Eastern Michigan University College of Arts and Sciences
CAS Reorganization Faculty Consultants
Report, August 2023

<u>CAS Reorganization Faculty Consultants</u>

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I. Executive Summary

Four faculty consultants worked on behalf of Dean Heller to gather feedback related to the Task Force Reorganization recommendations. This report details the timeline, focus groups, and feedback received. It also includes a hybrid model that reflects an attempt to reconcile elements of the existing models with the aspirations, concerns, and questions raised by CAS community members during this process. The report concludes with recommendations for how the process, personnel, and structural changes of reorganization should be handled (should it proceed) moving forward. Notes from the external faculty observer are included in the appendix.

II. Acknowledgements and Gratitude

It has been an honor to serve the CAS community in this effort. We acknowledge and appreciate all of the members of the CAS community who contributed their time, energy, and insights to this report. During this process we have made our best attempt to solicit feedback and to represent the views of those who may be impacted by a reorganization of the College. It is possible, however, that we have left some people out of the process. Please know that any omissions were not intentional. Additionally, we have made every attempt to accurately represent the perspectives of those who participated. It is likely, however, that there are unexpressed views that remain unrepresented in this report. We encourage those who do not see their concerns represented in this report to get involved in the next stages of the reorganization process.

III. Introduction

The Charge

In November 2022, Dean Dana Heller sent out a call for faculty consultants to facilitate conversations with members of the CAS community about the ongoing process of reorganization. The call stated:

> As the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) proceeds with plans for reorganization, the Dean of the College seeks two members of the faculty (from any college) to lead and facilitate feedback sessions during the Winter 2023 semester. These sessions will occur among CAS faculty, lecturers, and staff to advance inclusive conversation about the proposal put forward by the CAS Reorganization Task Force. Faculty consultants will be responsible for documenting and coding the responses. The successful faculty consultant will have experience leading large focus groups, and will demonstrate experience with qualitative data analysis, including documenting, coding, and summarizing responses from the sessions. Each faculty consultant shall receive a three-credit release to be taken in either Winter or Fall 2023. Deadline for presentation of results of feedback sessions to CAC is September 15, 2023.

Timeline

Fall 2022

- The CAS College Advisory Council (CAC) worked with Dean Heller to formulate the charge and process for selecting faculty consultants.

December 2022
- CAS Dean Heller invited CAS faculty with qualitative research backgrounds and experience in conducting focus groups to apply to serve as faculty consultants. Two faculty members volunteered to serve as faculty consultants, yet one needed to withdraw prior to the January meeting.

January 2023
- Dean Heller and the Faculty Consultant brainstormed potential faculty with the right expertise who could be invited to join the effort. Administrators were also invited to submit nominees. Subsequently, the Dean invited three more faculty to serve. A total of four faculty consultants constituted the group: three from CAS and one external member from the College of Education.
- Consultant group began work and weekly meetings.
- CAS Associate Dean updated the website for CAS Reorganization with information about the upcoming stage of reorganization.

February-April, 2023
- Consultants organized a CAS Town Hall, where the CAS Dean, EMU Provost, and members of the former CAS Reorganization Task Force were invited to answer questions about the ongoing reorganization.
- Consultants held focus groups around the six areas identified as crucial in the W'22 report by the CAS Reorganization Task Force:
  - Staffing
  - Student Support and Advising
  - Department Size, Structure, and Identity
  - Interdisciplinary Collaboration
  - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
  - Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing
- Consultants asked the Dean to solicit feedback about the report and models from each department.
- Consultants held a series of additional focus groups with professional advisors, who had been on retreat during the focus group on advising. Meetings with professional advisors at the General Advising meeting, Francine Parker Center, Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS), University Advising & Career Development Center (UACDC).
- Consultants held a union-leadership-centered focus group for representatives of the EMU-AAUP (Faculty), EMU-FT (Part-Time and Full-Time Lecturers), UAW 1975 (Clerical/Secretarial), and UAW 1976 (Professional/Technical) unions.
- Notes were taken at all focus groups. Where the list of attendees was known, the attendees were invited to confirm the notes for accuracy.

May 2023
- Faculty Consultants analyzed all notes and supporting documents from the perspective of the six key areas around which focus groups were held and from the perspective of the three proposed models of reorganization.
- Faculty Consultants revised the models to reflect feedback received from the college community.

June-August 2023
- Faculty Consultants drafted a report.
- Faculty Consultants submitted the report to Dean Heller. The Consultants' charge was thereby completed.

IV. Process

Overview

The charge given to the Faculty Consultants was to "lead and facilitate feedback sessions…to advance inclusive conversation about the proposal put forward by the CAS Reorganization Task Force." To fulfill this charge, the Faculty Consultants designed an intentional process to engage members of the CAS community in conversations about the proposed models and process of reorganization.

To begin the process, we organized a virtual CAS Town Hall meeting on February 21, 2023 to allow members of the CAS community to learn more about the rationale for and current status of reorganization efforts. The Town Hall offered members of the CAS community the opportunity to raise questions, share concerns, and hear directly from administrators about their plans for addressing the issues reorganization is supposed to solve. In advance of the meeting, the four Faculty Consultants prepared visuals of the models developed for the July 2022 report and a quick reference guide that captured some key ideas of the 2022 report. Members of the 2022 CAS Reorganization Task Force presented a summary of their report. The meeting was well attended. There were some, however, who felt that the webinar format on Zoom restricted audience participation, which frustrated those attendees who were hoping for greater dialogue (Town Hall webinar recording; Town Hall presentation slides). We also used the Town Hall as an opportunity to solicit feedback on the reorganization process via a Google Form and to recruit participants for a series of focus groups.

Our process sought to generate conversations and solicit feedback on questions, concerns, and aspirations about the reorganization process within the CAS community.

Focus Groups

We organized six (6) focus groups with members of the CAS community (faculty, administrators, lecturers, clerical/secretarial staff, students) based on the major themes identified in the 2022 CAS Reorganization Task Force Report:
- Staffing
- Student Support and Advising
  - Student group
  - Advisers
  - Francine Parker Advising Center
  - University Career Advisors
  - Student-Athlete Support Services
- Department Size, Structure, and Identity
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

- Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing

Each focus group was attended by two (2) Faculty Consultants: one as a facilitator, one as a notetaker. The facilitator asked participants to share their questions, concerns, and aspirations for each model (for Models 1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, see Appendix) as they related to the specific theme, as well as general questions, concerns, and aspirations about the reorganization process. Two documentation strategies were used. Some utilized traditional notetaking, and some utilized visual notetaking. In both approaches, note takers asked participants to confirm that the ideas captured were a fair and accurate representation of the ideas expressed.

Department/School/Unit Feedback

To solicit feedback from academic units within CAS about the proposed models and reorganization process, we distributed a survey via Google Forms. We intentionally used "feedback" instead of "input," as this was not an official request for formal, contractual departmental input. Department heads and school directors were asked to facilitate conversations about the Task Force Report, proposed models, and reorganization process and share collective feedback through the Google Form. Specifically, the survey asked for feedback on each model, suggestions for revising or combining elements of the models, important issues to address, and feedback on the reorganization process.

Departmental feedback about the models and the reorganization process was submitted by the following members of the CAS community:

Department/School	# of responses to departmental feedback form	# of responses to the focus-group sign-up form
Africology and African American Studies	1 (collective response submitted by the DH)	1
School of Art & Design	6	2
Biology	3	4
CMTA	3	5
Chemistry	2	2
Computer Science	0	2 (individual) +1 (collective response submitted)
Economics	0	0
English Language and Literature	0	0
Geography and Geology	0	1
History and Philosophy	7	3

Math and Statistics	5	1
Music and Dance	0	0
Physics and Astronomy	0	1
Psychology	5	1
Sociology, Anthropology, Criminology	0	1
Women's and Gender Studies	3	1
World Languages	8	8
Dean's office	0	1
Total (individuals)	43+	35+

Job Classification	# of responses to departmental feedback form	# of responses to focus-group sign-up form	# union representatives
Administrator/Staff	5	4	
Tenure-track of Tenured faculty	35	41	
Lecturer	4	1	
Union Steward		1	6
Emeritus Faculty		1	
Total (Individuals)	44+	48	6

Note: 1) There may have been other members of the CAS community who did not sign up in advance but showed up to a focus group. 2) There may have been others who signed up for a focus group but did not attend. 3) It is unclear exactly how many attendees were present at the Town Hall. The number of attendees was approximately 100. 4) The tables above do not include the special meetings with professional advisors: there were approximately 25 advisors present at the various meetings. 5) The tables above do not include the separate focus groups with students: approximately 13 students were present at the various meetings.
While this departmental/school Google Form was intended to be used for sharing collective feedback for each academic unit within CAS, most respondents shared individual perspectives and opinions on the proposed models and reorganization process. Furthermore, many of the respondents demonstrated a lack of familiarity and engagement with the CAS Reorganization Task Force Report. Many respondents (as well as attendees at focus groups) seemed to rely on the visual representations of the models when expressing personal opinions about reorganization.

Targeted Outreach

As the focus groups about the six major topics of concern proceeded, we observed that certain members of the CAS community were not adequately represented in the data we were gathering. To make our process more inclusive, we facilitated additional sessions with students, advisors, and representatives of the various unions representing CAS workers. Focus groups were held with: students in the Student Center; advisors with the Francine Parker Advising Center, UACDC, and SASS; and representatives of EMU-AAUP (Faculty), EMU-FT (Part-Time and Full-Time Lecturers), UAW 1975 (Clerical/Secretarial), and UAW 1976 (Professional/Technical).

