Exploring Shared Services in PSU's Largest Multidisciplinary College

A Reimagine CLAS Staff Narrative

Contributors and Authors:

Sarah Bartlett, Julie Bilski, Rob Fullmer, Becky Hoven, Aislyn Matias, Vicky Mazzone, Sydney Meyer, Joann Ng, Brendan O'Guinn, and Josh Powell

Special thanks to Project Facilitator and CLAS Associate Dean Matthew Carlson

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This "reimagine" report, authored by professional academic staff in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), is the culmination of years of conversation, formal and informal data collection, and peer-to-peer organizing that have collectively informed a cohesive narrative that details the structural conditions affecting CLAS staff. This report provides a set of peer-reviewed recommendations to guide us past our current staffing dilemmas into a new mode of working that is dynamic, sustainable, growth-oriented, and resilient. In short, this report characterizes the aspects of operational excellence that will enable us to act in unison as together we move forward toward a future brimming with possibility.

The day-to-day operations and essential functions of the college rest on the shoulders of frontline academic staff, who represent millions of billed hours of service and several hundred years of applied expertise and experience. Yet until now, the case for investing in staff governance has never formally been made, nor the necessity for providing strategic leadership and professional support truly understood by academic administrators. Over time, this neglect has caused the structural conditions for staff to deteriorate, has seriously amplified business risks, and is actively diminishing the college's competitive edge. While staff remain committed to upholding the best practices and highest standards for its stakeholders, the structure in which we work is overwhelmingly abstruse and in serious need of overhaul. We cannot afford to lose additional staff, nor do staff have the capacity to continue to support the work of additional full-time positions beyond the scope of their role due to failed searches, chronically unfilled or underfilled positions, or anemic central service units. In fact, this report makes the case that additional support is necessary and even crucial in order to re-strengthen the college. Our research substantiates that the current attrition of academic staff, which will undoubtedly cause the college to weaken over time, needs to be urgently addressed since it is making us vulnerable to the kinds of compression and equity dynamics that are inherently corrosive to overall college functioning.

The reimagine committee, comprised of staff coordinators [Office Specialist 2], Department Managers [Unrepresented/Unclassified], and one IT Specialist [IT Consultant III], have met to discuss these and other embedded problems in depth over the course of this academic year (2021-22). The apogee of the committee's work includes several primary recommendations to the college, some of which are as follows: (a) establish a CLAS standing staff committee, (b) systemically centralize core and redundant duties, (c) develop administrative officer teams housed within the college, (d) collect functional data through a regular staff survey process, (e) develop critical actions that can be readily taken by the CLAS Dean's Office, and (f) audit staff duties and position descriptions. These recommendations represent the culmination of our extensive deliberations and targeted research. Each recommendation is connected to another, as the complexity of our work requires an integrated constellation of solutions.

It is critical to address these structural shortfalls in the immediate present, while staff still retain the ability and bandwidth to undertake this important work. We invite you to read through the report, absorb the experiences that staff have endured, gain an appreciation for our deep dedication to the college, and depart with an understanding of what next steps are necessary to allow us to continue to grow as a community dedicated to our students, fellow colleagues, and the city we serve.

1. Introduction: Identifying the Problem

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) administrative staff can no longer serve as proxies for the status quo of services at this university. Administrative staff positions have become unmanageable in two significant ways: the number, breadth, and scope of essential duties and core responsibilities as expected and assigned by position; and the fundamental misalignment of position type and pay with these essential duties and core responsibilities. The committee concedes that the design of the current staffing model is no doubt historical and inherited, rather than strategic and deliberate, but notes that at times its members have experienced entrenched resistance from external "service" units in the university when attempting to update or revise the current labor practices. Human Resources (HR), unfortunately, has not always been a thoughtful ally in supporting necessary structural revision related to equitable administrative staff labor practices in CLAS. The committee observes the substantial and complex role that HR plays in this process, but underscores that CLAS leadership, CLAS administrative staff, and HR must collaborate together more productively to ensure that fixed and standardized inequity across the college is not conflated with real equity and faithful alignment of labor with position type, description, and "in practice" duties.

More generally, administrative staffing at this university is at critically low levels across most academic units and centralized service units, frequently described as "skeletal" by professional staff colleagues in casual conversation. Similarly, staffing at the university has become dangerously decentralized and unbalanced: work previously performed by and allocated to central specialized service units is now more often the responsibility of staff in academic units. The recent website rollout is an apt example of this decentralization trend, as cited by one anonymous staff survey respondent: "When PSU decided the website needed a change, department staff were asked to train on web development/design on top of our already jam-packed schedules. People train specifically to be web developers and design websites for a living, yet PSU thought it was okay to train some of the lowest-paid employees to do work that should have been done by people who are professionals in that field. I know we can't go back and fix this, but I thought someone needed to hear it."

