MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Rich Ogle, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
FR: Dr. James Winebrake, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
RE: Organizational Structure of the College of Arts and Sciences  
DT: January 20, 2021

Purpose
This memo requests input from you and your faculty and staff on the pros and cons of different organizational structures for the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

Background
CAS is an incredibly important component of our university. The college houses in excess of 100 programs (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral), serves over 5700 student majors, and delivers in excess of 227,000 student credit hours annually (approximately 65% of the total University credit hours). In addition, the college includes 426 faculty and 107 staff and administrators working across dozens of units; and you, as dean, are faced with a college structure that involves 31 direct reports.

The large size of CAS is not necessarily a bad thing; however, in conversations throughout my first semester at UNCW, the size of CAS has been referenced. Additionally, the EAB has noted in a recent report to me that “[t]he size and scale of the College of Arts & Sciences compared to others can contribute to organizational strain.” Therefore, understanding the current structure and evaluating possible alternative structures for CAS is something I wish to explore in more detail.

Given the dynamic changes at the university over the past few years – from our entry into a new Carnegie classification to our expanding interest in technology-based programs to our emphasis on ensuring an equitable and inclusive environment – I think this is a good time to review the CAS structure. Also, the timing is appropriate given our aim to create a new strategic plan in AY21-22, as well as hiring a permanent dean of CAS this spring.

Charge
With this communication, I ask that you coordinate an internal evaluation of your current structure – including its pros and cons – as well as think about future structures that will best serve your faculty, students, staff, and the institute.

I am not interested in one possible future; additionally, I am not asking for an operation plan to transition to one model or another. Instead, I would like to see your team evaluate several possibilities. Your team may also evaluate other possibilities as well. There are at least four possibilities currently on my mind:

1. Possibility #1: “As-Is” Structure. Do not change the current structure.
2. Possibility #2: School or Divisional Model. Leave CAS together as an organizational unit but under a divisional structure.

3. Possibility #3: New College for Technical Programs. Stand up a new college of computing and engineering, and keep liberal arts and science disciplines in CAS under a departmental, school, or divisional structure.

4. Possibility #4: Multiple College Model. Stand up new colleges by organizing departments in collective structures that make sense. For this possibility, I would ask that you propose some different models with pros and cons for possible combinations.

In your evaluation of pros/cons, you may also wish to consider additional actions that would support or enhance any structural change. For example, given our goal to support interdisciplinary teaching and research, if the college is divided into two or more colleges, we may want to firmly establish university level interdisciplinary teaching and research centers to ensure we continue to engage faculty working on interdisciplinary projects across the institute.

Guiding Principles

As you engage in this work, please consider your own guiding principles, as well as those of the institution. These guiding principles may also help you think about criteria that you would use to evaluate the pros and cons of the alternatives above. I believe our organizational structures must allow colleges and non-college units to excel in the “4Es”:

1. **Effectiveness.** Deliver educational programming exceedingly well; support our faculty and staff in their professional activities; drive us towards our institutional goals; be agile and nimble enough to create new programs or modify existing ones consistent with changing external drivers.

2. **Equity.** Foster a diverse and inclusive environment; create a culture of belonging; develop policies and practices to support equity and antiracism.

3. **Engagement.** Encourage participation by faculty and staff in governance; enhance job satisfaction; empower people to innovate, explore, and be entrepreneurial.

4. **Efficiency.** Deliver on the college mission efficiently and cost effectively; use scarce resources wisely, including personnel, money, time, and space.

Timing and Deliverables

I would be interested in hearing back from you no later than mid-March. I do not expect a large document; I believe a 3-5 page memo that outlines your team’s pros/cons of different structures would be sufficient. But we can discuss this in more detail.

Conclusion

I understand that this is not an easy lift. Thinking about what a new organization may look like takes substantial time and creative energy. However, this is incredibly important work, and whatever we decide will have a significant impact on the future of this university. I thank you and your colleagues in advance for their efforts on this worthwhile engagement.