Data Analysis

After completing the focus groups and surveys, the Faculty Consultants processed and analyzed the gathered data. Faculty Consultants divided the labor of analyzing data based on the major themes explored in the focus groups. The summaries and recommendations for each theme in the Findings section below are informed by an analysis of notes from the focus groups and responses to the surveys distributed.

Recommendations

After gathering and analyzing data through this process, we compiled a list of recommendations to inform the next steps of the reorganization process.

V. Findings

Introduction

In their July 2022 report, the CAS Reorganization Task Force identified a number of themes CAS should address through any reorganization. Among the most frequently cited by members of the CAS community were:

- Staffing
- Student Success and Advising
- Department Size, Structure, and Identity
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
- Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing

The Faculty Consultants used these themes as categories for soliciting feedback on the models proposed by the Task Force and the overall prospect and process of reorganization. Feedback was solicited through focus groups, surveys via Google Form, and targeting outreach to members of the CAS community. Summaries of our findings are detailed below.

Staffing

Aspirations: There is hope that each unit will have enough well trained CS support to function at its best because a) CS positions are the "face" of EMU; b) they contribute greatly to student satisfaction and retention

by staff greeting students, answering questions, dispelling confusion, facilitating recruitment, providing timely service; c) they allow faculty and administrators do what they do best, rather than doing clerical work; d) they reduce the burnout of all employees; e) they are essential for accreditation by CEA and NASAD.

There is a need for CS, PT, FTL, and PTL to be included in the reorganization more directly (such as through committees) with proper compensation. There is an opportunity for the term 'faculty' to include lecturers. Good clerical workers can obviate the need for many administrators.

Concerns:
- Work is not performed by those who are most qualified to do it: lack of CS causes faculty and administrators to do CS work.
- Concerns are raised about staffing policies that have led to the separation of dedicated, loyal staff, and now key functions remaining without staff, such as at the Dean's office.
- Staff are underpaid and are thus hard to recruit and retain. Specifically the CS-05 pay is very low. Dean could elevate/reclassify CS positions.
- Because CS work is on the computer, their work is invisible and their positions are consolidated and cut.
- Forcing CS personnel to be shared by multiple units is untenable: if each unit cannot have 100% CS, then better to hire two at 50% than one 100% to be shared.
- Work study support is discriminatory to international students.
- Programs need robust onboarding for new CS.
- Division of labor is inequitable: some CS and administrators are doing much more than others. To achieve equity, it's necessary to examine each school/department/program/discipline, the number of students and credit hours and the complexity of the tasks and the number of CSs should be based on the above.
- PTLs are concerned about losing seniority if they are forced to move to another department due to reorganization.
- PTLs and FTLs are concerned that the credentials they hold to teach in one department will not be adequate for a different department after reorganization.
- PTLs and FTLs are concerned whether they will be considered for the position if a new course that they might have been able to teach pops up in a different department under the new structure.
- There is concern about the exclusion of staff, PTL, FTL, unions from the reorganization committees/task force/consultants. The reorganization process is currently not inclusive. Lecturers are systematically excluded from decisions on this campus. DEI is viewed narrowly when over 50% of the workforce has no involvement in decisions.
- The Higher Learning Commission were surprised that 'faculty' at EMU excludes lecturers.
- How does the reorganization impact current negotiations?
- New PAFs and systems will be needed as a result of reorganization.
- Response time from HR is problematic.
- CS, PTLs, FTLs are concerned that they could be lost through the reorganization. They would like to call a unit a home, which leads to a sense of belonging and self-efficacy to be able to best serve students.

- The current organizational structure for CS work and positions makes work harder. CSs would like to both feel part of a department and see a team structure to be utilized to help create a sense of community among CS personnel; this, however, does not mean a shared-services model. Currently the system is not set up to support cooperation and equity.
- College- and department-level advising is strapped for resources. There is a need for more professional and departmental CAS advisors. Savings from the reorganization need to be devoted to departmental advising as well.

Questions:
- PTLs wonder about how seniority might be affected by a department remaining the same yet under a different name.
- How will reorganization impact split faculty?
- What about credentials and new offerings? Will the credentials in one unit transfer to another if the course is moved to a new department?
- How are contracts impacted by reorganization?
  - An AAUP leader expressed concern "that there is no contractual mechanism for the creation of 'department chairs'" and if the reorganization were to require the creation of department chairs, then extensive and complicated contract negotiations would need to take place, without any guarantees. There might be corollaries for other colleges, and the tenure and grievance procedures would be affected. The entire membership would need to vote for the contract changes but it is unclear how to proceed if the membership votes the proposal down.
  - EMU-FT contract would also need to be revised considerably, without guarantees. Would faculty associates be allowed to, able to, and feel comfortable with evaluating lecturers?
  - Would faculty associates provide 'functional supervision' to CSs?
  - The CS Union expressed concern that their hard-fought right to report only to one supervisor might be at risk. Maybe they can all report to the associate/assistant dean or the Dean?
- Who will hire lecturers?
- Could more CS replace some administrators?
- Org structure makes work harder with multiple departments: How could CS org structure be integrated yet still maintain autonomy? For instance, each department's work requirements for CSs are separate, making it difficult for CSs who have to juggle multiple competing demands about essentially the same task.
- Who will really decide who goes into which new unit? Will PTLs, FTLs, CSs, faculty, departments all have a say?
- How will the reorganization help CSs, PTLs, and FTLs feel a sense of belonging and inclusion at EMU?
- The new models are predicated upon non-administrators' willingness to step into administrative positions. Will there be enough of them to make the new system work? Release time should be commensurate with work load and complexity of the role.
- Comparable institutions make use of existing resources by allowing lecturers to perform service duties and advising by reducing their teaching load, such as leaders of departments or faculty associates. Will reorganization allow for such use of resources?

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- If a 'faculty' has a large facilities burden (ex. sciences and arts), will they get a facilities manager as well?

Student Support and Advising

Meetings: Virtual Meeting with Advising Staff at their meeting; Meeting with Athletic Advisors; Meeting with Parker Center Advisors; Meeting with Career Center Advisors

Summary:
Student success is critical to keeping students enrolled, and good advising is widely seen as central to student success. Advisors are some of the first professionals that undergraduate students meet on campus. But it doesn't always go well. Academic advising is one of the most misunderstood and under-supported divisions on campus, plagued by low pay, large caseloads, and high turnover. Good advising systems can increase professionalism and pride in this underappreciated field, help close equity gaps, and ensure students effectively navigate their path to a degree. The meeting with the advisor is a foundation to helping students feel connected, create a web of support, be eligible for letters of recommendation, and find an advocate. An area of particular interest is the built-in support available for student athletes by the Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS).

Student athletes get a degree of support unprecedented for regular undergraduates, resulting in a graduation rate that is twice that of other undergrads (70% to 35%). On the other hand, the fact that the institution is penalized if athletes don't graduate means that those supports are necessary. This includes extensive support of the academic journey, availability of scholarships and resources, connecting with Holman Success coaches, tutoring requirements, and practice schedules that strive to accommodate classes. However, SASS do serve as secondary advisors and academic advising is handled by the primary academic advisors and department faculty.

In meeting with the advising staff, the following points were clear:
- Undergraduate advisors start with first year students and follow them all the way through. Incoming students pick their major while completing their EMU application and a few of them at orientation as an intent, and advisors follow suit.
- Advisors start with first year students looking at the math track and either Writing or Speech. Then they examine their General Education requirements, which will be different depending on their intended major. Each college does advising differently (for instance, in COB, advisors work with students all the way through graduation) as does each department.
- A Provost Office level policy is that all first-year students need an advisor to officially sign off on course schedules. Often this happens at group advising sessions without the opportunity for establishing personal connections. In the best case scenario, an advisor may meet a student perhaps twice during their college tenure because each CAS advisor has a caseload of approximately 1500-2200 students! Contrast this to the student-athlete experience of SASS advisors available on a weekly basis.
- Advisors appreciate having dual advising between department faculty and professional advisors. An enormous challenge is that advisors do not have any record or documentation of what faculty advisors recommend, since while advisors maintain Starfish to document advising, faculty often do not. Advisors do not know what faculty have said, other than what the student reports. As the team was told

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"*Please, please enter notes in Starfish; it's a 15-minute training to use and it would make a world of difference.*" However, faculty are not really encouraged in their departments to use it nor are they required to be trained in the program. Another concern is that departmental advisors only have access to students majoring in their program but not those who minor in their program. In some cases – such as TESOL – the vast majority of students minor in it and the departmental advisor cannot enter any notes into Starfish.

- If students do not get into their major of choice, the advisor checks with the department and explores the reasons for the denial. It may include a renavigating of the student's program of study, or a referral to a career coach. Career coaching is offered to every student throughout their tenure at Eastern and as alumni, and is a wonderful resource that few students seem to know about or actively use.

- While a frequent concern of department faculty was that advisors might be advising negatively regarding some courses, no advisor could think of a time or example when they may have pressured a student to not take a course or major. The exceptions would be if a student had been repeatedly unsuccessful (example of someone failing a particular STEM course multiple times, and being asked to reconsider if they were really cut out for pre-med). This would be particularly true for student athletes whose failure would result in penalties. Another situation where a conversation between a student and an advisor may result in the student's failure to register for a course they are interested in can occur when after a student registers for math, writing/speech, prerequisites for the declared major, any additional classes would a) clash with the already selected ones, b) would put the student above the block tuition rate, c) extend the student's time to graduation. When the student is alerted to the fact that they would have to pay beyond the block tuition or may not be able to graduate within the planned four years' time by exploring additional courses, programs, or minors, then most students choose to abandon this form of exploration.

