

Academic Restructure Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why do we need to restructure?

- In our current fiscal crisis, academic reorganization will save money and retain faculty. Various committees and task forces have studied our academic organization over the past decade and made recommendations for change, but so far no action has been taken at the university level. *Now is the time to act.*
- Our current academic structure, organized into 4 colleges and around 50 academic departments and non-departmental programs, is not sustainable. College and department size differences cause problems in representation and administration.
 - Currently, the College of Letters and Science is larger than all three other colleges combined. As of August 2023, COLS contained 226 tenure-track faculty, while College of Business, College of Nursing, and College of Education and Human Services combined contained 90 tenure-track faculty.
 - Both proposed models contain 3 colleges and move some academic units currently in COLS to other colleges.
- As the university became smaller, we have not done enough to address differences in unit size, leading to some cases where departments contain only two or three faculty. This leads to a disproportionate number of faculty serving as department chairs; for example, in COLS approximately one of every six faculty members is serving as a department chair or director of a non-departmental program. Reducing this number will lead to economies of scale.
- In the increasingly competitive higher education landscape, restructuring allows us to better highlight high demand areas, and to support marketing and recruitment efforts.
 - Curricular and administrative efficiencies result from department and program consolidation. Reorganization also presents an opportunity to align our programs by career cluster areas, helping to signal career paths to prospective students.

Do the proposed models include elimination of programs and/or faculty?

- No, this workgroup has NOT been charged with eliminating majors, programs, people, or disciplinary identities. Some majors and programs are not shown on the models for simplicity.

How were FTE and student headcount numbers calculated in the models?

- We used Fall 2022 undergraduate student plus graduate headcount. FTE included faculty, instructional academic staff, and professional academic staff as of Spring 2024 (estimated).

How do these models save money?

- New models consolidate administrative responsibilities and distribute them among a smaller number of individuals at the college, school, and area levels.
 - Both models have one fewer dean, associate dean, and dean's office than at present.

- The amount of release time and summer CAS for current department chairs is also significantly reduced.
- New models group academic programs in ways that could lead to greater curricular efficiencies, thus reducing instructional costs and the probability of under-enrolled courses.

What are the major differences between the 2 models?

- Model A saves more money.
 - In Model A, one School of Culture and Society contains the academic units that are separated into two schools in Model B (School of Culture & Society and School of Public Administration & Sustainability)
 - In Model A, one School of Nursing and Health Professions contains the academic units that are separated into two schools in Model B (School of Nursing and School of Health Professions)
- Individual career clusters are dispersed into multiple schools & colleges in Model B.
 - For example, academic units that support the career cluster “Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security” are found in both the School of Culture & Society and the School of Public Administration & Sustainability.
 - Also, coursework supporting the STEM career cluster is within both the College of Business, Science & Technology and the College of Nursing & Health Professions in Model B.
- The location of the School of Media, Communications & Arts differs between models.
 - This school is paired with Business into a College in Model A.
 - This school is part of the College of Culture, Society & Education in Model B.
- The location of School of STEM differs between models.
 - In Model A, Schools of STEM and Nursing are paired into one college.
 - In Model B, the School of STEM is paired with Business into one college.

How will the work be divided among deans, school directors, and area coordinators?

- The work of deans would remain largely unchanged over reconfigured colleges of more equal size. Deans would provide executive leadership and strategic vision, oversee college budgetary and personnel matters, adjudicate questions of resource allocation, represent the programs in their areas to upper administration, serve as the public representative of the college in fundraising and external partnerships, serve as ceremonial head of the college in matters such as commencement and convocation, liaise with deans of similar colleges across the UW system, and other duties as assigned.

- School associate deans / directors would oversee all administrative matters in their school, such as coordinating personnel processes, conducting performance evaluations, writing reports, overseeing course schedules, managing budget and workload, and leading school meetings. These positions would be 12-month limited appointment and assume administrative work performed by multiple department chairs.
- Area coordinators would oversee disciplinary and program area issues such as curriculum, accreditation and program review, and programming. Area coordinators would receive up to 6 credits of release annually depending on the size, scope and complexity of the program(s).

Department Chair		➔	Area Coordinator	Associate Dean/ School Director
Champion faculty interests in hiring and workload assignments	Oversee department administration			Champion faculty interests in hiring and workload assignments
Oversee department curriculum	Support institutional goals		Oversee program curriculum	Support institutional goals
Oversee program accreditation	Evaluate faculty performance		Oversee program accreditation	Evaluate faculty performance
Oversee coordination of student events	Oversee class scheduling		Oversee coordination of student events	Oversee class scheduling
	Manage department budget			Manage school budget
	Oversee faculty workload			Oversee faculty workload

Besides the roles mentioned in the preceding question, what are the implications of these models for other types of administrative roles?

