

August 19, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.  
President

**FROM:** Timothy P. Scott, Interim Provost and Chief Academic Officer  
Working Group Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Scott'.

**SUBJECT:** Implementation Memo – Working Group #9 – College of Arts & Sciences

**Recommendation to be Implemented:** Combine the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Science, and the College of Geosciences to create new College of Arts & Sciences. “We will bring together the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Geosciences and Science to form the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS). This merging of arts and sciences will create a critical mass by which all programs will benefit. To succeed, we must develop a fully integrated administrative operation from the beginning. In the next few weeks, we will identify an implementation working group led by the Provost, identify an acting/interim dean through the appropriate university processes, and begin to build the college structure.”

**Strategic Considerations:** The College of Arts & Sciences Working Group (CASWG) addressed several strategic considerations as part of its deliberations:

- 1) Identifying the organization and role of Executive Leadership including options for the administrative structure of the college office, reporting lines for department heads, and ensuring parity between the dean of CAS and the vice chancellor and deans in Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering, and the Health Science Center;
- 2) Exploring implementation of Divisions/Branches broadly defined by subject matter and their potential benefits and drawbacks if implemented in the consolidated college;
- 3) Planning for needs and potential issues related to Promotion and Tenure, particularly ensuring fair and equitable consideration of promotion cases across the broad areas of scholarship within the college;
- 4) Establishing a common structure and unified policies and practices for Academic Advising and ensuring that the administrative changes have little to no impact on the student experience;
- 5) Planning for the consolidation of Student Councils and establishing student leadership for the new organization; and
- 6) Transitioning from the CASWG to Implementation

**Logistical Issues Addressed:** The CASWG’s recommendations regarding each of the six Strategic Considerations identified above are briefly discussed below. Since Jose Bermudez was named interim dean of CAS starting May 2022, his efforts to establish a leadership team and set

the foundation for college operations overlapped somewhat with the committee's deliberations and are also reflected in the narrative.

- 1) **Executive Leadership:** The CASWG recommends senior level leadership similar to current colleges at TAMU: executive associate dean; faculty affairs; diversity, equity, and inclusion; undergraduate education; graduate education; research; and a chief administrative officer. Each of the above positions have been posted. Many of these leadership positions within the college have been appointed. There was unanimous consensus that all department heads should report directly to the dean while the executive associate dean should oversee some of the associate/assistant Deans.

There was considerable discussion about maintaining parity in authority and scope between the CAS dean and the vice chancellor and deans of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering, and the Health Science Center. While separate line-item legislative responsibilities associated with vice chancellor roles will not exist for arts and sciences, the CASWG strongly recommends that the CAS dean have regular meetings with the President, as is the practice with the peer vice chancellor and deans. System level meetings may also be occasionally needed in support of CAS strategic initiatives.

- 2) **Branches/Divisions:** The CASWG held robust discussions about the formation of disciplinary branches or divisions. Such disciplinary branches are used by many peer aspirants including California-Davis, Michigan, Wisconsin, etc. Divisions generally included: computational sciences, earth/physic sciences, humanities, life sciences, social sciences, etc. CASWG interviews with Associate Deans from these institutions revealed that divisions facilitated appropriate recruitment and startup packages, candidate evaluation for promotion and tenure, interdisciplinary efforts. Peer aspirants indicated that the investment in staffing such divisions was worthwhile and necessary. Some CASWG members, however, expressed concern that establishment of branches or divisions may create barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration. The group took an early vote on the presence of branches or divisions as a recommendation, which was split. During this vote, however, the presented options did not fully capture the input of early conversations. Later, more thorough CASWG discussions related to the branches/divisions and the consultation with peers from other institutions modified the available options. No formal vote was taken in follow-up, but members were generally more vocal in favor of the presence of branches/divisions.

Based on the CASWG's and other's input, Interim Dean Bermudez has sought to establish Assistant or Associate Deans of Faculty Affairs that would complement the Executive Associate Dean to broadly represent the humanities, mathematics and sciences, and social sciences.

- 3) **Promotion and Tenure:** The CASWG considered how promotion and tenure would be handled for a college that would have more than twenty departments, spanning very different disciplines. The College of Engineering, which does not have disciplinary divisions, shared how their review process is accomplished over a two-day period. Models at peer aspirants varied widely, though most involved disciplinary branches or divisions.