Recommendations:

1. Departments must connect with advisors proactively, and there should be scheduled times that advisor liaisons work with the college teams. The College leadership should have ongoing input from an advising coordinator to plan course roll outs responsively and understand the ongoing changing needs of their students.

2. Faculty advisors should have access to all students' records through Starfish but at the very least declared minors and not only majors.

3. Faculty who advise undergraduates should be trained in Starfish and keep notes to enable advisors to help students meet their major requirements.

4. When scheduling course rollouts, advisors in the Parker Center, SASS, and other academic support services should be informed prior to students. This could be done through the Registrar's office since all schedules are managed there.

5. If adequately resourced, the graduation and retention rate for students, many of whom are BIPOC, could be as high as that of student athletes. One of the key aspects of that support is that it is coordinated and wraparound. Ad hoc programs are less effective.

6. Department/School/Program advisors should be notified by professional advisors when a student is interested in exploring their course offerings even if after a conversation with a professional advisor the

student chooses not to register for the course. Department/School/Program advisors should have the opportunity to talk further with the student about whether their interest can be pursued to the student's benefit. Perhaps such notification could eventually be achieved through Starfish, but until such time through another mechanism.

7. The proposed CAS Director of Marketing & Recruitment should be liaising with all units around the university that advise CAS students in any official and unofficial capacity.

Department Size, Structure, and Identity

Overview:
1. There is a widespread concern that reorganization will lead to the consolidation of academic units (schools, departments, programs, etc.) and the loss of jobs.
2. There is general agreement that self-determination for academic units is vital and that collaboration is essential for CAS's success.
3. Many departments are concerned about losing direct report status with the Dean by introducing additional administrative hierarchy. Many respondents expressed concerns about how additional hierarchy would introduce barriers to efficiency, diminish departmental agency, and impact departmental governance.
    a. Small departments have acute concerns about their status without a direct report to the Dean and within a larger administrative unit, for fear of being marginalized by larger departments within the unit.
4. Several respondents expressed concerns about inequities in workload, representation, and resources in CAS and hopes that reorganization would address those inequities. These inequities are based on department size, the identities of faculty/staff (race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, international origins, etc.), and other factors.
5. There is a pervasive, yet unfounded, assumption within CAS that larger academic units are effectively subsidizing the existence of smaller units. This has been present not only in this iteration of the reorganization process, but in earlier initiatives leading up to this point as well.
6. Many respondents expressed concerns about how reorganization would impact existing academic programs and curricula. For example, if CMTA were disaggregated, there are concerns that it would have a "destructive, if not devastating impact" on degree programs.
7. Throughout the process, many CAS community members have expressed concerns about how academic units will be rearranged and what process will guide those changes. Respondents often struggled to comment on proposed structures without knowing where they would end up, yet also seemed reassured that departments would have input on where they end up.
8. There was general confusion about how the models would address the specific needs of academic units within CAS. Respondents shared concerns that the models developed through the reorganization process did not include a "needs assessment" for the units involved.
9. There were questions about how clustering of academic units would impact departmental governance, evaluations, teaching assignments, etc.

Model 1:
1. There were mixed feelings about the shift from department heads (DH) (admin) to department chairs (DC) (faculty) in this model. While some supported the move to DC for fresh perspectives and

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leadership opportunities for faculty, others expressed concerns about "amateur leadership" and turnover of faculty chairs.
2. Many respondents expressed concerns about where they would fit within the different schools within CAS described in the model.
3. Several respondents supported Model 1 because departments would maintain their autonomy and some (like Psychology) would largely maintain their existing structure.
4. Several respondents supported Model 1 because of its alignment with what peer institutions have done and its modeling of CAS's Vision and Mission statements.

Model 2:
1. Several respondents liked that this model gave interdisciplinary programs a "home" and a reporting line to the Dean.
2. Several respondents feared that this model was too "distilled down," which could lead to lack of departmental autonomy, identities, and expertise.
3. Several respondents raised questions about where interdisciplinary programs that extend beyond CAS would fit within this model.
4. Several respondents expressed concerns that this model added a layer of bureaucracy between the Dean and departments/schools.
5. Respondents from Arts expressed concerns about how reorganization in this model may impact their accreditation and facilities.

Model 3:
1. Several respondents were concerned that Model 3 would be favorable to larger departments, which would largely maintain their existing structures, at the expense of smaller departments, which would be grouped together.
2. Several respondents expressed concerns that Model 3.1 would lead to "untenable job descriptions" for department heads/chairs.
3. Several respondents expressed support for these models because they have the potential to disrupt the fewest number of units, which others saw as a liability for effectively reorganizing CAS.
4. Several respondents preferred Model 3.3 because it essentially leaves larger departments intact, while others expressed concerns about how this could adversely impact smaller departments.

Recommendations:
1. Existing academic units must maintain their status (as outlined in the CAS Reorganization Task Force Report) and have agency in determining their placement within any reorganization model that is considered for adoption.
2. If a model is adopted that results in the grouping of departments, CAS leadership (Dean's office, CAC, DHs, SDs, etc.) should work collaboratively to determine placements and develop equitable organizational structures and operations for each grouping.
3. If additional associate/assistant dean positions are created between the Dean and departments, the associate/assistant deans should have demonstrated familiarity with and commitment to the academic programs of the units they would be responsible to and CAS should consider departmental input for the selection of these positions.

4. The histories, identities, and contributions of academic units in relation to CAS's Vision and Mission statements should be taken into consideration within the reorganization process, with a particular eye towards correcting historical inequities between academic units. Financial drivers of reorganization should not take precedence over "mission critical" academic units and programs.
5. If CAS reorganization results in a shift from department heads to department chairs, interested faculty should be provided with paid training opportunities to prepare for DC positions.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Summary:
1. The topic of "interdisciplinarity" was complicated due to differing and competing definitions that different members of the CAS community brought to the table. The differing interpretations included: interdisciplinary academic programs, interdisciplinary disciplines, multidisciplinary units, and interdisciplinary collaboration across units.
2. There is a general feeling that academic units in CAS are currently operating in "silos" with interdisciplinary collaboration being stifled by competition for SCH, lack of familiarity among colleagues, and general lack of institutional support/commitment for interdisciplinary initiatives.
3. Current barriers to interdisciplinarity:
    a. a general spirit of competition over collaboration within CAS and broader university, fostered specifically through competition for SCH
    b. lack of institutional support for interdisciplinary initiatives (ex. relationship-building, resources, etc.)
    c. university policies surrounding "team teaching" (ex. enrollment requirements)
    d. inability of interdisciplinary programs (ex. ENVI) to hire faculty due to lack of departmental status
4. Several respondents questioned if there was any evidence to suggest that merely grouping academic units together would promote interdisciplinary collaboration. Many wanted more intentional institutional support above and beyond reorganization.
5. A common refrain in focus group sessions and online surveys was the need for intentional structures and processes to support and incentivize interdisciplinary collaboration across units.
    a. Several respondents suggested greater support for interpersonal relationships, like "faculty mixers," to encourage collegiality and collaboration.
6. Some existing multidisciplinary units within CAS (ex. CMTA) have concerns about how reorganization would impact their structure and academic programs.
7. Questions were raised about the process of how academic units would be organized (split up, etc.) and complexities of decision-making processes within units.
8. Questions were raised about how new interdisciplinary programs would be proposed.

Model 1:
1. Concerns were expressed about lack of intentional support for interdisciplinary collaboration. Just putting units together in clusters does not, in and of itself, promote active collaboration.
2. Concerns were raised that additional administrative bureaucracy would represent a barrier to interdisciplinary collaboration.

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3. There is lack of clarity about the logistics of how certain aspects of CAS operations would be managed (ex. recruitment, cross/interdisciplinary collaboration, etc.)
4. Concerns were voiced about division between Arts and Sciences and how that would be overcome to foster collaboration.

Model 2:
1. There was general support for intentional structure to support interdisciplinary programs, particularly a dedicated Associate/Assistant Dean for Interdisciplinary Programs:
    a. Attendees needed more details about the "how" of interdisciplinary initiatives in this model.
    b. One respondent suggested adopting the associate/assistant dean position independent of reorganization.
    c. Others doubted the ability of an associate/assistant dean to adequately support and resource interdisciplinary programs.
2. Questions were raised about distinctions between departments and programs if the latter had hiring lines, as well as how tenure lines would be accounted for within interdisciplinary programs.

Model 3:
1. Concerns were raised about how labor and responsibilities would be shared/distributed between department head (admin) and department chair (faculty) in this model.
2. Questions were asked about upper-level administrative support for reducing number of administrator positions (DH) and increasing faculty positions (DC).

Recommendations:
1. If interdisciplinary collaboration is a priority for reorganization, CAS should develop working definitions for the types of interdisciplinarity currently happening within CAS and clarify objectives for reorganization.
2. CAS should consider facilitating formal input sessions with multidisciplinary units about their aspirations, concerns, and questions for reorganization.
3. Examine other universities that are excelling in the area of interdisciplinarity and identify what aspects make them successful that could be replicated at EMU.
4. Leadership of interdisciplinary initiatives should have faculty buy-in and proven background in developing effective and innovative programs.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

Sources: Focus Group 4/24/23; Focus group 4/1/23; Student discussions; Advising discussions; Department discussions.
Note: Due to the sensitive and vulnerable nature of this section, concerns have been presented without attribution to protect participants.

