

ACADEMIC UNIT REALIGNMENT PROPOSAL UW OSHKOSH

REQUESTED ACTION

Approval of establishment of the College of Business, Arts, and Communication, the College of Public Affairs and Education, the College of Nursing, Health Professions, and STEM, and the School of Business, the School of Media, Arts, and Communication, the School of Public Affairs and Global Engagement, the School of Education and Human Services, the School of Nursing and Health Professions, and the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

SUMMARY

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh seeks approval to realign its four existing colleges into three new colleges and six new schools. Currently existing College of Business, College of Nursing, College of Education and Human Services, and College of Letters and Science will be reorganized into three colleges each containing two schools as outlined below:

1. College of Business, Arts, and Communication comprised of the School of Business and the School of Media, Arts, and Communication;
2. College of Public Affairs and Education comprised of the School of Public Affairs and Global Engagement and the School of Education and Human Services; and,
3. College of Nursing, Health Professions, and STEM comprised of the School of Nursing and Health Professions and the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

The reasons for the realignment include financial benefits, with immediate savings from the consolidation of administrative work, a more balanced distribution of students and staff, the alignment of UWO programs with DPI career clusters, and the potential for greater interdisciplinary connections and guided pathways to support student success. The realignment provides the transformative structural change for a sustainable University of Wisconsin Oshkosh moving forward.

The realignment does not affect the program array offered by UW Oshkosh nor does it impact the accreditation status of programs involved in the realignment.

The official effective date for all proposed realignment actions is July 1, 2025.

UW Oshkosh's Chancellor and Provost have approved the proposed realignments, following the required shared governance recommendation via faculty referendum (April 2024).

DISCUSSION

UW Oshkosh (UWO) Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, at the direction of the Chancellor, established the academic restructure working group in Fall 2023 following the adoption of UWO's Strategic Plan 2030 to explore how UWO could position itself for success in the next decade and beyond. The academic restructure working group included cross-institutional representation and was charged to reimagine and realign UWO's academic structure and program array to position the institution for sustainable, strategic future growth as a learner-centered, research-enhanced institution. Following extensive discussion across the institution including workshops, forums, open houses, and opportunities for written feedback, the working group proposed two models for academic realignment. Through a faculty referendum vote conducted by the UWO Faculty Senate (Article 1, Section 6 of the Faculty Constitution), a three college and six school model was recommended (April 2024).

Formal implementation of the new structure is requested for July 1, 2025, with the start of the fiscal year 2026. The numerous concurrent realignments have been assigned to operational units and teams; Appendix A outlines the timeline and dates for various stages of the initiative.

Objectives and Benefits

UWO has identified the following stated objectives and benefits from the proposed realignment:

- i. **Fewer administrative structures/units:** The proposed academic restructure reduces the number of colleges from 4 to 3; the current 47 departments and programs of varying sizes (some with only a single faculty line) will be aggregated into 6 schools. Fewer, more uniformly sized units and standardized operations will bring consistency of services to employees and students. The simplified structure increases coordination and agility, allowing for sustained adaptation (program array management; ongoing resource realignment).
- ii. **Efficiencies and cost savings:** Fewer units means reduced administrative costs and duplicated services. The current structure contains a significant number of small departments/programs; each has a chair. Restructuring into the college/school model significantly reduces administrative costs from department/program chair releases, instructional backfill from chair releases and summer chair compensation. The reduction from 4 to 3 colleges also eliminates 1 dean position and 2 associate dean positions. Total cost savings from the academic restructure are projected at \$1.75 million.
- iii. **Academic Integration/Coordinated and Adaptive Structure:** The proposed streamlined academic structure allows for improved coordination of scheduling and

efficiency of course and staff planning at the school level. The proposal encourages interdisciplinary appointments and collaboration in research, curricular design, and teaching practices.