The CASWG believes it is essential that the college's promotion and tenure committee be representative of all departments. The working group was able to determine from all available and reviewed evidence is that there is typically one college committee with representation from the different disciplines. The process to identify faculty to serve was variable.

- 4) **Academic Advising:** As the Academic Advising Administrative lead for Liberal Arts, CASWG member Allison Rivera is very familiar with the college-centric advising model. She has been meeting regularly with her peers from Geosciences, Science, Biomedical Sciences, and Transition Academic Programs to coordinate academic advising functions within the CAS, including interdisciplinary programs. The college-centric advising model in place in Liberal Arts will be implemented more broadly across the units composing the CAS. Specific advising topics discussed include change of curriculum, closet majors, probation, removals and warnings, learning communities for targeted student populations, and enrollment of all students in Hullabaloo U certified courses. The advising sub-group has also developed plans for New Student Conferences scheduled this summer.

The Academic Building has been updated to house CAS college-level advisors and also those from Biomedical Sciences and Transition Academic Programs. These moves were completed in early August. There are plans in-place to physically and administratively house the Office of Professional School Advising in the near future if that decision is determined to be appropriate by university leadership. University Studies advisors continue to be physically located within their home colleges for the time-being.

- 5) **Student Councils:** Existing Students Councils for Geosciences, Liberal Arts, and Science were contacted to form one counsel for the new college. By the end of the spring semester, officers had been identified and were working with CAS academic advising administrators on branding and content for New Student Conferences. Officers include persons within the interdisciplinary programs of the College of Arts & Sciences. Work will continue throughout the summer. An event is being planned for Howdy Week or early in the fall semester to welcome all students in CAS and will be hosted on the Academic Plaza.
- 6) **Ongoing Implementation:** All members recognized that the real work of building the CAS has only just begun. Many expressed interests in serving on implementation committees, should they be needed after decisions on the initial recommendations are made. Interim Dean Bermudez can contact Ann Kenimer or Tim Scott for a list of representatives willing to continue service on implementation committees.
- 7) **Departments, Degrees, and Timing:** No degrees will be phased out or started as the Colleges of Geoscience, Liberal Arts, and Science are transitioned into the College of Arts & Sciences. Beginning September 1, 2022, all departments and degrees currently housed in the Colleges of Geosciences, Liberal Arts, and Science will be moved into the College of Arts & Sciences with the following exceptions: 1) Political Science is moving from the College of Liberal Arts to the Bush School of Government and Public Service along with the International Politics and Diplomacy track of the International Studies Bachelor of Arts degree; 2) Performance Studies is moving from the College of Liberal Arts to the new


School of Visualization, Performance, & Fine Arts; 3) a new department, Global Languages and Culture, will bring together Hispanic Studies and faculty from International Studies.

The timing of implementation is critical. As a result, arrangements have been made with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to phase out the Colleges of Geosciences, Liberal Arts, and Science on August 31. All departments and their associated academic programs not specifically referenced in the immediately preceding paragraph will be transitioned into the new College of Arts & Sciences officially as of September 1, 2022. Between the time of this report and September 1, 2022, the THECB has given Texas A&M permission to use these new names.

**Major Challenges Encountered and Resolutions:** No significant challenges were encountered during CASWG discussions.

**Key Logistical Issues to be Completed and Timeline:** As noted previously, considerable effort will be required to fully implement the structure and processes necessary to operate a large and complex college. While the administrative formation of the college will be complete by September 1, 2022, refinement of initial processes and development of college-level programs may extend into the next year.

Approved:



---

M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.  
President

September 10, 2022

---

Date

\* Approved with the following comments and exceptions:

- The head of the new College of Arts and Sciences is the Dean. The role of a Dean is different than the broad range of responsibilities of a Vice Chancellor and there is not parity between the two positions.
- The existence of divisions in the College of Arts and Sciences will limit the collaboration College-wide and such structure is not supported.
- Please work with the Vice President for Faculty Affairs in the development of a T&P committee structure.
- The entire International Studies program was to be moved to the Bush School of Government and Public Service, not only one track of the degree.

**NOTE:** The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has been notified that effective 9/15/22, the B.A. in International Studies degree will move to the Bush School of Government and Public Service.