Aspirations

The College of Arts and Sciences has one of the most diverse assortments of departments in the University, and the range and variance mean that issues of equity, inclusion, and justice are highlighted in ways that are less apparent in other colleges. Many departments have faculty who study and instruct on these topics

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organically within their field from anthropology, criminal justice, history, philosophy, literature, communication, TESOL, world languages, or art, as well as those who have engaged deeply even when their area is biology, chemistry, or math. In addition, there are departments such as WGST and AAAS that explicitly have a social justice mission, while interdisciplinary programs such as Jewish Studies, Queer Studies Minor, Critical Disability Studies Minor, and Aging Studies underscore collaborating across the university.
If students are to be attracted, they must feel that they will have a sense of belonging. These programs that offer that to marginalized and underrepresented groups are critical to the academic environment both for students in opening possibilities, as well as for faculty scholarship and resulting renown for the University. These programs should naturally be housed in the College of Arts & Sciences, even as they reach to collaborate with other disciplines.

Concerns
- The concerns for diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice expressed do not appear to be structurally integrated within the College.
- There seem to have been societal momentums that resulted in AAAS being funded to offer a graduate program or the Queer Studies minor developed. The interdisciplinary and social justice perspectives do not seem to be evenly applied or socially responsive. For instance, even though Eastern is close to one of the largest Arab American communities in the United States, no Middle Eastern studies major is offered. Missing too are any other Ethnic Studies concentrations whether in Latinx/Hispanic Studies, Asian American, or Indigenous/Native American/First Nations Studies.
- As is true on many higher education campuses, student protest in response to egregious hate crimes or unfriendly campus climate leads to change rather than the institution proactively taking the lead.
- While Eastern bills itself as an Institution of Opportunity, and students do have many opportunities not available to them in neighboring institutions, those are primarily of admission and lower costs. Over the last decade, as the student enrollment has declined across the university but particularly in CAS, the departments seem to have experienced a shrinking of the resources to which they were accustomed.
- The departments and minors that most represent marginalized population experiences and social justice issues seem to have experienced greater hiring in terms of faculty lines, without corresponding support for administrators, students, or faculty.
- It is unclear whether it is a historical or perception aspect, but there appears to be a strong scarcity model operating in the CAS across departments, where department heads/school directors and faculty actively point to other departments as competitors who overuse resources.
- Using student credit hour production as a way to evaluate department performance means that departments will fight over a limited number of students with limited numbers of courses to take. General Education is one area where competition continues to occur as departments who can get multiple courses into the Gen Ed curriculum can rely on a stable number of students to take courses. Departments offer courses that would mean students have to choose between competing subjects; one cannot simultaneously take the History of Asian Art and a Survey of Non-Western Art for Gen Ed Arts. There is no African Dance or Belly dancing in the DANC course approvals, and the rest of the globe outside the US is offered in one course in World Music. Meanwhile all the World Languages must compete with Harry Potter and an Introduction to African Philosophy.
- This system obviously does not account for intersectionality and students as multidimensional, but rather divides out disciplines or topics as individual and separate.
- One aspect of how DEIJ issues can be afterthoughts is the setup of unions and how they have evolved

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at EMU. Unions serve their constituents, but also serve them all equally with due diligence. Human Resources would deal with complaints against a staff person, and the CS union must defend them even if the complaints have merit and are damaging to other CS constituents. The AAUP is the faculty union and represents faculty interests, advocating for faculty in the face of administrator encroachment. However, it assumes a homogenous faculty model rather than one with diverse and sometimes clashing priorities. Therefore, when faculty members who might be from a marginalized group by race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, or national origin are harassed, bullied, or otherwise disenfranchised by other faculty, they have no reasonable recourse. Academic Human Resources does not have clear guidelines on process. The union must represent all faculty equally, and would have to defend faculty who face administrative reprimand for such harassment.

- Due to their marginalized status, minoritized faculty have less cultural capital and probably know fewer backdoors, resulting in BIPOC faculty leaving the institution more often in frustration and despair. Several faculty and staff with minoritized status shared confidential stories of how they had been harassed, and dealt with microaggressions on a frequent basis from their colleagues, administrators, and students. If their harassers were faculty or other staff, they felt they had no recourse.

- With administrators, there seemed to be a process, but no trust that any action would be taken. The Eastern practice of frequently appointing an *ad hoc* administrator with no job posting, search process or rationale for the position, supports this notion. This is often contrasted to the hiring of faculty that is governed by specific criteria and processes and is anything but *ad hoc*. This differential process means that inequity and lack of representation in leadership is endemic at both the College and University level.

- There are more resources directed towards management and administration of programs and fewer resources to actually staff the programs. Advisors are a case in point. To specifically want to attract first-generation students and then provide them with one advisor across 1700 students is a set up for failure. Students who are under-resourced need more advising and support rather than less.

- As professional and clerical staff have continued to shrink, it is a deeply classist viewpoint that minimizes the knowledge and competency needed to manage data and information, engage with students respectfully and meet their needs. Neither faculty nor administrators can do this work as effectively and it is insulting to assume that with no training they can equal the work of a highly skilled staff person.

Recommendations

- If reorganization efforts ensured enough clerical staff positions so that work was humane rather than overwhelming, wellbeing would be more pervasive because staff, faculty, and administrators would be less stressed, leading to more positive and responsive interactions and engagement with students.

- While much discrimination through the years has taken place at Eastern, it is rarely acknowledged nor are reparations made. Supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice cannot occur by word of mouth. Resources have to be assigned and structural initiatives must be supported. To be serious, the College of Arts and Sciences must assign funding to reconstruction efforts, which is specifically earmarked for DEIJ.

- The costs for departments that meet a critical need for representation and attention to underrepresented issues who are then under-resourced should be covered by the College; considered a "tax" for departments that have not diversified sufficiently. In return, faculty lines from such departments like AAAS that serve "mission critical" educational and representational functions, might be ancillary in

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higher-resourced departments such as Political Science or Psychology, which should assist in supporting such lines. In return, courses taught by such faculty could be cross-listed across both the home department and the sponsoring department, leading to robust interdisciplinary collaborations.

- It is critical to gather data on faculty, staff, and student representation across various groups by department, to examine course offerings across departments and their currency and relevance to the world in the present, and to examine the ways in which BIPOC faculty have been compensated inequitably. If reorganization results in the creation of an Associate Dean for DEIJ, these initiatives could fall under their responsibilities.
- Innovation would result in faculty lines that focus on the scholarship of social justice across fields; and faculty who examine teaching and learning directed towards belonging, and inclusion.
- Students need to have culturally competent student academic advisors who are knowledgeable about diverse course offerings as well as academic and personal support services.
- Working class, first-generation students, veterans, parents, international, refugee, and students disenfranchised by their families or communities need options for navigating academia in timely and cost-effective ways. These obstacle strewn and non-traditional paths, cannot be one-size-fits-all but require understanding, creativity, innovation and insight to effectively address. If CAS can meet the needs of such students through the reorganization of departments to present clarity, academic relevance, faculty responsiveness and understanding, staff support, and effective advising, it will undoubtedly be more successful in enrollment, retention, and graduation.

Outreach, Recruitment, and Marketing (ORM)

Aspirations: There is a desire for all CAS programs to be highlighted by a marketing and recruitment expert; thus, there is general support for a dedicated ORM expert to be housed in the Dean's office.

Concerns: Although these key positions exist at the university level, they do not at the college level. Because the university is strapped for resources and they do not believe that it is their mission to highlight all programs, the vast majority of CAS programs receive little to no recruitment and marketing support. There is, however, concern how a dedicated CAS ORM expert will receive funding.

Questions: N/A

Model 1:
- This model does not appear to help ORM.

Model 2:
- The strength of Model 2 is a dedicated person responsible for ORM and DEI.

Model 3:
- This model does not appear to help ORM.

Recommendations:
- A revised version of Model 2 needs to be developed where it is clear that units retain their integrity and are not lumped into four large silos.
- The proposed Director of Marketing and Recruitment should liaise with all individuals and units that intentionally or unintentionally advise CAS students.

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● The assistant/associate deans could also coordinate advising across the College.

Union and Contract Issues

Focus-group attendees wondered whether unions were invited to participate in the reorganization process from the beginning. Thus, the Faculty Consultants reached out to the leadership of the following unions: UAW 1975 (Clerical/Secretarial), UAW 1976 (Professional/Technical), EMU-FT (Part-Time and Full-Time Lecturers), and EMU-AAUP (Faculty) for a special focus group. We have included portions in the relevant sections of this report, and the key takeaways of the meeting are also included below.

Aspirations:
- Good clerical workers can obviate the need for many administrators.
- More faculty releases create more opportunities for FT and PT lecturers.
- The term 'faculty' could include lecturers.
- Involve all stakeholders and compensate them for their time to drum up widespread involvement in the reorganization process. The university is legally required to provide notice and involve other stakeholders.
- CSs want to have an identity that comes from working with/for departments but they also want to support each other in teams.

Concerns:
- An AAUP leader expressed concern "that there is no contractual mechanism for the creation of 'department chairs'" and if the reorganization were to require the creation of department chairs, then extensive and complicated contract negotiations would need to take place, without any guarantees. There might be corollaries for other colleges, and the tenure and grievance procedures would be affected. The entire membership would need to vote for the contract changes but it is unclear how to proceed if the membership votes the proposal down.
- The EMU-FT contract would also need to be revised considerably, without guarantees. Would faculty associates be allowed, able to, and feel comfortable evaluating lecturers?
- A Clerical Union leader is concerned
  - about inequities in the workload among CSs.
  - that because the work is on the computer, their work is invisible and their positions are consolidated and cut.
  - that the CS-05 pay is very low.
  - administrators do not receive training and neither do CSs or PTs.
  - that the one full-time secretary-per-department model is challenging.
  - because to achieve equity, it's necessary to examine each school/department/program/discipline, the number of students and credit hours and the complexity of the tasks and the number of CSs should be based on the above.
  - about faculty providing 'functional supervision' over CSs.
  - that their hard-fought right to report only to one supervisor might be at risk. Maybe they can all report to an assistant dean or the Dean?
- GenEd programs have no limitations and as a result some departments (such as World Languages) have lost ¾ of their enrollments.