- iv. **Academic Integration/Meta Majors and Career Clusters:** The academic restructure brings academic units together around meta majors, also called career clusters, aligning programs that have related course and/or career goals. This evidence-based practice helps students focus their interests early and allows for *guided pathways* to be developed at UWO. These degree planning paths provide structure and coherence improving time-to-degree completion, decreasing credit accumulation that does not lead to a credential.
- v. **Student Success:** The academic restructure supports learners to discover programs and aligned opportunities (internships, clinicals, service learning, etc.), connect and transition between disciplinary areas, build supportive relationships and social networks within their chosen school, and create a more transfer-friendly framework. Several ancillary reforms including general education, high impact practice reform (funded by a UW planning grant) and expanded use of the student support platform Navigate will converge with the academic restructure timeline. These changes together support a reimagined UWO experience that is learner-centered and focused on transferable and/or career competencies developed through experience-driven coursework.
- vi. **Accreditation/Licensure:** All unit/program accreditations will be maintained with their various accrediting agencies. Higher Learning Commission approvals for the proposed realignments are not required.

Leadership Plans

One of the four colleges at UWO currently has an interim dean. The proposed realignment presents the opportunity to integrate and realign the colleges without having to recruit. The plan is to utilize the existing dean talent for the realignments: the dean of the current College of Business will become the dean of the College of Business, Arts, and Communication; the dean of the current College of Letters and Science will become the dean of the College of Public Affairs and Education; and the dean of the current College of Nursing will become the dean of the College of Nursing, Health Professions, and STEM. Proposed School Directors will draw from the talent pool of current college associate deans. "Unit areas" will be defined based on curricular affinities among programs within each school, and the number of unit areas will be determined based on program size and other complexities. School Directors will have front-line support (ex. scheduling and staffing details) via area coordinator; assignments to be determined during the implementation process.

UWO Policy and Procedure Changes

The Provost's Office has been working with shared governance leaders on transition and implementation procedures and processes. Although the current structure of UWO does not include schools within colleges, the concept is not unknown within UW institutions. Operational teams have been established to outline changes needed to governance documents including the Faculty Handbook and Academic Bylaws. Additional teams have been stood up to explore changes needed in support units such as Admissions, the Registrar's Office, Human Resources, and Information Technology. UWO is confident any needed changes to institutional policy and procedures can be accomplished by leadership and shared governance upon approval by the Board.

Timeline

A timeline for the realignment process is given in Appendix A. Upon receipt of the Board approval, UWO will officially start the many concurrent realignment efforts. It is anticipated that all academic, student support, research support, finance, human resources, information technology, faculty and staff support systems will be fully aligned with the new structure by the start of the fiscal year 2025-26. UWO is coordinating with UW administration on the system-level administrative transformation program (ATP)/Workday project through UWO's institutional lead for that project.

Related Policies

- SYS 102 Policy on University of Wisconsin System Array Management: Program Planning, Delivery, Review, and Reporting, Section 8.2
- Regent Policy Document 4-12 Academic Program Planning, Review, and Approval in the University of Wisconsin System

UNIT IDENTITY & PROPOSED REALIGNMENT ACTIONS

Overview

The current organizational structure of UWO has four colleges: College of Business (1 Dean, 1 Associate Dean, 7 Departments), College of Nursing (1 Dean, 3 Associate Deans, non-departmentalized); College of Education and Human Services (1 Dean, 1 Associate Dean, 5 Departments), and College of Letters and Science (1 Dean, 4 Associate Deans, 35 Departments/Programs). The College of Letters and Sciences is the largest college and, in addition to departments, has a traditional divisional structure: mathematics and science, humanities, fine and performing arts, and social sciences.

The proposed realignment has three colleges each with two schools:

1. College of Business, Arts, and Communication comprised of the School of Business and the School of Media, Arts, and Communication;
2. College of Public Affairs and Education comprised of the School of Public Affairs and

- Global Engagement and the School of Education and Human Services; and,
3. College of Nursing, Health Professions, and STEM comprised of the School of Nursing and Health Professions and the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

The basic parameters of the new colleges and schools were voted on via Faculty Senate referendum:

- a. Schools maintain their own identities within the new college.
- b. Departments will be aggregated into area units based on size, curricular affinities, and complexity within the schools.
- c. No immediate change to graduate or undergraduate program arrays offered by current departments.
- d. Each school will be overseen by a School Director.
- e. Budgets for the schools remain separate; school budgets will be administered by the School Director with oversight by the College Dean.
- f. Position elimination is through reduction from 4 colleges to 3 and through aggregation of 47 departments/programs into 6 schools.