- Other administrative reassignments are needed for accreditation, licensure, clinical, graduate coordinator, and other specific roles, such as Writing Center Director and developmental coordinator. These roles are accounted for in the budget projections, though in some cases consolidation of certain roles could lead to additional efficiencies. All administrative release will be evaluated based on the size, scope and complexity of the program and the work needed to be done. School associate deans / directors will have a certain number of release credits they can assign as needed to conduct the mission-critical work of serving our students.

Will departments and programs be forced to move physical locations?

- No, this restructuring plan does not include plans to force departments and programs to move locations. In many instances, programs are tied to specific facilities such as labs and practice rooms that would be impossible to move.

How long will this restructuring process take? What are the next steps?

- With the models now released, people will have multiple opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback through town hall meetings, open forums, and other college-specific meetings. In March, there will be a university referendum on the two models, followed by ratification in Faculty Senate by the end of the Spring 2024 semester.
- Transition and implementation teams will be formed to actualize changes following the ratification related to bylaws, governance structures, marketing and communication, and academic infrastructure. The work of these teams will be completed by January 2025.

How does restructuring impact general education (University Studies Program)?

- Academic restructuring does not impact general education requirements. Our current general education requirements, the University Studies Program (USP), apply to all UWO students regardless of college. A separate USP Task Force has begun reexamining and potentially revising USP requirements and nomenclature. We will incorporate USP changes into the academic planning implementation process.

What will be the impact of restructuring on faculty governance?

- Both models result in a more balanced number of tenure-track faculty in each college. Tenure-track faculty FTE share is the current basis for apportionment in Faculty Senate and many university committees. Under our current structure, apportionment heavily favors COLS. The new structure would produce more balanced representation in Faculty Senate and on committees, allowing more voices to be heard.

What will be the impact of restructuring on policies and procedures?

- Each unit will need to craft new bylaws to reflect their new compositions, including tenure, renewal, and promotion policies and procedures for selecting area coordinators. Faculty and staff will be held to the guidelines under which they were hired unless they choose to switch to new criteria.
- Tenure, renewal, and promotion review would be coordinated by school associate deans / directors, and faculty in the specific disciplinary area would still constitute the first level of review. For example, in a STEM school the biology faculty or a biology personnel committee would serve as the first level of review for biologists. For faculty in interdisciplinary fields or those coming from an area with an insufficient number of disciplinary specific faculty to serve as first level of review, a process could be created where the faculty member would select other faculty with relevant academic expertise to serve as the first level of review.

What will be the impact of restructuring on interdisciplinary collaboration?

- In all models, interdisciplinary appointments and curricular design will be encouraged. Faculty may be able to choose to move to a different college if they would like, and dual and split appointments between colleges and schools would be possible.

How do the models shape approaches to the Fox Cities campus?

- These models do not impact planning for access campuses. Access campus faculty and staff assigned to departments will follow the new structures associated with those units. The future direction of the Fox Cities campus is being guided by the directives issued by the University of Wisconsin in October 2023 and is following a separate process.

Are programs and faculty currently housed in a single department being split in these models?

- No. However, current departments with more than one program (major, minor, diverse track/emphasis, specialization) who wish to separate their programs and faculty into more than one school may be able to do so.
- For example, imagine a Department of Video Game Studies, with one major in Game Design and another in Esports Management, has been placed in the STEM School. Faculty of the department could request a split if they feel the students within the two majors would benefit from the majors being in different schools. Faculty want the Game Design major to stay in the STEM School because of recruitment opportunities and curricular efficiencies to be gained by being co-located with Computer Science and Math. Faculty feel the Esports Management major has become more business oriented, and so they want to move the Esports Management major and the tenure home of related faculty to the School of Business. If the move was approved, then faculty could still teach courses for both majors (see Interdisciplinary Collaborations above).

Why is there not a third option for “none of the above” or “status quo?”

- Our current structure is not sustainable, so doing nothing is not an option. We have engaged in an inclusive, collaborative, iterative process with significant faculty input designed intentionally to protect programs and faculty positions, and to allow the new structures to explore additional ways to sustain and enhance programs for the long term. Refusing to choose a direction now would render those opportunities impossible and would force alternative cuts to achieve the overall cost savings target.

FTE (Faculty and IAS) and Student Per School in Model A and Model B

MODEL A			
FTE	Students	School	College
43.1	1803	Business	Business, Media & Communication
82	710	Media, Communications & Art	
58.5	765	Culture & Society	Culture, Society & Education
53.8	1292	Education	
68.2	2204	Nursing & Health Professions	Nursing, Health Professions & STEM
90.5	1182	STEM	

MODEL B			
FTE	Students	School	College
43.1	1803	Business	Business, Science & Technology
86.5	1170	STEM	
31	256	Culture & Society	Culture, Society & Education
53.8	1292	Education	
82	710	Media, Communications & Art	
27.5	591	Public Administration & Sustainability	
50.2	1295	Nursing	Nursing & Health Professions
18	709	Health Professions	