

**Questions for the Academic Planning Transition Team
Reponses Provided 18 March 2024**

1. **Have the names of the colleges in the two models been finalized?** As a member of a STEM department, I find it problematic that in the nomenclature of both models, STEM is listed second or third, perhaps signaling to outsiders that those disciplines are considered less important than the professional Business or Nursing schools. (It's notable that in conversations involving our current structure, we rarely note the "Human Services" part of the "College of Education and Human Services.")

The academic planning workgroup considered these working titles; they could be adjusted during the implementation period. However, the names do reflect the following assumptions and goals of the planning group: First, the group wanted to highlight our existing professional programs with strong enrollment and market demand while also enhancing the visibility of STEM, another area with strong demand. We saw the addition of STEM into the title of the colleges in both models as a way to accomplish both goals. Secondly, the group also believes that the schools will be the more important point of visibility and locus of recruitment activity for students, making the activities of the schools related to recruitment, yield, and retention more important than the names of the colleges, let alone the order of the names in the colleges.

STEM" has no visibility at all--it is gestured to in the "College of Letters and Science," and has no other way of identifying the disciplines related to STEM as a distinct group. The intent of this change is actually to enhance visibility of STEM, by including it in both College and School titles.

2. At the 29 February Town Hall, I asked the following question (Pascale Manning): **The FAQ includes details about appointments for the "associate dean/director" positions, but the appointment structure for "area coordinators" is not defined. Can you articulate the rationale for *appointing* "associate dean/director" positions, and might "area coordinators" be *elected* rather than appointed?** In his response to the first part of the question, the Provost emphasized that the work scope, required skillset, and expectations associated with the "director" positions is similar to what we expect of our current associate deans. He added that the current plan is to move existing associate deans into these "director" positions. In response to the question of appointment v election, Anne Stevens added that UWO HR prohibits election as an appointment model for 12-month limited term appointments. In his response to the second part of the question, the Provost expressed a willingness to use an election model for the "area coordinators."

a. Subsequent discussion introduced a set of additional questions: Will we use a search and screen process for future "director" appointments? If so, how will those committees be made up and will the Faculty Senate oversee faculty appointments? Will a detailed job description for each of the administrative roles ("dean," "director," and "area coordinator") be shared with the university community?

Yes, as we have since clarified, all future searches for Deans and Associate Dean/Directors will follow existing search and screen processes to ensure consistency and transparency in filling those positions. All shared governance groups will have the ability to name representatives to the search committees. Those

committees will help ensure the full vetting of candidates and will make recommendations to the hiring agents.

Please see the draft position descriptions for area coordinators, associate dean/director, and deans crafted by the transition team, along with a working document, “Roles and Responsibilities,” which attempts to capture the proposed breakdown of specific tasks in the new models, and can be added to with the additional discussion and input through implementation.

3. At the 29 February Town Hall, I asked the following question (Pascale Manning): **If individual faculty feel that, in the new structure, their department is not housed where it should be, whether that’s at the level of “school” or “college,” what kinds of opportunities might be open to individuals or even whole programs or departments to reconsider their placement? Is there going to be mobility across schools and colleges?** In his answer, the Provost emphasized that the Academic Planning Workgroup acknowledges that not everyone will feel that the new structure is a perfect fit, adding that we should recognize that the changes we’re introducing are not absolute or permanent. The goal has been to design models that we can adapt as we evolve and grow, as well as to produce models that acknowledge and facilitate interdisciplinarity and other opportunities for collaboration. He added that many faculty already have a foot in more than one area and that there will be opportunities for programs to move or strategically divide up their parts and situate those components where they best fit, with similar opportunities for individual faculty. We did not discuss this issue in granular detail (e.g., how such moves would be administered, whether through memorandums of understanding or otherwise).

President Manning’s summary accurately represents to views of the workgroup. Within any university, it is vital to provide pathways for faculty and programs to shift within the organizational structure when evidence suggests that students and faculty would benefit from such a move. As with our current structure, which has such processes in place, the new structure will allow for this type of movement. Faculty will shape these processes through the writing of bylaws and policies during implementation.

4. The proposals seem to rely heavily on Department Chair course release for savings, but how much does the current practice cost (acknowledging that small summer stipends are the only increase in faculty salary when taking the Chair role, and potential replacement costs vary by discipline)? What does it cost to add School Directors? How much has been cut from Dean’s office budgets and upper administration (above dean level)? And what costs remain there?