The principal purpose of the realignment is administrative cost savings, fewer units to simplify student navigation, the alignment of UWO programs with DPI career clusters and meta majors, and the potential for greater interdisciplinary connections and guided pathways to support student success. The new alignments bring complementary academic units together and make possible transformative change for a sustainable future.

TIMETABLE FOR PROPOSED REALIGNMENT ACTIONS

The official effective date for all proposed realignment actions is July 1, 2025.

In the transition period, essential functions including administration and finance, human resources, student support, information systems, academic and research support, marketing, and school/college governance will be aligned to meet the needs of the new college and their constituent schools. Transition period work will require up to 8 months for the relevant units to complete their tasks while serving the needs of students, faculty, and staff during the transition period. More detail on the work planned during the transition period is presented in Appendix A. Budget authorities remain with the currently existing units until the start of the fiscal year 2026. Starting in Fall 2025, new students will be admitted into the new, realigned programs/schools/colleges.

Core services such as human resources, procurement, administrative, and financial services will be coordinated through the university shared service unit supporting the respective unit. Although the shared service model is in place for each unit, some reorganization of shared services personnel may be required.

Faculty and academic staff in the current academic units will be moved to the new schools created. Program specialists and certain clinical placement supports will likely be held within existing units, while other administrative supports would benefit from a more centralized model across schools as appropriate for optimal efficiency. Significant work in this centralization has already occurred due to UWO's institutional realignment plan (IRP) implemented in January 2024.

After receiving all approvals for the establishment of the realigned colleges and schools, each unit will work in accordance with UWO policies and procedures to adopt governance documents for the operation of the new schools and colleges.

IMPACT OF PROPOSED REALIGNMENT ACTIONS ON ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, RESOURCE UTILIZATION, PERSONNEL AND STUDENTS

Academic Programs: The current academic programs and associated faculty and academic staff will be relocated together in the new organizational structure. As such, the instructional programs will continue to be overseen by the same faculty and staff as in the present structure. Programs in each college and school are provided in the respective tables of Appendix B. The proposed unit realignment is expected to lead to additional collaboration and multi-disciplinary program development and will drive continuous adaptive management of the program array in alignment with UWO's mission and vision.

The proposed realignment actions will not negatively impact accredited programs within the new units. Accreditation is at the program level, and since the programs (including curricula, learning outcomes/competencies, assessment methods, clinical placements, preparation for professional practices, etc.) are not changed by the proposed action, there is no anticipated impact on accreditation. Change notifications will be sent to accrediting bodies as required.

Scholarship and Research: UWO is a Carnegie designated R3 Doctoral/Professional institution and a research-enhanced comprehensive university. Current collaborative projects and publications are anticipated to continue and/or grow across the proposed college/school structure. There are no anticipated changes to grant administration including pre- and post-award functions which are done for all colleges by UWO's Office of Sponsored Programs.

Community Engagement: UWO's Center for Civic and Community Engagement coordinates community engagement programming and activities including practical civic learning activities, volunteer opportunities, and experiential learning embedded in courses and programs. The academic restructuring does not impact the operation of the Center for Civic and Community Engagement; no changes are anticipated to student, staff, and community participation and benefit from the center's programming.

Resource Utilization: Resource utilization will be minimally impacted by the proposed realignments. The resources available to the current four colleges will be redistributed to the new colleges and/or centralized to realize cost-savings and efficiencies. Upon approval of the realignment proposal, the university Business and Finance office will build the budgets for the realigned units for FY26. The process is planned to begin in Fall 2024 and to be completed prior to implementation. Huron Consultants are assisting in the strategy and operationalization of the student information system (SIS) changes that are required for the academic restructuring. This one-time cost is necessary for the scale and complexity of the project which will realize significant cost savings into the future.