Throughout our committee deliberations on staff equity and work allocation, the idea that academic units are expected to "absorb" work previously done by central service units – or to absorb work that has been repackaged using new software, digital platforms (sometimes outsourced), and databases (that frequently turnover) – has recurred as a serious problem and pain point essential to the scope of this proposal. One anonymous survey respondent articulated the problem this way: "Being staff in a department is starting to feel like working at an outsourcing center. Please stop work from coming to departments when Accounting, HR, SPA, and others should be hiring and doing the work [in their central units]. Otherwise, *we'll keep losing CLAS department staff* (emphasis added)."

In the case of digital repackaging and reassigning of work (using continually new platforms), for example, there are serious concerns about digital literacy and training, specialized expertise, and staff role compression that arise when an existing entry-level administrative staff member (such as an OS2) is suddenly asked to both manage and process advanced work that was previously performed by an area expert in a central service unit (e.g., PaymentWorks and W-9 collection). In other cases, a faculty administrator or "supervisor" may, in practice, simply rely on the expertise of their professional staff rather than taking on the full scope of the administrative duties that constitute their new non-instructional role. The committee observes that professional staff equity has been somewhat absent as a governing principle in historical university decision-making, budgeting, and staffing practices; rather, role compression and "managing up" have become the accepted norms. For example, the continual onboarding and offboarding of higher-level faculty administrators (such as Department Chairs and

Program Directors), constitutes a heavy administrative lift, and it demands comprehensive forms of coverage and support from existing lead staff in an academic unit: "It would be nice if the Dean's Office made it clear to new Chairs that they are now running a department, not just doing a bit of administrative work on top of research/teaching. Chairs rely too much on staff and [staff] end up training them, but it doesn't excuse us from our other duties, so it's a burden (anonymous survey respondent)." Administrative and professional staff workloads, including Office Coordinators, Program Administrators, and Department Managers, can radically expand during these perennial transitions, and without careful leadership, structural oversight, and very clear role clarity and expectations, never fully contract again.

The committee further acknowledges and recommends as a standard fair labor practice that any significant and far-reaching adjustment in duties, duty complexity, requisite expertise, or "in practice" levels of responsibility should be accompanied by a commensurate adjustment in staff position type and compensation. More simply put, when an "Office Specialist 2" (OS2) is assigned to an academic unit as the only professional administrator on the ground, they become a de facto program administrator and even program manager. Similarly, when a department manager is faced with a myriad of highly specialized or advanced HR, union, or fiscal tasks, in addition to providing academic and supervisory support – or if there is a persistent vacancy in the unit's lead staff positions (e.g., Psychology, Math) – the role quickly expands to an unmanageable scope and level of responsibility. Where do we draw the line for a particular position type? What work is staff work – or should be staff work? How can staffing be restructured to create healthy boundaries, realistic expectations, and a more positive professional staff community and staff ecosystem? These are only some of the many questions explored by this committee in the course of our "reimagining." The committee notes too that some of these observations are difficult and even uncomfortable to offer in our roles as strictly administrative staff of this university. That said, the committee members are very grateful to the CLAS Dean's Office and the Provost for giving us this opportunity and arena for discussion and, hopefully, this vehicle for driving structural change.

2. Ecosystem Audit and Research Methodologies

The committee undertook several strategies and research methodologies to better understand the current PSU staffing models and external peer university staffing models in the hopes of developing a better staffing model in CLAS:

1. a preliminary study of the existing position descriptions and classification types that encompass the majority of staff positions within CLAS academic units
2. an analysis of the internal organization of the college mapped using several key indicators including size and complexity
3. an analysis and evaluation of the CLAS staff duties using a complexity model
4. an internal survey of academic unit staff regarding specific work allocation
5. a targeted exploration into the organizational structure of various National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) peer "comparator" universities, involving an evaluative rubric of functional staffing areas through which to review each peer by a more standard lens
6. and a compilation of Liberal Arts & Science equivalent college staffing numbers from comparator universities

This multimodal review and research led to several conclusions that support and bear out a number of the challenging PSU staffing realities detailed in this report, and confirms the urgent need for staff reorganization in CLAS. These various research strategies have served to closely guide the committee's "reimagining" and inform the final recommendation made to the CLAS Dean and Provost.