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- Any workable model must preserve departments and their autonomy.
- New PAFs and systems will be needed.
- Structural competition among units is a barrier to collaboration and interdisciplinarity.
- Student-credit-hour-production model fosters competition.
- Lecturers are systematically excluded from decisions on this campus. DEI is viewed narrowly when over 50% of the workforce has no involvement in decisions.
- The Higher Learning Commission were surprised that 'faculty' at EMU excludes lecturers.
- There is great skepticism that the reorganization is not top-driven but driven by the CAS community.

Questions:
- The devil is in the details: What specifics will be in the models?
- Where will the mailboxes be?
- How will interdisciplinary programs be proposed?
- How do employees get support?
- How many students will be in each class?
- Will there be gen ed courses in a particular department?
- What problems are foreseen?

Summary:
- Unions "do not have to be the reason why change cannot take place." Unions work "in partnership with others at the university." Where possible, the Unions' position is to work with the Administration. Unions do not want to get in the way of change. However, at EMU Unions are suspicious because of the Administration's history of unilateral decision making (see energy, housing, dining, parking).
- Meaningful input means that the Unions and Administration sit down, design plans together, review plans together, and develop a rough consensus around a plan/model. If the process is not meaningfully collaborative and consultative, then the inequitable process will create roadblocks.
- Impressions so far are that the CAS community is not taking the reorganization seriously enough to make it happen.

VI. Model 4 Hybrid for Consideration
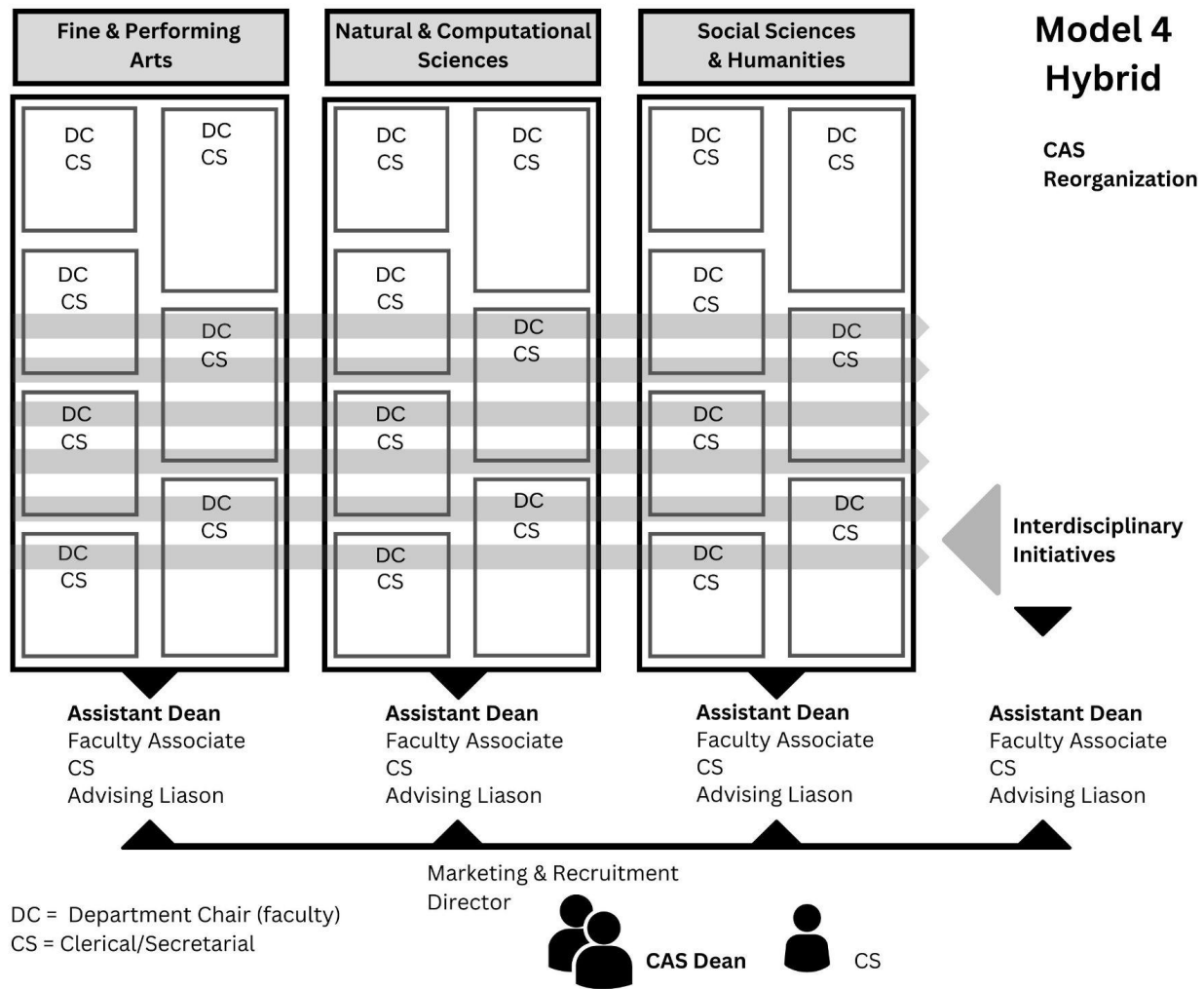
Model 4 Hybrid

This model is created in response to feedback received during the 2023 CAS Reorganization focus group sessions.

Departments/Schools/Programs Grouped into one Organizational Unit[1]

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[1] "Organizational unit" refers to each of the three vertical and one cross-cutting interdisciplinary grouping. The three vertical organizational units are Fine & Performing Arts, Natural & Computational Sciences, and Social Sciences & Humanities. The one cross-cutting organizational unit is Interdisciplinary Programs. Each organizational unit is served by an assistant dean and at least one faculty associate. The name 'organizational unit' is used until a more appropriate term can be found for a grouping that is smaller than a 'college' but larger than a 'department' or 'school'. The term 'faculty' in the European sense, which is suggested in Model 2, has been abandoned because it is already used for a group of workers at EMU. The term 'section', which is suggested in Model 3.3, in some departments refers to a unit that is smaller than the department; it is also used university-wide to refer to a sub-grouping of a course.

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Instructors[2] expressed a need for belonging and program identity. By grouping departments/schools/programs into three similar areas, instructors can create a community of like-minded professionals able to network and collaborate while maintaining their autonomy.

1. Fine & Performing Arts
2. Natural & Computational Sciences
3. Social Sciences & Humanities
4. Interdisciplinary Programs[3]

Note: The Position of Assistant/Associate Dean of DEI was not included in this model because, based on feedback, individuals saw it as a redundancy since the University already has leadership in this area.

Unit Leaders: Department Chairs and Faculty Associate
Multiple departments/schools/programs will operate within one organizational unit with each one having their own department chair elected from the instructors[4]. A Faculty Associate and the Assistant Dean will serve departments, which will be led by department chairs.

CS: Clerical and Secretarial Support
Currently, CS personnel struggle to feel as though they belong to a particular area. They also see inequitable workloads as some CS personnel serve one department and others service two or more. In the Hybrid Model, each department/school will be allotted CS personnel who will form the CS Support Team for the unit. Working with the Faculty Associate and the Assistant Dean, the CS team will determine how to best serve the needs of the overall unit.

Assistant Dean[5]:
The assistant dean (AD) will work closely with the faculty associate and department chairs to coordinate departments/schools/programs within the organizational unit. The AD will work directly with the College Dean and the other ADs to ensure that the unit they lead will have the space and resources needed to thrive. Additional duties to be determined through collaboration and negotiation.

Faculty Associate:
The faculty associate will coordinate with department chairs relaying their needs to the AD. Additional duties to be determined through collaboration and negotiation.

Advising Liaison:

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[2] "Instructor" is an inclusive term used to identify all who instruct students: Tenure-track faculty, tenured faculty, part-time and full-time lecturers.

[3] It was clear that focus group respondents value the inclusion and possible expansion of Interdisciplinary Initiatives. These programs would be led by a Faculty Associate and Assistant Dean dedicated to interdisciplinary work throughout the College.

[4] Department chairs would need to be tenured faculty, although interest to lead was indicated among PTL/FTL instructors attending the focus groups.

[5] Assistant Deans are called "assistant" in this model not because they are demoted and "associate deans" are their superiors but rather to distinguish them from the current titles. They could be renamed "associate" if that were a preferable title.

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A professional advisor from the Francine Parker Center will work with the organizational unit and work as a liaison between departments/schools/programs, their leaders, and the advising center.

CAS Dean

The Dean is supported by:
- A Marketing and Recruitment Director focused exclusively on promoting CAS programs and initiatives
- CS Support who will communicate directly with the CSs serving and supporting the three organizational units and interdisciplinary initiatives.

