

Memorandum

To: Dr. Joshua Powers, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

From: Dr. Wartyna L. Davis, Acting Dean for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date: December 2, 2019

Re: Academic Reorganization of the College

I. Context for Reorganization Discussions in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

In spring 2019, all colleges in the university were asked to consider opportunities for reorganization of their departments and programs. As per the guidelines provided by the office of the Provost noted [here](#), we specifically sought strategies that aligned with the criteria for reorganization. After the first Faculty Senate meeting in fall 2019 and further communications from the Provost's office including the memo noted [here](#), the leadership of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences not only recognized an opportunity to become better stewards of our resources, but also to re-envision how our programs would be offered. In that process the Provost's "Starter" questions were addressed both formally and informally by most of the departments in the college.

Our process was collaborative and data-driven. It was developed in a series of stages that would allow for data collection, evaluation, and selection of a college redesign. Initially we gathered information on current organization/reorganization models for academic departments from a variety of institutions. We collected local data from WPU, from our sister institutions in New Jersey, and from the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE). In addition, we collected national data, largely from the federal DOE and the Chronicle of Higher Education, that track majors and national demographic shifts. We also collated dozens of studies of academic structures, philosophies of organizations, and sourced a variety of op-eds, lectures, and best practice standards that targeted institutional structure models for academic organizations in the current sociocultural climate. The source material we gathered was distributed to all faculty in the college (and provided to others at the university; viewable [here](#)). The material also was used in support of a series of meetings and retreats within our College (which we termed *advances*) beginning on September 12th with our all-college meeting. We note that many of the resources we gathered overlapped with the office of the Provost and appears on the Office of the Provost's website under "Academic Reorganization."

Dean Davis began the first all-faculty meeting by assuring faculty that the process of reorganization would be open, transparent, and collegial. The goal was to embrace this moment as a means to re-envision our college, using the mandate set forth by the Provost as a catalyst. All-college "advances" were held on 9/26, 10/3, and 10/16. The meetings on 9/26 and 10/3 specifically focused on discussing synergies and possible combinations of and between departments. The "advance" on 10/16, was entitled "Re-Imagining the College of Humanities and Social Sciences 2032." We invited faculty to think creatively and imaginatively about what they wanted our college to look like in the year 2032 – which would be 10 years after our current college and the university's strategic plans end. In addition to these formal all-college meetings, there were numerous one-on-one and collaborative inter-departmental meetings, discussions and gatherings.

The college leadership met with each of our departments to discuss particular issues related to them, the running of the college generally, and the reorganization of the college specifically. In addition, our college reorganization has been on the agenda and discussed at length in many of our College Council meetings.

Current Structure of the College

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences currently has eleven departments, and one program, Asian Studies, that is extradepartmental and reports directly to the Dean. In total our college is home to 18 undergraduate major degrees, 31 minors, 8 post-graduate masters and certificate programs, and one doctoral degree.

The college has been active supporting the student body directly through its major/minor and graduate programs, and through the large number of courses critical to what it means to be university educated.

Table 1 (below) summarizes the faculty and student enrollment numbers.

Departments	Full time Tenured/Pre-tenure Faculty AY20	Majors AY20	SCH AY20	Degrees Awarded AY20
<i>Africana World Studies</i>	2	17	480	1
<i>Anthropology</i>	6	15	3021	9
<i>English</i>	25	277	7716	60
<i>Geography</i>	3	16	1083	5
<i>History</i>	14	133	5316	34
<i>Languages & Cultures</i>	14	47	4689	5
<i>Philosophy/ Liberal Studies</i>	9	311	3555	50
<i>Political Science</i>	11	152	2463	33
<i>Psychology</i>	26	883	9605	195
<i>Sociology & CCJ</i>	18	1094	8007	192
<i>Women's & Gender Studies</i>	2	19	1728	3
<i>Asian Studies</i>	n/a	23	n/a	4

The number of majors, Student Credit Hours (SCH), and Degrees conferred (Deg) were obtained from the most recent fall 2019 Fact Book data.

Research on Models

Several models of our reorganized college structure were generated by individual faculty, programs, and from the office of the dean for evaluation. Academic organizations have been structured on a variety of disciplinary, pedagogical, and outcome-related variables that motivate their administrative processes. Over the history of William Paterson University – from its inception providing night/weekend teacher training for high school students in the Paterson High School system in 1855, to its eventual formation as a liberal arts college in the 1960's, and then its evolution into a university with graduate training in 1997 – there have been a series of changes promoting its current organization as a discipline-structured hierarchy. Our courses, programs, and administration are organized in such a way as to educate students in discipline-specific content and promote outcomes determined by and central to those disciplines. This has allowed departments to align with national standards set by national disciplinary organizations in support of accreditation and meeting the best practice models advocated by our respective fields.