Please see the updated document, “Academic Planning Budget Explanation” for specific details which addresses these questions for each college and school using Model A.

5. As a follow up to #4, there seems to be a marked lack of details about the role of and cost savings related to having “area coordinators”. Is this the new name for dept chairs? How many are there per college and how many depts does each person coordinate? It seems that these numbers would have to have been worked out to reach the projected cost savings number in the right hand

column (the budget summary PDFs), yet no actual implementation details have been provided (making people wonder if the plans were created with the idea in mind that the implementation details would be worked out) That information should be openly disseminated campus wide for several reasons: a) that faculty who are current dept chairs as well as those recently elected this spring know what's in store for them- not only in terms of course releases (which directly impact strategic curriculum planning at the dept level); b) how a lack of summer CAS support will impact dept'al planning for fall semesters, decrease any if not all dept'al representation at summer recruitment events (now done mainly by dept chairs), and likely deny incoming students with readily available dept-level contacts; c) needing to know when transition from dept chairs to area coordinators will occur – is it Jan 2025? If so, then what happens to the 6-credit course releases going to be dealt with? d) having been told that we are only about a month from having to have spring 2025 courses planned, what happens to dept chairs with approved administrative course-release packages that would extend through Spring 2025 & have more approved course releases than the 6 designated for area coordinators?

Again, please see the “Academic Planning Budget Explanation” document for additional detail on the financials of course releases and summer CAS by school. During implementation, schools and areas can work to determine the most appropriate division of tasks for how certain work gets done over the summer in particular, accounting for the range of size, scope, and complexity of academic programs across areas, colleges, and schools. Specific timing on many of those implementation details is model-dependent and will be determined by the implementation team once a model has been chosen. Given the target date of January 2025, however, yes, existing course releases for current chairs will need to be adjusted in many cases for the 24-25 academic year.

6. How will money flow through these proposed academic structures? Would the proposed structures bring more or less equity in the distribution of money to programs, compared with the current practice? If departments don't exist, how would budgets be assigned to different disciplines in the college?

The budget planning documents provide projections for administrative work within each of the models. Financial responsibility will continue to rest with the Deans, but areas would be supported financially as they are now and would continue to work collaboratively with their Associate Dean/Director and Dean's office as they do now to discuss resources and priorities. The budgetary projections are not budget allocations. These models provide for a baseline upon which new budget models can eventually be explored and potentially implemented, but no such recommendation is being made by the workgroup at this time.

7. I've heard folks say that the two restructuring models are open to tweaks. Is this the case? How would tweaks work (presumably managed through Faculty Senate)? If there are changes, would there be a third option in the restructuring referendum?

Any adjustments to the structure of the models would be assessed during implementation. As we move from transition to implementation, we will form multiple implementation teams to address key areas, and faculty senate will name

representatives to various groups to ensure ongoing communication, collaboration, and transparency about decisions made during implementation.

8. (Loiacono) What, precisely, is the distinction between a department and an area? Will some areas be departments, while others are multiple departments/programs? Do we really need to relabel departments as areas? Will the abolition of “departments,” as such, make it more possible to lay off faculty and close programs? Thank you for fielding these many questions!

The workgroup assumptions are that all current departments will become areas, initially on a 1:1 basis. Schools will be allocated course release and allocate them to areas based on size, scope, and complexity to achieve additional efficiencies, cost savings, and curricular alignment. These decisions are best made during implementation with significant input from faculty in those areas.

We have not and do not anticipate faculty layoffs; this process has been designed in part to avoid that outcome. However, the specific language around departments versus area does not impact the process for faculty layoff and programs. The governing statute of the Universities of Wisconsin, Chapter 36, in discussing program closures and faculty layoffs refers to an “academic department or its functional equivalent.” Areas in these new models are the functional equivalent of an academic department, and faculty would retain the same rights under an area as they currently have under a department.

9. (Chybowski) A follow up to question 8—The definitions section of the rationale document says that both areas and schools replace departments. It is not clear how or why this could be the case. Thanks, in advance for providing more information.

We are not entirely clear on what this question is asking, but it is true that some of the tasks currently being performed by the department chair would remain with area coordinators, and some will be shifted to the associate dean/directors of the schools and in that sense, both areas and schools would help replace departments. In some schools, faculty may decide that certain policies that previously existed at the department level will now exist at the school level.