Benefits: This model
- keep units, departments, schools intact if they so choose
- helps to create a sense of belonging within the college by grouping like-minded areas together.
- significantly reduces the number of paid administrators.
- provides leadership opportunities to willing faculty.
- provides teaching opportunities for FTLs and PTLs.
- streamlines communication to the Dean's office.
- gives CS personnel a sense of belonging and agency over their workload.
- promotes and supports the creation of Interdisciplinary Initiatives.

VII. Final Recommendations

Overview

Based on our analysis of feedback offered by members of the CAS community through focus groups, surveys, and the town hall meeting, we offer the following recommendations to CAS administrators to guide the process of reorganization in addition to the thematic recommendations included in the findings above.

Process

1. The Dean's office should conduct a needs assessment of units within CAS to establish clear objectives for reorganization.
2. Any models put forth for formal input should be accompanied with a feasibility study and financial analysis.
3. The process of soliciting formal input should be intentional, meaningful, accessible, and inclusive of all members of the CAS community.
4. The process of reorganization must be data-driven and informed by CAS's mission and vision statements.
5. Before any reorganization begins, the Dean's office should research effective community-driven processes for reorganization implemented at other institutions.
6. All members of the CAS community, including faculty, clerical/secretarial staff, part-time and full-time lecturers, advisors, and students who will be impacted by reorganization must have meaningful roles in shaping the reorganization process. A guiding mantra should be: "No decisions about us without us."

7. The histories, identities, and contributions of academic units in relation to CAS's Vision and Mission statements should be taken into consideration within the reorganization process, with a particular eye towards correcting historical inequities between academic units. Financial drivers of reorganization should not take precedence over "mission critical" academic units and programs.
8. If interdisciplinary collaboration is a priority for reorganization, CAS should develop working definitions for the types of interdisciplinarity currently happening within CAS and clarify objectives for reorganization.
    a. Examine other universities that are excelling in the area of interdisciplinarity and identify what aspects make them successful that could be replicated at EMU.
9. CAS leadership should facilitate formal input sessions with multidisciplinary units about their aspirations, concerns, and questions for reorganization.

Personnel

1. The CAS Dean's office should consult with CS staff and union representatives about how CS positions are structured and allocated in reorganization.

2. If additional Assistant Dean positions are created between the Dean and departments, the Assistant Deans should have demonstrated familiarity with and commitment to the academic programs of the units they would be responsible to and CAS should consider departmental input for the selection of these positions.

3. If CAS reorganization results in a shift from department heads to department chairs, interested faculty should be provided with paid training opportunities to prepare for DC positions.

Structural

1. Existing academic units must maintain their status (as outlined in the CAS Reorganization Task Force Report) and have agency in determining their placement within any reorganization model that is considered for adoption.

2. If a model is adopted that results in the grouping of departments, CAS leadership (Dean's office, CAC, DHs, SDs, etc.) should work collaboratively with faculty and staff to determine placements and develop equitable organizational structures and operations for each grouping.

3. Advising needs to be more intentionally integrated within CAS structures, with greater coordination between academic units and advising units. There should be liaisons between professional advisors, departmental advisors, and CAS leadership to coordinate student support initiatives. Faculty advisors should also receive formal training in Starfish to facilitate collaboration with professional advisors. Professional advisors should notify the relevant academic units when students express interest in their courses and programs but for practical reasons, after a conversation with an advisor, decide not to sign up for such courses.

4. When scheduling course rollouts, advisors in the Parker Center, SASS, and other academic support services should be informed prior to students. This could be done through the Registrar's office since all schedules are managed there.

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5. Reorganization should include consistent, structured, wraparound student support services, sourced in the College that students can access. This includes advising, resources and tutoring, career, and academic support that is closely connected to their major and future paths.
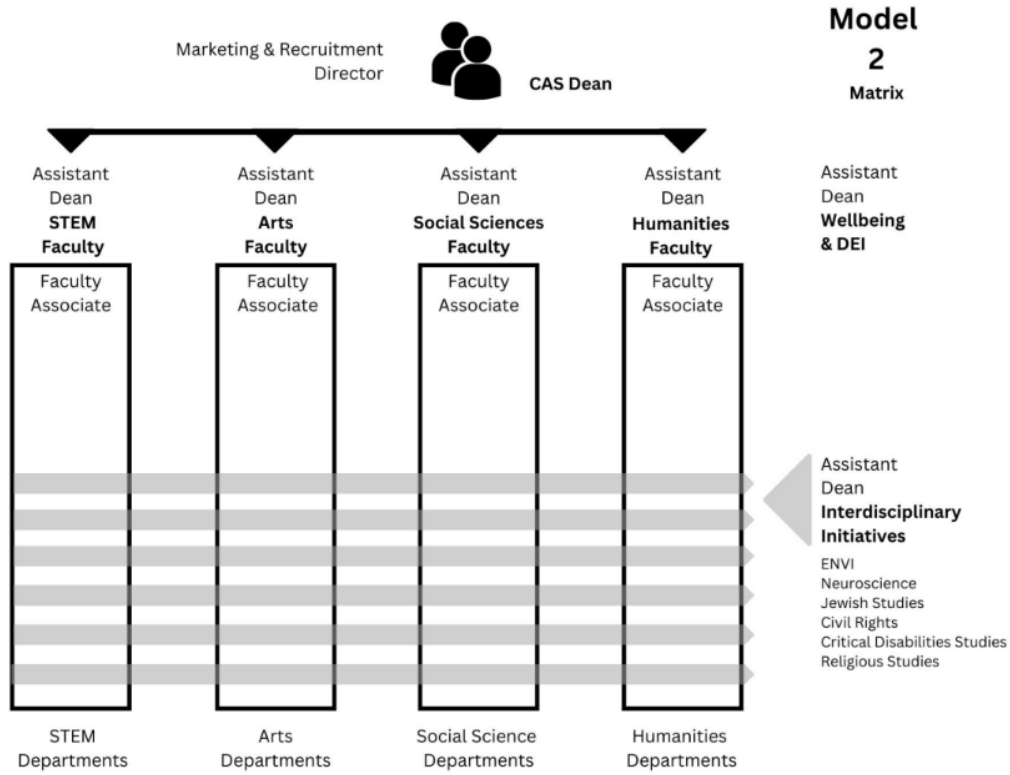
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VIII. **Appendices**

A. Visual representation of Model 1 based on the July 2022 report

SD = School Director
AD = Associate School Director
DC = Department Chair (faculty)
PD = Program Director (faculty)
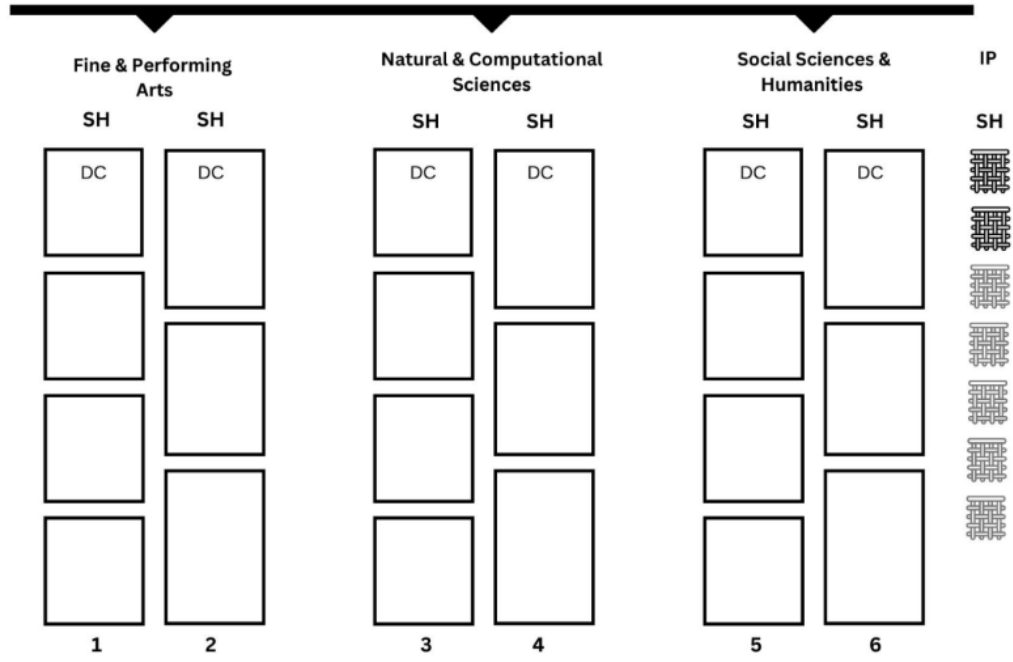
Model 1
8 Schools
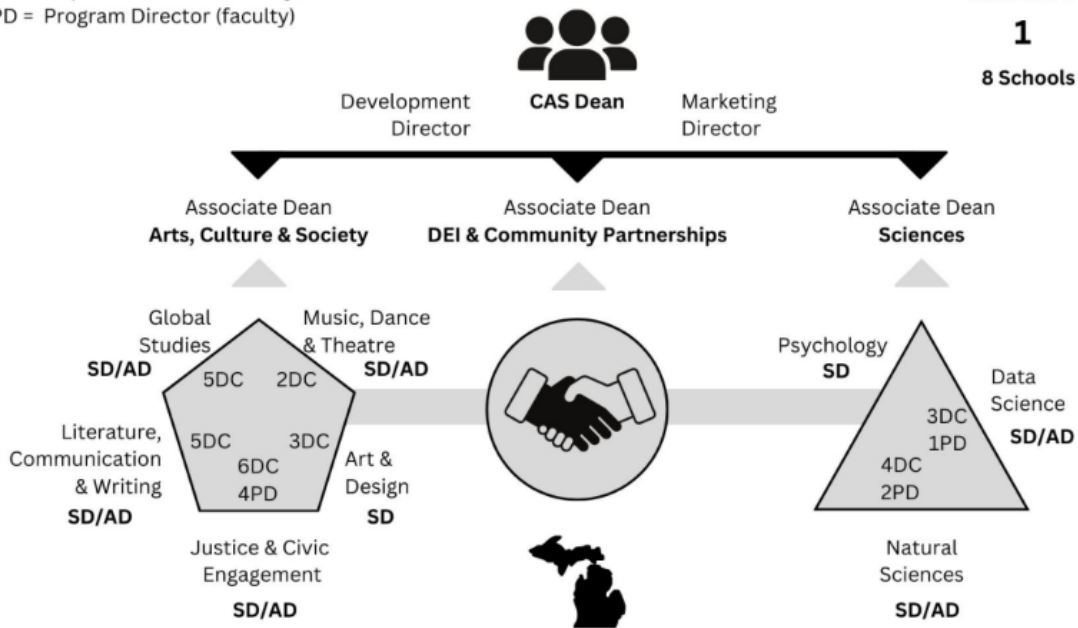
B. Visual representation of Model 2 based on the July 2022 report