While the current model has advantages, our college evaluated organization models broadly – all ideas were on the table. We evaluated whether our discipline-oriented structure is still relevant given our changing student body, demographic shifts locally and nationally. We reviewed multidisciplinary innovations for departments that might combine across disciplines in support of common themes and potential interdisciplinary synergies. We evaluated several more radical models: outcome-specific models that organize faculty and curriculum according to assessed learning/scholarly outcomes (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, analysis) and models that engaged students in programmatic majors that balance across these outcomes. We evaluated matrix models that separated academic programs from their administrative implementation and actively combined across disciplines to form courses and majors. This process involved a series of existential exercises during the “advances” to better understand our college and its aims, and a series of strategic discussions on practical and pragmatic considerations to produce a successful reorganization that might benefit our students, faculty, and William Paterson University.

II. Within College Recommendations

There were several factors that influenced our final recommendation/proposal. While the timeline created constraints, faculty worked meticulously through many possibilities. The proposed structure was designed as an effective model for implementation that would better meet current student needs and the mission of the university, and would enable our college's adherence to the guidelines set by the Office of the Provost for its departments.

The pace of this process compounded with consternation about the downward trends in our student enrollment, and the personal concerns many expressed for the livelihood of the institution, their programs, and their own vocations, were common themes. We benefitted greatly from the good will, collegiality, and extraordinary breadth of talent that constitute the faculty and staff of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Their ideas and willingness to embrace the uncertainty inherent in changing facets of our structure are both impressive and inspiring. Our detailed proposal follows:

Department of Community and Social Justice Studies

Departments involved: Three existing departments in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences – Anthropology (ANTH), Africana-World Studies (AWS), and Women’s & Gender Studies (WGS) – will come together to form the new department.

Criteria for reorganization addressed:

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| 1. 5 or fewer full-time faculty members: | New department will have 9 |
| 2. Fewer than 50 undergraduate majors: | New department will have 51 |
| 3. Fewer than 10 graduates per year: | New department will have 13 |
| 4. Number of minors: | New department will have 67 |
| 5. UCC student credit hour generation: | New department will have 5229 |
| 6. Number of graduate majors: | -- |
| 7. Financial contribution to the university: | -- |

Rationale: This new department brings together three important programs that directly support the current mission of the institution: Africana World Studies, Anthropology, and Women’s and Gender Studies. The merger of these departments speaks directly to our university’s mission statement, specifically, the department will foster “a campus culture that welcomes diversity of personal circumstances and experiences and prepare students to become effective citizens in an increasingly diverse, interdependent and pluralistic society.” William Paterson University has had the honor of educating first-generation students and providing transformational experiences. This academic year the University launched The Center for Diversity and Inclusion and The Black Cultural Center. Accordingly, this newly formed department will support courses, training, mentorship opportunities, and scholarship from its students and faculty in direct alignment with those initiatives. There is already common ground and these departments share many cross-listed courses. In addition, the newly formed department will reduce use of administrative resources, as it transitions from three departments to one. Reorganization will necessitate support for the new department in the form of administrative credits assigned in a way that shepherds the creation of the newly structured programmatic organization.

The Department of Community and Social Justice Studies will offer the following degrees:

- B.A. Africana-World Studies
- B.A. Anthropology
- B.A. Women’s & Gender Studies
- B.A. Social Justice and Social Change (proposed)

The mission of the new department is to offer students a critical, interdisciplinary, and research-based (experiential) education that focuses on issues of social justice and public/civic engagement. Students will be prepared for graduate study and a wide range of careers that engage local and diverse communities. We are very excited about the possibilities that will grow from this new department.

Department - (official name to be determined)

Departments involved: Two existing departments in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences – Political Science (POL), and Geography and Urban Studies (GEO) – will come together to become the reformulated department of Government Law and Urban Science.

Criteria for Reorganization Addressed:

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| 1. 5 or fewer full-time faculty members: | New department will have 14 |
| 2. Fewer than 50 undergraduate majors: | New department will have 172 |
| 3. Fewer than 10 graduates per year: | New department will have 38 |
| 4. Number of minors: | New department will have 92 |
| 5. UCC student credit hour generation: | New department will have 3546 |
| 6. Number of graduate majors: | New department will have 17 |
| 7. Financial contribution to the university: | -- |

Rationale: The Geography and Urban Studies department and Department of Political Science propose a merger. Political Science has had success incubating the growth of programs in Legal Studies and Latin American/Latino Studies, and we recognize the national and local interest for studies of Urban Centers (in particular as there is growing interest in the interaction of geopolitics and culture locally and globally). The two programs have common ground in that they currently share cross-listed courses. Consequently, this program is likely to grow in its appeal to our student demographic, to bolster the potential offerings for the Masters in Public Policy, and we foresee synergistic develop for the combination of these departments. Bringing together two existing departments not only strengthens their programs, but also reduces the use of administrative resources. Program direction will be necessary during this reorganization, and administrative credits will be used to shepherd and support the newly structured programmatic organization.

In addition to these resource and stewardship concerns, the Urban Science & Society major includes two tracks that students can choose from: (1) Community, Culture and Diversity and (2) Policy, Planning and Development. Both offer opportunities for collaboration moving forward and the Policy and Planning track offers immediate opportunities for strengthening current and prospective programs in Political Science. Geography is maintained in this design as an important major and will provide students with critical knowledge and technical skills, included in the general and GIS tracks.

