

MEMO

To: Thomas Borchert, President of the Faculty Senate
From: Stephen Everse (Chair), Vicki Brennan, Christopher Burns, Adrian Ivakhiv, Anthony Julianelle, Catherine Paris, Cory Teuscher, Timothy Tourville, and Scott Van Keuren
Date: December 22, 2021
Re: Review of the School of the Arts Proposal by the College of Arts & Sciences

Executive Summary

As required by Senate *Procedures Related to the Establishment, Reorganization, and Elimination of Colleges and Schools*, we have reviewed a proposal submitted by Dean Falls for the creation of a School of the Arts (SoA) within the College of the Arts & Sciences. The School would move faculty, staff, and students from the Departments of Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance into programs within the SoA, with Film & Television Studies and Creative Writing associated as affiliate programs. All faculty positions, ranks, and tenure would be transferred to the School, as would operating budgets and gift funds. A startup fund of \$50,000 would also be made available from the CAS Dean and the Provost's Office. A Director and Associate Director of the School would be appointed from the faculty while Chairs would become Program Directors within the school. There would be no curricular changes to any of the majors or minors in Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance in the creation of the school. With Board of Trustee approval, faculty and staff would be transitioned to the SoA on July 1st, 2022.

Our review of the School of the Arts proposal included the following actions:

- Study of the proposal and supporting materials
- Review of public comments received (n=11)
- Meetings with Dean Falls & Associate Dean Di Dio and with the Chairs of Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance
- Solicitation of answers to follow up questions from Dean Falls & Associate Dean Di Dio

At the conclusion of the review process, the ad hoc Committee voted (8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain) to recommend that the SoA be implemented with the following condition:

Appropriate safeguards are in place to protect faculty, lecturers, and staff so that their positions, rank and tenure status are preserved prior to dissolving their departments. This

implies that a Director of the SoA must be appointed before the movement of faculty and staff begins.

Detailed Committee Report

UVM School of the Arts, Description and Rationale

Over the last three years, the CAS Deans Office and the Chairs of Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance have worked together to develop the SoA proposal we reviewed. As described, the SoA "... aims to better support the excellence of our arts faculty and curricula, expand interdisciplinary courses and research opportunities for our students, stay more current with trends in the arts that are crossing disciplinary barriers, elevate and better promote the value of the arts as part of a liberal arts education, and communicate more effectively the importance of the arts for the enrichment of and engagement with diverse communities at UVM and beyond."

A School is preferable to melding all of the arts into a single department because it breaks down disciplinary walls while maintaining and supporting disciplinary identities. As proposed, the School aims to create new opportunities for greater visibility, strength, and excellence for students and faculty beyond traditional boundaries.

Goals

The goals for the SoA (as articulated in the proposal):

- To bring together the arts units at UVM in a cohesive way, while also respecting and supporting our differences;
- To streamline efforts in raising awareness for arts related events on campus;
- To foster an artistic community that brings UVM arts faculty and students together in shared interests (Provost's Academic Success Goals 1.1, 2.1, 2.2);
- To align with UVM's land grant mission in serving and engaging the local community;
- To advance fundraising for arts units in the College of Arts and Sciences (Provost's Academic Success Goals 2.1).

School Structure

The SoA will create a new administrative structure in CAS. The Dean will appoint a Director and an Associate Director from among the faculty. The Director will be responsible for personnel, student issues, and staff supervision. In addition, the Director will have a commitment to fundraising and stewardship, planning and programming for School-wide events, outreach to community partners, acting as an advocate for the arts with the administration, and ensuring that faculty are well supported in their scholarship and teaching. The Associate Director will help to manage the operations of the School, including facilities and programming. Internal units within the SoA will be called programs and will be led by program directors (PD). PD will focus on the curriculum of their respective majors and minors, instruction, and other area-specific needs.

Our committee was concerned about the dissolution of departments; we were assured that all faculty positions in the transitioning departments will be reappointed to the SoA at the same rank and tenure status. Under the new administrative structure, the faculty will report to the Director of the SoA, who will be responsible for all personnel issues (yearly evaluations as well as Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure (RPT)).

Additionally we were assured all current staff appointments will be maintained and will report to the Director. Efforts, however, are ongoing in the College to implement the more efficient handling of various administrative processes and are expected to also be applied to the SoA over time.