C. Visual representation of Model 3.1 based on the July 2022 report

SH = Section Head
SD = School Director
DH = Department Head
DC = Department Chair (faculty)
IP = Interdisciplinary Programs

Model 3.1
section/school/department
6 + IP

Associate Dean Programming — **CAS Dean** — Associate Dean Budget & Facilities

Fine & Performing Arts

SH | SH

DC | DC

Natural & Computational Sciences

SH | SH

DC | DC

Social Sciences & Humanities

SH | SH

DC | DC
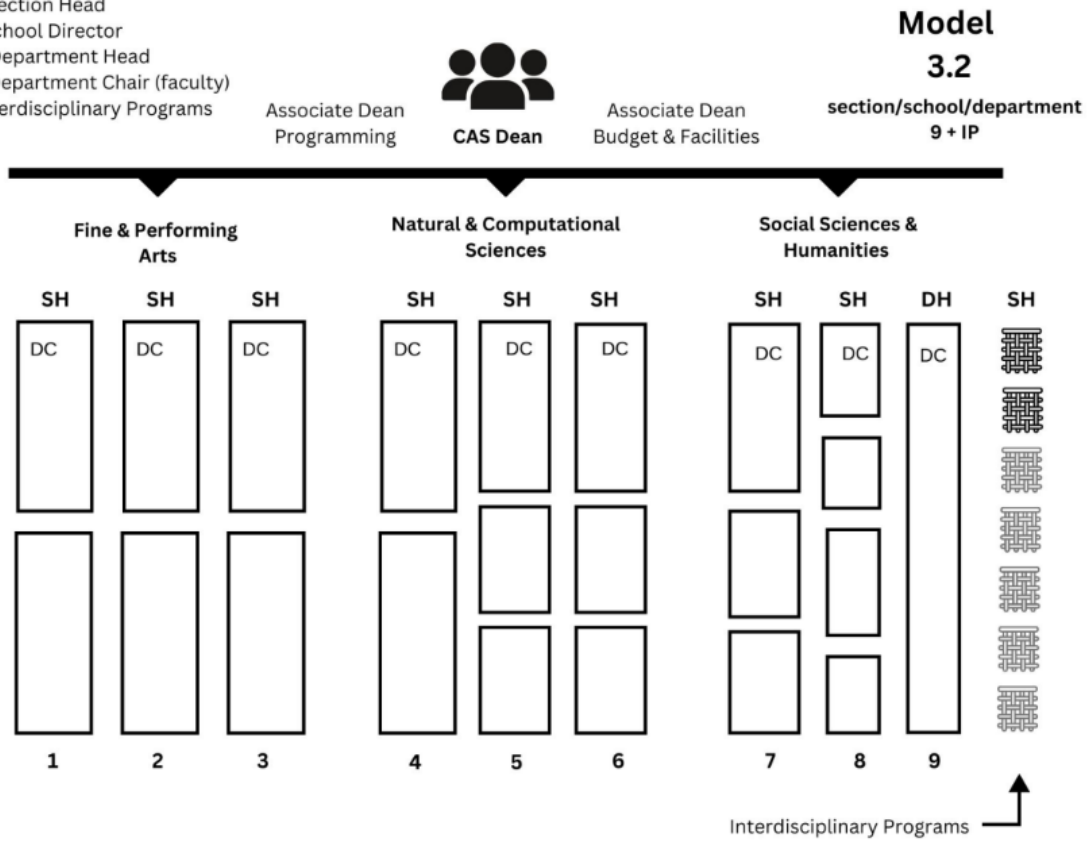
IP

SH

1   2   3   4   5   6

D.Visual representation of Model 3.2 based on the July 2022 report

SH = Section Head
SD = School Director
DH = Department Head
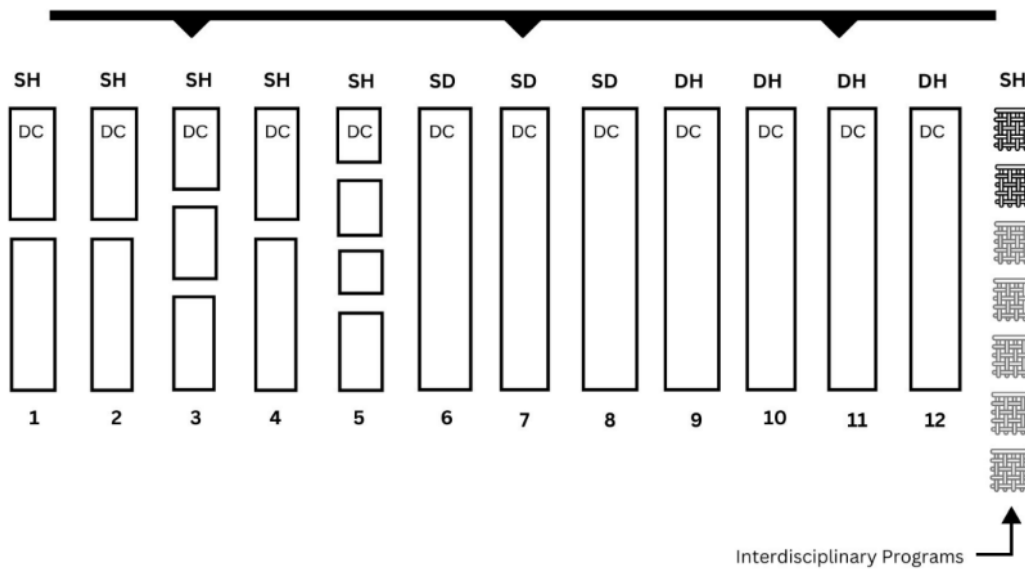DC = Department Chair (faculty)
IP = Interdisciplinary Programs

Associate Dean Programming

CAS Dean

Associate Dean Budget & Facilities

Model 3.2
section/school/department
9 + IP

Fine & Performing Arts

Natural & Computational Sciences

Social Sciences & Humanities

Interdisciplinary Programs

E. Visual representation of Model 3.3 based on the July 2022 report

F. Slides for Town Hall Presentation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_fO_DFku-9gNN3tDM3vL5S4el4Jk-bm5/view

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G.   Quick Reference Guide for Town Hall Presentation

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ORqyoV35N36K5dLMRxpHqel44uS0_o-b/view

H.Group Process Observations by Dr. Devika Dibya Choudhuri

Overview

Over the period of Winter 2023, the second phase of the CAS Reorganization process was carried out by a team of CAS Faculty Consultants, assisted by myself to serve as a process observer. The project started with initial meetings with the CAS Dean who gave the charge, and many discussions that involved philosophical and historical perspectives with the CAS Faculty Consultants.

Over the Winter 2023 semester, all four consultants met multiple times and carried out an intensive plan to educate, inform, and receive feedback from the CAS community on the Winter 2022 Reorganization Task Force proposed models. A major initial component of the process was an attempt to represent the different models from the recommendations visually to make them more easily understandable. This effort was a significant step in having participants engage with the models and critique and offer feedback. The downside was that participants seemed to interact with the visual representations as if they represented the only information about the model, and often ignored the multiple pages in the report that delineated the intricacies of each. The plan was carried out starting with a virtual Town Hall to represent the report from the first phase from W'22 and explain the second phase process in W'23 to the CAS community. The second phase consisted of a series of focus groups of various constituencies and stakeholders including faculty, staff, and students. These focus groups were carried out in March and April by the Faculty Consultants, where each session was facilitated and recorded by a pair of the consultants. A Google Form was also designed to elicit written feedback from departments and schools. Using the university Google Drive, focus session notes as well as all meeting notes were uploaded to form an archive of the process. Based on an analysis of the archive data and experience, a final report has been composed.

Events

1. **Virtual Town Hall, Tuesday, February 21ˢᵗ 2023. 6 to 7:30 pm**
   Attended by the Provost, the Dean, various administrators from within and without the College, faculty and some staff, the town hall appeared to meet its initial goals. There was a clear rationale provided about the reorganization efforts in the CAS, the generation of the report and recommendations of the CAS Reorganization Task Force during the first phase, and the plan for the second phase.

Process Comments: There were over 100 participants who attended at some point or the other. To the external facilitator for the town hall, it appeared that the participants, on the one hand, had come together as a CAS community to participate, while simultaneously presenting themselves as outsiders to the Reorganization process. There seemed to be a bewildering lack of knowledge or context from members who presumably had participated in the listening sessions during the previous year. The extensive report that had been generated from those listening sessions seemed to be not understood by many, but more disturbingly, not read by many. There was a general sense that the report recommendations and the reorganization were being imposed on the community as opposed to generated through the conversations and discussions from the community.