The reformulated department will offer the following degrees with the expectation that additional synergistically imagined degrees will follow:

B.A. Political Science	B.A. Legal Studies
B.A. Geography	B.A. Urban Science & Society
B.A. Latin American/Latino Studies	M.P.P Master of Public Policy

The mission of the reformulated department is to create academic and intellectual synergy across the disciplines of Political Science and Geography and Urban Science. This new merger will foster breadth and depth of course offerings. Emphasis will be given to geopolitical variables across the curricula and the opportunities for skill development critical to understanding and addressing both local and international phenomena.

Department of Languages and Cultures

Departments involved: One existing department in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences – Languages and Cultures (L&C), and one program (ASN) – will come together to become the reformulated department of Languages and Cultures.

Criteria for reorganization addressed:

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| 1. 5 or fewer full-time faculty members: | L&C department will have 13 |
| 2. Fewer than 50 undergraduate majors: | L&C department will have 66 |
| 3. Fewer than 10 graduates per year: | L&C department will have 9 |
| 4. Number of minors: | L&C department will have 39 |
| 5. Student credit hour generation: | L&C department will have 4689 |
| 6. Number of graduate majors: | L&C department will have 23 |
| 7. Financial contribution to the university: | The Department of L&C provides contractual teacher education. They are currently in a contract for 300,000 dollars with Paterson Schools. A comparable cohort from Passaic Schools begins this winter. |

Rationale: The Asian Studies Program will remain a vibrant, multidisciplinary program in the reformulated Languages and Cultures department. The newly formed department is committed to actively engaging and supporting the Asian Studies program as it expands its offerings and student engagement. There are no faculty lines dedicated to ASN, but there is a program director, Dr. Rajender Kaur from the department of English, a consistent student cohort of majors/minors, and regular student engagement in study abroad and visible aspects of campus life (e.g., Asian in Bloom and the Diwali Festival). Direction for this program will be necessary during reorganization, and administrative credits will be used to shepherd and support the newly structured departmental organization.

In addition to these resource and stewardship concerns, ASN brings with it a BA and two minors (Asian Studies and Asian Studies Language). These present strong synergistic opportunities for offerings currently housed in the L&C department including the Spanish major and minors in Linguistics and French/Francophone Studies. While French and Francophone Studies is only offered as a minor, the historic presence of the French in Asia has the potential for a reinvigorated interest in this important area of study.

The reformulated department of Languages and Cultures will offer the following degrees with the expectation that additional synergistically imagined degrees will follow:

B.A. Spanish

B.A. Asian Studies

Graduate Certificate: Bilingual Education

Graduate Certificate: English as Second Language

The mission of the reformulated department is to create synergy in terms of breadth and depth of course offerings that expand majors and minors offerings in area studies, Spanish, Asian Studies, Linguistics, French and Francophone Studies, and related elective offerings.

III. Cross-College Recommendations

- In-depth conversations occurred around moving Disabilities Studies from the College of Education to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In particular, opportunities to combine this program with the new department of Community and Social Justice Studies were explored. However, it was concluded that while Disabilities Studies constitute a valuable area of study, the possibility of combining that program with the newly emerging department occurred when discussions within and between Africana World Studies, Women and Gender Studies and Anthropology faculty were already at an advanced stage. Given the considerable change in structure, and, among other needs, the development of new procedures for student advisement and matriculation, for faculty retention and support, and for curricular development, entertaining the addition of Disabilities Studies at a later date would be more practical.
- Professional Sales was also briefly discussed with the College of Business. However, it seemed the preferred collaboration was with the College of Arts and Communication. No reorganization involving this department was seriously considered after their interest in Arts and Communications was understood.
- It is proposed that Dr. Djanna Hill will have a joint faculty appointment in the College of Education and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Dr. Hill and the deans of both colleges will craft an appropriate distribution of teaching and service responsibilities. Dr. Hill's departmental home within the College of Education will be a newly constructed department that focuses on initial teacher preparation P-12. In the College of Humanities and Social Sciences her appointment will be the new Department of Community and Social Justice Studies.

IV. Conclusions

The leadership of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, in consultation with its faculty and staff, embarked on a three-month academic reorganization process that brought us to recommend the adoption of the foregoing proposal. The design of this reorganization will improve the administrative efficiency of the college and further its institutional mission to help our students “embody a profound sense of responsibility to their communities, commitment to a sustainable environment and active involvement in a multicultural world.” We began with eleven departments and our newly proposed college arrangement will have eight departments and a greater focus on multidisciplinary studies. The eight departments would include the three newly proposed organizations described above (Community & Social Justice Studies; Political Science with Geography/Urban Studies; Languages & Cultures with Asian Studies) and maintain the departments of English, History, Philosophy/Liberal Studies, Psychology, and Sociology & CCJ in their current states. The intense process of organizational study and its accompanying dialogues have motivated new ideas and uncovered possibilities that we look to embrace during this moment of transformation for our college and institution. We believe the new organization of the college will support a dynamic and successful path to our future.