Student Services: The realignment will allow for sharing of services to enhance student, faculty, and staff support. Due to the Institutional Realignment Plan (IRP, January 2024), many services in existing units have been reduced or eliminated. The simplification of the new structure with one fewer college and a uniform college/school model better fits our current staffing levels. Organization around meta majors/career clusters, the development of guided paths, and the parallel general education reform (slated for implementation with academic restructure in Fall 2025), allow for more intentional advising strategies which are shown to increase student confidence and belonging.

Space: No changes in academic spaces (general classrooms, specialized classrooms, laboratories, studios, testing accommodation spaces, etc.) are anticipated. Some staff and administrative offices are anticipated to change where physical unit alignment makes sense. Space optimization is under consideration as part of the general space planning of the university.

Administration: Restructuring the current four colleges into the college/school model eliminates 1 dean position, 2 associate dean positions, and significantly reduces administrative costs from department/program chair releases, instructional backfill from chair releases and summer chair compensation. Cost savings from the academic restructure are projected at \$1.75 million.

Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Students will be served by current faculty and staff. There are no anticipated negative impacts on student matriculation, progress, or graduation. The only observable aspect for continuing students will be a college name change. Students entering UWO in Fall 2025 will enter into the new structure, and all students will benefit from the simplified structure.

There are no anticipated changes to the number of faculty and university staff associated with the proposed realignment. Existing workload models will continue to be applied after the realignment, with attention to opportunities for integration. Instructional academic staff appointments are anticipated to decrease with the reduction in department chair (faculty) releases.

PLAN FOR ASSESSING PROPOSED OUTCOMES

Many of the required quality assessments and reports (HLC Annual Report, IPEDS, UW Annual Reporting, etc.) address key metrics of student success and fiscal health that will be followed with this initiative. UWO's annual budget process provides additional opportunities to assess outcomes including retention and graduation of students, faculty research, scholarly and creative activities, and outreach activities. Regular realignment updates will be provided to UWO shared governance and other stakeholders.

Appendix A REALIGNMENT TIMELINE

Spring 2024

1. Submit realignment models to Faculty Senate; distribution to academic units/faculty.
2. Stand up academic restructure transition team (cross-institutional representation).
3. Faculty Senate referendum vote.

June/July 2024

1. Start preparing/deciding
 - a. New College and School names; assignment of deans and school directors;
 - b. Mission Statement/Value Proposition;
 - c. Bylaws and governance;
 - d. Area unit models and responsibilities; unit coordinator model and responsibilities.
2. Bundle approved/pending proposals for submission to UW OAA and BOR.
3. Realigned units finalize plans for how they market themselves to prospective students.
4. Realignment units identify any curricular/details requiring unit or institutional shared governance review (assessment; program review). Prepare relevant documents for review.

August 2024

1. BOR review of UWO realignments.
2. Realignment units finalize structure for coding. Impacts: RO, Finance, IR.
3. Begin discussions with UMC regarding marketing plans and website restructuring.

Fall 2024

1. Upon approval, realigned college finalizes plans for prospective student marketing and other internal details.
2. Identify and prepare any documentation for accrediting bodies.

January 2025

1. Begin implementation of new academic units.
 - a. Budget authorities and structures (coding) remain in place until July 1, 2025.
2. Begin realigned student information system (SIS) conversions to production.

Spring 2025

1. Realignment units determine internal communication plans to current students: changes and impacts.
2. Realignment units work with UWO Foundation to determine alumni communication plans.