Our committee questioned the move from a departmental structure to a School with programs and PDs. The proposers believe that a School with programs is preferable for several reasons. First, a school of departments with a Director adds an additional layer of bureaucracy and raises the question of who the arts chairs should report to – the CAS Dean or the SoA Director. Second, it was acknowledged that it has been challenging to identify faculty willing to serve as department chair in the arts because most faculty do not wish to oversee personnel actions. The proposed SoA structure moves personnel actions to the Director. Third, the proposed structure was suggested by the Arts Chairs themselves as being most feasible at UVM. And finally, when Dean Falls consulted with the Provost on this question, she expressed the opinion “... that a school with departments not only adds a layer of bureaucracy, but was not in keeping with other schools at UVM which are comprised of programs.”

Impact

The proposal asserts that the SoA may attract more students because of the greater visibility generated from increased marketing following the formation of the School, coordinated efforts with admissions, and stronger community partnerships. Expanded internships and professional development opportunities are imagined, as are professional development workshops and student/alumni panels to further prepare arts students for the job market and/or graduate school. There are no curricular changes planned, therefore no change to any existing major or minor in the School.

This summer the CAS Dean’s office and Provost’s office demonstrated their commitment to the arts by hiring three Harris fellows (one each in Dance, Art, and Studio Art), hiring of a new lecturer each in Theater and Art & Art History, and movement of two lecturers in Dance to tenure track.

Budget

There will be no change in financial resources – all operating budgets and gift funds will shift to the School but remain allocated to the areas to which they currently support. A one-time start-up fund of \$50,000 from the CAS Dean and the Provost's Office will be available to the Director. It is imagined that increased fundraising efforts will help form a pool from which future projects and programming can be supported.

The proposers believe that there will be a modest cost savings in the formation of the School as current course releases and stipends allocated for chairs will be reduced. The Director will be compensated in line with CAS extra-large departments, the Associate Director will be compensated in line with chairs of medium-sized departments, and the program directors for Theatre and Dance, Music, and Art and Art History will be compensated comparably to large programs in CAS that have majors (FTS, GRS & Neuroscience).

Information Learned from Comparisons to Other Institutions

In the summer of 2019, a group of CAS faculty surveyed existing schools of the arts at universities from across the US, and a subset of their leaders were interviewed. The survey revealed a good deal of variation in size, structure, financial resources, student numbers, and number of programs included; the structure of a School or College of Arts within a larger College and/or University was found to be common.

Evaluation Metrics to be Used with the UVM School of the Arts

As articulated in the proposal, UVM's Dean of CAS will use the following areas to evaluate success of the new SoA:

- Scholarly metrics: increase in productivity as defined by the units, increased applications for external and internal grants and awards;
- Student credit hour/major/minor increases;
- Increase in philanthropic support: donor support for arts initiatives, research funding, scholarships, facility upgrades, etc;
- Increase in public engagement: more collaboration with greater Burlington and Vermont arts organizations, more community-engaged events and learning opportunities.

Dean Falls indicated that if over time the SoA is unsuccessful, he would be willing to dissolve the SoA and return a departmental structure, as was done in the UVM College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences in 2016.

Summary of Committee Actions

This Ad-Hoc Review Committee for the School of the Arts proposal was charged on October 31st by Senate President Thomas Borchert. The committee met on November 15th to discuss the submitted proposal and comments collected thus far. Following that meeting, we requested audiences with Dean Falls and Associate Dean Di Dio and with the Chairs of Art & Art History, Music, and Theater & Dance.; a list of questions for each group was distributed

prior to the meetings. The entire committee and President Borchert met with the Deans on December 6th. Dean Falls addressed questions that we were not able to cover in the meeting time allotted in a follow-up memo. Eight of the committee members and President Borchert met with all three Chairs on December 9th. The committee met again on December 14th to determine next steps. At this meeting we recognized that we still had questions remaining. These were submitted to Dean Falls and Associate Dean Di Dio on December 14th; their responses were received on December 16th.

Final Recommendations

We recommend that the Faculty Senate approve the School of the Arts in the College of Arts & Sciences with the following condition:

- Appropriate safeguards are in place to protect faculty, lecturers, and staff so that their positions, rank and tenure status are preserved prior to the dissolution of their departments. This implies that a Director of the SoA must be appointed before the movement of faculty and staff begins.