

Steering Committee E-Mail
April 16, 2019

Colleagues,

On behalf of the newly formed Steering Committee, I am excited to provide the first of many updates related to our activities over the last few weeks. As a brief reminder, the Steering Committee is comprised of faculty and staff representatives from the College of Education, Health, and Aviation (EHA) and the College of Human Sciences (HS). This committee serves in an advisory capacity to members of the administration and has been tasked with *creating and guiding the process through which the creation of a new college on the OSU campus will occur.*

Members of the Steering Committee, along with associate deans and administrative staff from EHA and HS, met on March 27. Dean/Interim Dean Wilson provided the committee the task of creating an exhaustive list of actions that will need to occur in order for the new college to be created. Importantly, the committee was reminded that they are not responsible for completing the actions, but rather providing a framework for prioritizing the activities associated with the formation of the new college. After receiving our charge and discussing how best to proceed, two things became very clear: (1) we needed to form subcommittees for greater efficiency; and (2) we needed some insight into the rationale for the creation of the new college. The following subcommittees were formed and started their discussions:

1. Instruction/Teaching
2. Research/Scholarly Activities
3. Extension/Outreach
4. Administrative/Advising.

On April 2, Provost Sandefur and Senior Vice-President Joe Weaver were invited to join the Steering Committee to provide background and context for the creation of the new college. Their insights provided greater clarity related to the opportunities and benefits resulting from the creation of a new college. *By capitalizing on existing strengths shared by both EHA and HS (e.g., health-related programs¹ and education programs), we will strengthen the curriculum, increase the impact of our programs for students and stakeholders, and enhance the visibility of efforts in EHA and HS related to instruction, research, and extension across the state and region.* Further, by consolidating two of the smaller colleges on the campus into a new college, *faculty, students, and staff will benefit from increased financial stability and greater flexibility to respond to new opportunities and emerging areas of growth.* Although there will be some potential

financial savings related to changes in organizational structure and personnel, Vice-President Weaver reiterated that, if needed, *every effort will be made to accommodate existing staff through re-assignment and/or through securing another position on campus*. The OSU administration is committed to taking care of our employees through this process. Additionally, it is anticipated that any financial savings will be re-invested in the new college.

As many of you have also wondered, the Steering Committee requested information related to the timeline for the creation of the new college. Both Provost Sandefur and Vice-President Weaver indicated that *there is no specific date for the completion of the process for the creation of the new college*. Time is our ally and we were asked not to rush the process, but instead to continue to make steady progress towards the end goal of creating a new college. It is also very clear that there is no secret plan or hidden agenda related to the creation of the new college. The intent is to put OSU and academic programs currently in EHA and HS in a position of strength going forward. *The administration is also committed to this being a faculty-driven process as it relates to the realignment and reorganization of academic programs in the new college*.

The Steering Committee reconvened on April 9 to discuss effective communication strategies and to examine approaches for obtaining faculty, staff, and student feedback on issues related to the creation of the new college. The committee identified staff input as a particular area of concern since staff may not have participated in the listening sessions with academic units that were facilitated by associate deans in EHA and HS. As a result of this meeting, a survey was created and will be administered to faculty and staff in both colleges over the coming weeks. This survey will be the Steering Committee's first step to gather faculty and staff feedback/input related to the creation of the new college. We anticipate there will be many additional requests for faculty and staff input over the next several months.

Over the next four weeks (April 16 – May 7), subcommittees will present their action items from which the entire committee will develop a list of priorities. *Our goal is to share our recommendations and a prioritized list of tasks with members of the administration and all of you by the end of the Spring 2019 semester*. The Steering Committee's activities will not come to an end with the production of this report and we expect to move forward with gathering additional input from faculty, staff, and students on how best to accomplish the goal of creating a new college.

In closing, we wanted to remind you that the Steering Committee is one conduit through which you can share suggestions for putting the new college in the best position to grow and flourish in all aspects of the Land-Grant Mission. We are your colleagues who are committed to the success of this complex process to create a new college while preserving the key aspects of shared leadership. We are also committed to transparency and sharing information on a regular basis and ensuring that reports are shared openly with anyone that is interested. Although we serve in an advisory capacity, *we have been provided the autonomy to conduct our work without worrying about external pressures that may negatively influence the integrity of the process.* As soon as we have the website created, meeting minutes, reports, and other information salient to the work of the committee will be made publicly accessible. We hope to be able to share the URL for this Steering Committee site within the next week. Thank you for your time and we look forward to providing additional updates over the next few weeks.

Sincerely,

Stephen Clarke

¹ For additional information, please see the Provost's Health Committee Report available on the Steering Committee web page.