

## CAS Task Force on the Structure of the College Executive Summary of Survey #1

Survey #1 invited faculty, staff, and students to respond to the first of four questions that the president and provost have asked us to consider (link to the memo with the question graphic): “What are the advantages and disadvantages of the current structure relative to the college’s ability to deliver on its teaching and research mission?” After several questions with multiple-choice answers, the survey offered three options for individual responses:

1. Are there other aspects of the Dean’s office that are not included above that should be considered?
2. What are the advantages of the current structure relative to the college’s ability to deliver on its teaching and research mission?
3. What are the disadvantages of the current structure relative to the college’s ability to deliver on its teaching and research mission?

147 people responded to the survey, most of them from CAS, but there were respondents from all over the university. A majority of respondents felt that CAS should not be restructured, but many felt it could be improved without restructuring. A smaller number of people felt it should be restructured. There were several suggestions for “other aspects” of CAS that should be considered in this discussion that the survey hadn’t identified, like the relationships between the options provided (advocacy, hiring, promotion and tenure, budget, administration), external funding, curricular oversight.

The overwhelming “advantage” to the current structure of CAS identified in the responses was its facilitation of interdisciplinary research and teaching. Also very important to respondents was CAS as a structure for the liberal arts and, in particular, the importance of undergraduate teaching to a liberal arts mission. Others found advantages in the balance of disciplines and the efficiency, oversight, consistency, and expertise achieved by having one Dean’s office. Several mentioned that the current CAS structure allows for sharing resources, preserving small units, and offering a voice on campus for a shared educational mission among diverse disciplines.

Here a couple of responses that capture the gist of the “advantages” question, and we encourage you to read all the survey responses to hear more from your colleagues:

“Inter-disciplinary cooperation, resource sharing, being better connected to a robust and diverse academic community that benefits our professional and academic goals, as well as the goals of our students.”

“The university community as part of CAS creates a sense of general belonging and shared goals/purposes. We know these factors are important to student success, and they matter for teachers and researchers as well. The collaborative working relationship between deans, the shared staffing for their work with units all make our mutual responsibility for the good of the division visible. Creating separate units means so much

more administrative work to coordinate and create coherent pathways between colleges. The liberal arts share values. More divisions nationally where ideologies (disciplines) are not able to see their responsibility to cooperate and do what is best for all need not be replicated here in CAS.”

Most of the “disadvantages” to the current CAS structure identified in the survey concern competing priorities within one college, the large size (which may impede agility, marginalize small units, micromanage departments without adequate local knowledge, and give CAS too much authority on campus), and the dilution of scarce resources. If supporting the mission of undergraduate teaching was generally viewed as an advantage in the prior question, lack of support for the research mission of the UO was repeatedly cited as a disadvantage of the current structure. The particular disadvantages of the current structure to non-tenure-track faculty arose several times in responses to this question. Finally, a number of respondents raised questions about the imbalance of power among the schools and colleges because of CAS’s size.

Again, we offer a couple of representative responses with encouragement to read the whole survey:

“The current structure requires that a single dean understands the needs of all three divisions. This is somewhat augmented by the divisional dean structure, but may create the perception of unfairness related to budgets and policies. Having a powerful dean that represents 70% of UO students and faculty, may create a leadership imbalance among the colleges and may sometimes make it difficult for UO leadership to enact their priorities without complete buy-in from CAS.”

“Competing priorities among disparate disciplines and programs. It's hard to see how having the number of disciplines in the same structure is equitable to all of them. The performing arts should be housed with SOMD, the Sciences as another school/college, and Humanities as another.”

We’re grateful to everyone on campus who took the time to respond to Survey #1 and hope you will continue to offer your perspectives through the surveys, the feedback option on the website, attending the task force meetings, and staying in touch with your task force colleagues. Please read the full survey if you have time. We are redacting only individual names, so the responses are sometimes colorful but always just what the person wrote.