July 2025

1. Formal implementation start date, July 1.

**Appendix B
Program Array**

Table 1. College of Business, Arts, and Communication

Current Unit	Program	Degree	Proposed New Academic Home
College of Business	Accounting	BBA	<i>School of Business</i>
College of Business	Applied Computing (collab)	BS	
College of Business (BBA); Colleges of Letters and Science (BA/BS)	Economics	BA, BS, BBA	
College of Business	Finance	BBA	
College of Business	Human Resources Management	BBA	
College of Business	Information Systems	BBA	
College of Business	Interactive Web Management	BA, BS, BBA	
College of Business	Leadership & Org. Devel.	BPS	
College of Business	Leadership and Org. Studies	BAS	
College of Business	Management	BBA	
College of Business	Marketing	BBA	
College of Business	Supply Chain Management	BBA	
College of Business	Business Administration	MBA	
College of Business	Executive MBA	MBA	
College of Business	Applied Biotechnology (collab)	MS	
College of Business	Information Technology Mgmt (collab)	MS	
College of Business	Sustainable Mgmt (collab)	MS	
College of Letters & Science	Advertising	BA, BS	<i>School of Media, Arts, and Communication</i>
College of Letters & Science	Art	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Fine Arts	BFA	
College of Letters & Science	Communication Studies	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	English	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Individually Planned Major	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Multimedia Journalism	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Music	BA, BS, BM	
College of Letters & Science	Public Relations	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Radio TV Film	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Theatre Arts	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	English	MA	

Table 2. College of Public Affairs and Education

Current Unit	Program	Degree	Proposed New Academic Home
College of Letters & Science	Anthropology	BA, BS	<i>School of Public Affairs and Global Engagement</i>
College of Letters & Science	Criminal Justice	BA, BS, BAS	
College of Letters & Science	Environmental Studies	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Fire and Emergency Response Management	BAS	
College of Letters & Science	French	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Geography	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	German	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	History	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Individually Planned Major	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	International Studies	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Japanese Studies	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Liberal Studies	AAS, BAS	
College of Letters & Science	Philosophy	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Political Science	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Sociology	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Spanish	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Women's & Gender Studies	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Public Administration	MPA	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Elementary Education	BSE	<i>School of Education and Human Services</i>
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	English as a Second Language	BSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Human Services Leadership	BS	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Individually Planned Major	BA, BS, BSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Secondary Education- Fine Arts	BFA	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Secondary Education	BSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Secondary Education- Music	BME	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Special Education	BSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Technology & Engineering Edu.	BSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Educational Leadership & Policy	MS	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Human Services Leadership	MS	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Language & Literacy	MSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Mathematics Education	MSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Professional Counseling	MSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Special Education	MSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Teaching and Learning	MSE	
College of Edu. & Human Svcs.	Educational Leadership & Policy	EdD	