While administrators and consultants were anxious and desirous of union representation and perspectives, union leaders themselves seemed reluctant to ally or in any way engage with the reorganization process at this stage.

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2. **Advising**

Process Comments:

Advising as a keystone of the collegiate experience was not represented in the models derived from the earlier report, and seemed to be a source of surprise during the focus groups with faculty. However, it was the meetings with the advisors that really demonstrated the disconnect that exists between students and CAS departments when the intermediary of advising is not accounted for. Department advising comments seemed suspicious and distrustful of how advising was done externally, perceiving student unwillingness or lack of enrollment in courses as somehow due to being given negative information or steered away. An example of this is that department faculty might hear from students that they cannot connect with their professional advisor and suspect neglect rather than the truth of overwhelming caseloads. The capacity of professional advisors to manage the complicated student schedules and requirements towards graduation is disregarded, and their burdens increased since advisors are informed about course offerings at the same time as students are, rather than being given time to prepare.

Recommendations:

- Departments must connect with advisors proactively, and there should be scheduled times that advisor liaisons work with the College teams. The College leadership should have ongoing input from an advising coordinator to plan course roll outs responsively and understand the ongoing changing needs of their students.
- Faculty who advise undergraduates should be given access to and trained in Starfish and keep notes to enable advisors to help students meet their major requirements.
- When scheduling course rollouts, advisors in the Parker Center, SASS, and other academic support services should be informed prior to students. This could be done through the Registrar's office since all schedules are managed there.
- If adequately resourced, the graduation and retention rate for students, many of whom are BIPOC, could be as high as that of student athletes. One of the key aspects of that support is that it is coordinated and wraparound. Ad hoc programs are less effective.

3. **Students**

No students attended the focus groups, so we decided to meet with students through going to the Student Center and engaging with CAS students there. The Dean's office provided a number of giveaways to appreciate the students for their time and energy. In all, we spoke with about 13 students in various groups and with diverse identities.

In talking with students, it seemed that they simply did not identify as members of the College of Arts & Sciences or even as members of a department. They described themselves as an "EMU Student" or as a student in a major. This was in contrast to students who eliminated themselves when they responded that they were "in the COB" or "in Education." In some ways, the CAS was so large and diverse, it had no singular identity for them. It emerged as their college by a process of elimination.

Student grievances were twofold. Either they focused on institutional processes, obstacles, or policies that they perceived as incomprehensible, onerous, or profit-based, or were individually-focused where

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they felt that an instructor or office had been less than timely, fair or reasonable. A generational gap of technology and the aftermath of the pandemic was a part of the equation. Students commented on how little they read email and ignored most institutional emails. Texting and Instagram were far more popular modes, and neither was something their faculty participated in. But even email was a point of contention with students indignant that faculty might not respond for weeks. While online classes were seen as very convenient and preferred by some students, most said they probably learned better in person. Part of the issue was that they felt some instructors did not teach online effectively and students did not learn *how to learn* in digital environments. Those who had been in high school during the pandemic-based retreat online, had often found themselves academically unsuccessful and felt that the EMU online college classes were better. They commented that being in person made them feel like a student and connected. A couple commented that the campus did not seem alive now post-COVID.

Other concerns that were more institutional were around parking which was especially onerous for commuters who found it both draconian and expensive. A concern raised by Muslim students was that they didn't know what was available to them to eat during Ramadan and were unaware that any provision had been made to keep Dining Commons options open past sunset. A reason to gather at the Student Center was that they had foot-washing facilities there, while there were often no places for prayer in the classroom buildings. They also felt that many faculty did not know how to address their needs during this period. An ROTC student was exhausted by having had to go through a three day fitness training during Ramadan when she rose at 4:30 am to break her fast. Some students reported having had to miss tests and the instructor not allowing a make-up, but others spoke about instructors who allowed students to leave class early to break fasting, or help students catch up.

Similarly, diverse stories were told about the multiple demands between school, work, family, and education and how some faculty seemed to "get it" while others cared more about the syllabus than the learning. Personal hardship was a frequent element, and the students often seemed to be elated when they felt seen and their struggles recognized by their instructors. It was empowering and it often motivated them to work harder. Few students found office hours useful, since they were either limited, inconvenient for commuters, or clashed with other courses.

Advising for the students with whom we spoke, none of whom were athletes, was considered helpful but rare to access and they often turned to students senior to themselves in their major or program for help. When entering the university, they knew little about the content of majors and were unclear on the direction of their studies. The transition from high school to college was very rocky, and often students related flailing and crashing before finding assistance. The Office of International Students and Scholars, some faculty advisors as well as some academic advisors such as a Holman Success Coach were featured in success stories. One student commented that on a neighboring university website, students could see and review their graduation audit from the beginning of their academic journey.

The number of students with regret was frustrating. For those who had to work to find their major and path, the regrets were often about aspects like trying to protect GPA over being challenged, blowing off Gen Ed courses that might have taught important life skills even if it seemed unrelated to their major, or of spending money on unnecessary credits they had not been appropriately advised about. Finally, many students were torn between striving for lucrative careers, those familiar and supported by family,

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accessing the resources needed to pay for that preparation, and the frequent regret that they could not pursue what they enjoyed because they could see no route to that career being monetarily rewarding as well.

For most of the students we spoke with, the job and career post-graduation was critical. An example was shared about how at another university, students could learn the job titles they qualified for by graduating with a specific major or minor. Here, students felt they often had to discover how to connect the major and the future job with little help.

Students valued practitioners; instructors who had experiences outside academia in their profession and infused those experiences into the classroom; these were perceived as more helpful in navigating systems in the real world. Lecturers and adjunct instructors were often more able to do this than department faculty who were perceived as more theoretical and removed from the real world, providing dry lecturing that did not assist them in career preparation.

Recommendations:
- Consistent structured wraparound advising, sourced in the College that students can access. Resources and tutoring, career, and academic support that is closely connected to their major and future paths.
- Easily understandable pathways that are integrated into the College that result in comprehensible programs of study laid out across time, but also revisable.
- Acknowledgement and integration of student diversity and student lives in the classroom. Instructors should be aware of the make-up and needs of the student population at Eastern, and be educated on available student supportive services. In addition, student support offered during the pandemic should continue to be offered since hardships are continuing to occur and the cost of living rising.
- Acknowledgement that few Eastern students can afford to pursue an education without some confirmation that they can earn a living in that field, or that pursuing this major will not prohibit them from being successful. Have faculty bring more real world experience, example and information into the classroom, as well as inviting in guest speakers from various fields who can be role models and mentors.
- Consider developing a Graduate Student Organization at Eastern to be able to create belonging among graduate students who are even more isolated than undergraduates. Currently, they have little representation even though they are more closely associated with departments.

4. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice**

Focus Group Process Comments:
The attendees at the sessions were a mix of concerned faculty and department heads, of whom few were people from marginalized communities. While many more had responded positively to attending, it did not seem of sufficient urgency to attend. This could be because of a perception that they would be unheard, but it seemed more likely that the reorganization process offers little that is hopeful to faculty and staff from marginalized groups. In any case, the focus group seemed to be reiterating well-worn perspectives that resulted in nonverbal gestures of exhaustion. Poor allocation of resources, the lack of coherent attention to DEIJ issues in the models presented were cited as evidence of lack of investment

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by the administration. In addition, participants felt simultaneously distressed by college structure and governance while not believing that any change at the college level would be effective given the control by the university and the other colleges with which the CAS must interact. Issues of resource allocation and equity at the scale required were seen as a University strategic commitment.

Overall Process Comments:

The perception I had was that there seemed to be a very large sense of indignation and long-standing grievance among the CAS community. This included department heads/school directors, tenure-track faculty, lecturers, and staff.

The acrimony of the focus groups often appeared to result from a division of resources and resulting power to meet the needs of the departments that was a source of disagreement. There was also an implication that those members who might be satisfied with the division were not present, so that the overwhelming sense at the focus groups was that nobody was happy.

While this may seem contradictory to the above, there was also a visceral sense of community as in "we are all in this together" on an overpacked lifeboat; and the perception that the boat was either not being steered or being steered in the wrong direction. The sense of urgency about necessary change was palpable among junior faculty who felt under-resourced and overworked as well as staff who seemed to be having to meet crushing needs across departments with a third of the resources that were required. On the other hand, it was interesting that there was simultaneously a pervasive distrust that any change efforts would be in the right direction. When people talked together, there was general agreement and appreciation of the difficulties across departments. Yet, no one trusted that administrative efforts would be equitable or fair.

The overall process observation is the sense that we were playing out a *Groundhog Day* reorganization effort, in other words, the same negative events were repeated at every opportunity. Each focus group started with introducing the various models, and even when participants had attended other focus groups, they still seemed to ask the same questions and make the same comments. There was always the moment when the facilitator had to reiterate that the models were visual representations of responses to the feedback received from the community, rather than simply dreamt up. Each model had its proponents and critics, and they seemed unchanged. There was also a sizable group for whom no model was adequate. For staff and lecturers this was accurate because no models looked at the role and functions and staff or lecturer needs in the reorganization. The other group that was inadequately represented and addressed were advisors even though advising was a key point for departments, advisors themselves, and students.

In response, the Faculty Consultants looked at ways to bring together the various pieces across models that were palatable, while addressing the aspects that were most critiqued. Hybrid Model 4 was the result.