack of support for research in CAS, inadequate understanding of fundamentally interdisciplinary disciplines and departments.

A number of responses suggested that the curriculum review processes at UO could better support liberal arts education. Though some survey participants felt that the diversity of CAS divisions and disciplines aids their interdisciplinary and cross-unit research and teaching collaborations, most felt that there isn’t strong enough support for interdisciplinary collaboration, especially in the classroom. They also generally agreed that dividing CAS units into other college structures would increase rather than decrease these problems.

Almost all of the survey responders enthusiastically expressed a desire to be able to collaborate in their research and teaching more readily with colleagues from their own and other disciplines.

There was equally strong agreement that already scarce financial resources and the need to reduce expenditures further because of the budget situation make it difficult or impossible to collaborate with and benefit from their colleagues across campus.

Thanks once again to those who took the time to fill out the survey.