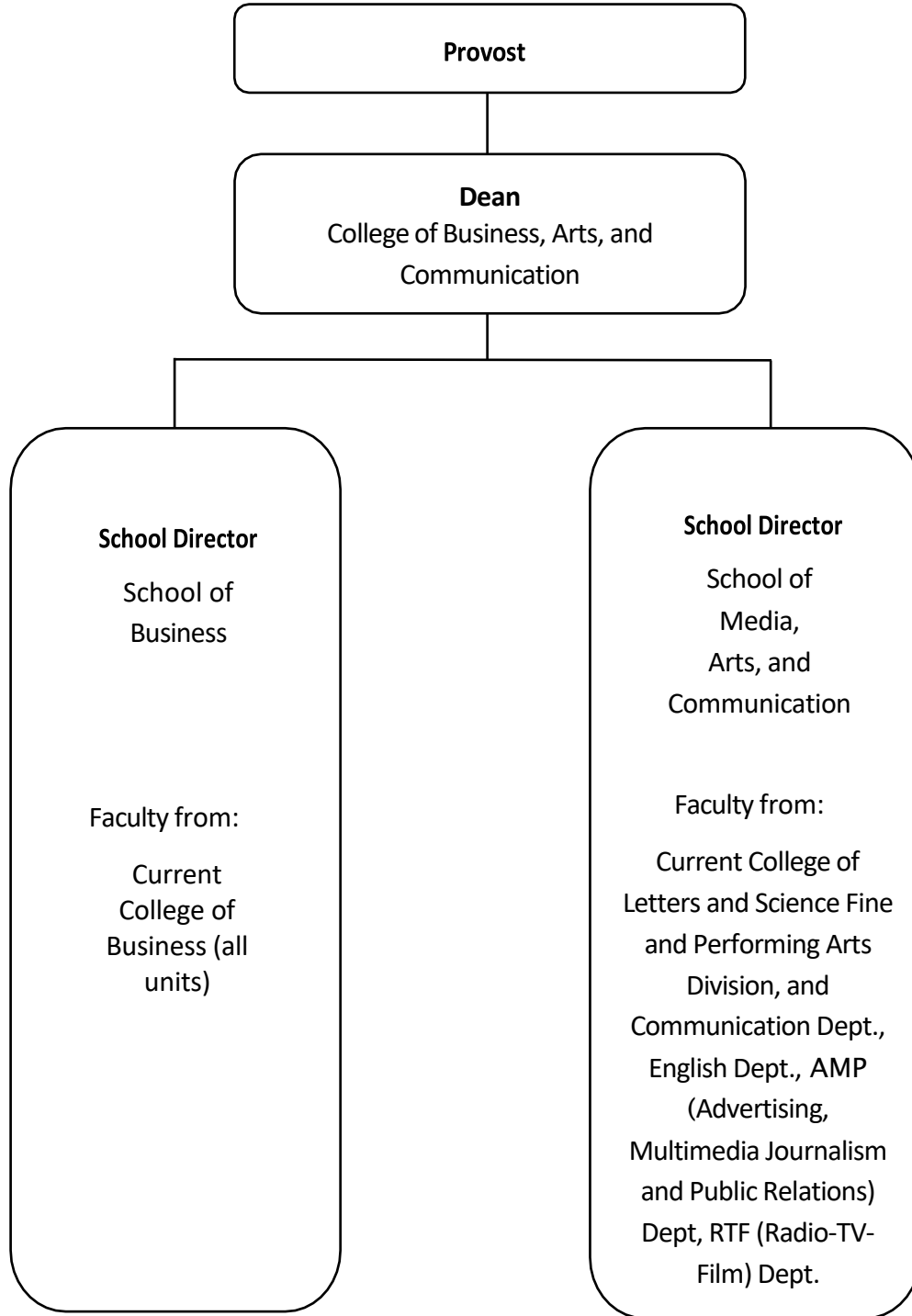
Table 3. College of Nursing, Health Professions, and STEM

Current Unit	Program	Degree	Proposed New Academic Home
College of Letters & Science	Computer Science	BA, BS	<i>School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics</i>
College of Letters & Science	Software Technology	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Biomedical Engineering	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Automation Engineering	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Electrical Engineering Tech.	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Environmental Engineering Tech.	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Mechanical Engineering Tech.	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Biology	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Biomedical Science	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Microbiology	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Mathematics	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Chemistry	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Geology/Earth Science	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Physics	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Psychology	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Environmental Health	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Individually Planned Major	BA, BS	
College of Letters & Science	Cybersecurity (collab)	MS	
College of Letters & Science	Biology	MS	
College of Letters & Science	Professional Science	MS	
College of Letters & Science	Data Science (collab)	MS	
College of Letters & Science	Psychology	MS	
College of Letters & Science	Kinesiology-Exercise & Sport Sci.	BS	<i>School of Nursing and Health Professions</i>
College of Letters & Science	Medical Imaging	BS, BAS, BPS	
College of Letters & Science	Medical Laboratory Science	BS	
College of Nursing	Nursing	BSN	
College of Nursing	Nursing (collab)	BSN	
College of Letters & Science	Rehabilitation Science	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Social Work	BSW	
College of Letters & Science	Strength & Conditioning	BS	
College of Letters & Science	Athletic Training	MS	
College of Nursing	Nursing	MSN	
College of Letters & Science	Social Work	MSW	
College of Nursing	Nursing	DNP	

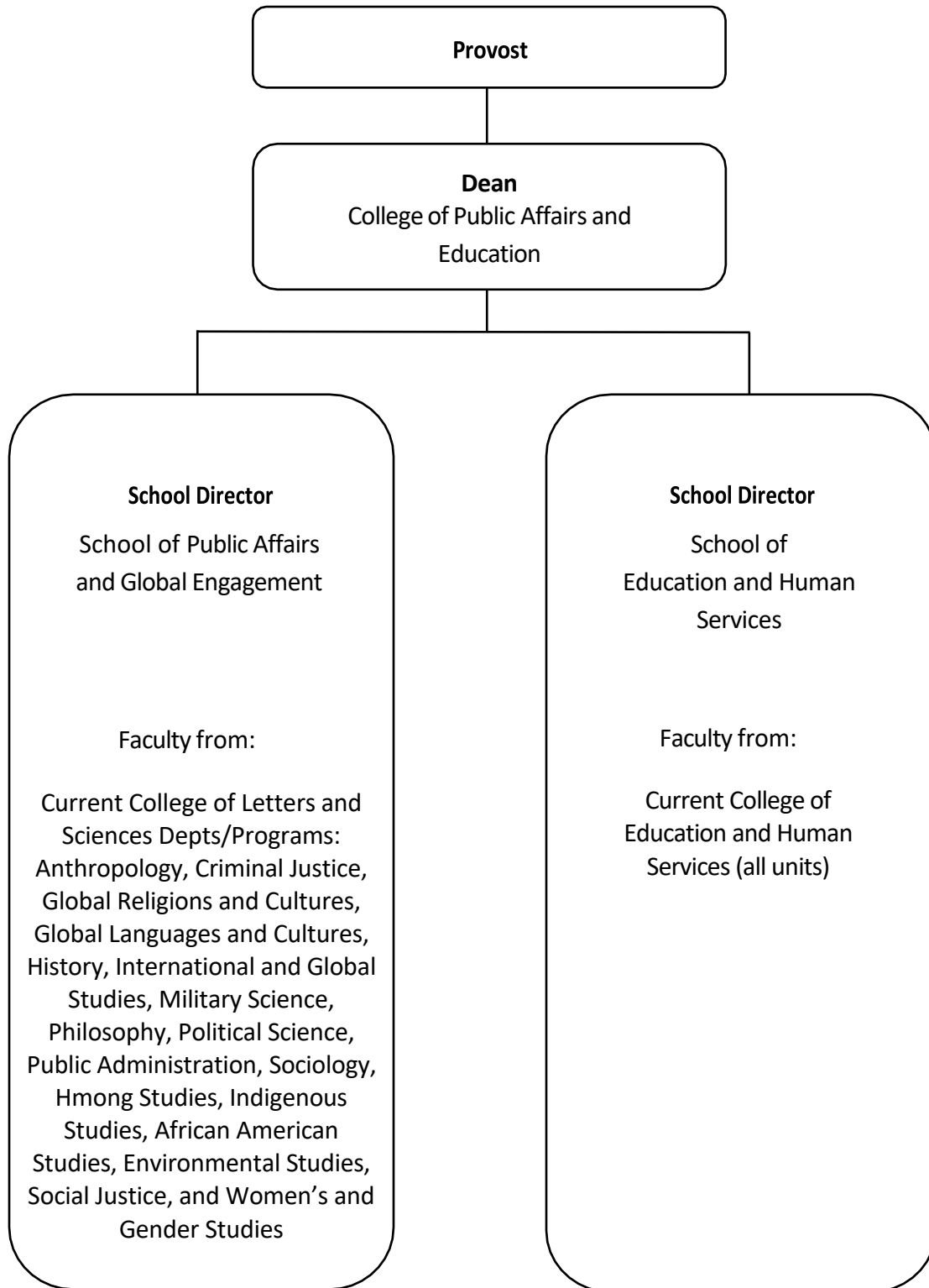
Note: Program arrays in this arrangement include degree programs only and not certificates, minors, non-degree continuing education offerings, or sports and recreation programming. These types of non-degree programming operated by the associated units will continue with the respective unit upon realignment.

Appendix C

College of Business, Arts, and Communication: Proposed Organizational Structure



College of Public Affairs and Education: Proposed Organizational Structure



College of Nursing, Health Professions, and STEM: Proposed Organizational Structure