This committee hopes to make a case for investment in staffing as tied closely to investment in the university's core mission: student success. Administrative lead staff support academic unit leadership and often share in the essential duties and core responsibilities that are critical to unit leadership and unit functioning. Administrative staff directly support full-time faculty who are also working as administrators (e.g., Chairs, Program Directors, etc.), who in turn provide student support by maintaining program standards and curriculum, and by interfacing directly with students about various programs, degree pathways, and university policies. As critical "frontline" and public-facing employees, professional administrative staff also provide a substantial degree of direct student support, helping current students navigate complex university bureaucracy and policy toward successful degree completion, and often serve as the first point of contact for prospective and incoming students. Healthy administrative staffing therefore directly affects student recruitment and retention, the two great pillars of university revenue, as any staff member who has attended a university budget forum will readily confirm.

3. Reimagining the System

This committee seeks to reimagine and identify a new staffing model that balances operational efficiency with professional community, and that acknowledges the interconnection and value of these two governing principles toward staff performance, retention, and job satisfaction. Successful leaders, professional communities, and invested employees create healthy staff "ecosystems" that reinforce shared accountability – which in turn bolsters operational responsiveness and effectiveness. A primary indication of healthy staff ecosystems is that they continuously develop and accumulate new value over time.

Understanding the university staffing structure as a series of critical services housed in multi-level and often separate systems or units, this committee seeks to reorganize, interweave, and, when necessary, overlap essential duties and tasks in order to create (a) more organic feedback loops and better overall communication between staffing levels and units, (b) clearer role responsibility and better alignment with position type, and (c) greater cross-level and cross-unit responsiveness; while at the same time (d) streamlining transactional operations such that recurring and core duties can be completed by more appropriately positioned staff in competency areas with, when possible, less replicated effort and task duplication at each staffing level.

At a certain point, separation and "silo-ing" of staff academic units – and the failure to address any gaps in requisite skill level, expertise, and work specialization among staffing hierarchy levels and within staffing duties – intersects with and negatively impacts actual operational efficiency. A more robust, multi-tiered, and specialized professional community and staff ecosystem supports efficiency despite at times requiring (slightly) greater staffing numbers and some important operational redundancy. For example, rather than requiring Office Specialists (OS2) or Program Administrators (APA) across the college to replicate advanced and specialized but nonetheless fairly standardized work, it makes more sense to assign this kind of work to a new middle tier team of central officers and competency area experts.

The committee acknowledges that greater investment in and restoration of university-level central service units and systems (e.g., Human Resources, Campus Accounting Services, Sponsored Projects Administration, Contracts and Procurements, Facilities and Property Management, etc.) is beyond the purview of this committee and the scope and breadth of this proposal. The committee has instead focused on how college staffing, but not necessarily academic unit structure, can be reorganized and restructured internally in order to offset the noticeable imbalance in greater university staffing structures,

and the ongoing attenuation of centralized university-level services that are available to academic unit staff.

Identified below are the basic **college organization** models that were typically found among peer comparator universities during the committee research. These models do not correlate exactly to the organization of staff, but function as a reference point for the committee's recommendations:

- College | Department (Majority of comparators, [Texas Arlington](#), [San Diego State](#))
- College | Cluster or Division | Department ([Georgia State](#), [Akron](#), [Louisville](#))
- College | Division ([Arizona State](#))

In relation to college organization models, there is some precedent among our peer universities for creating a "hybrid" staffing structure rather than undergoing a complete reorganization of the current college academic units ([Georgia State](#)). The committee observes that regarding a total college reorganization strategy, we are limited by the scope of this report, and by an absence of clarity pertaining to the outcome of a parallel reimagine report (that could potentially result in a recommendation to cluster together some smaller academic units, e.g., Geology and Geography).

The committee finds that staffing recommendations related to structural design can be decoupled from the physical and academic structural design of the college, and observes that many of the peer comparator schools had "hybrid" staffing structures that were segmented in that fashion: robust staffing at the department or academic unit levels, limited staffing at cluster or division levels (not necessarily mirroring the college organization structure), and broad staffing at the college administrator or dean's office levels. That is, rather than assuming a specific physical and formal reorganization of the college, since that is beyond the scope of this committee, we recommend that a "hybrid" staff reorganization could function well to bridge the gap between academic units and the CLAS Dean's Office, and serve to build and bolster existing staff capacity across all levels of the college.

The committee notes that if staffing structure/organization and college academic structure/organization were *exactly aligned*, the reorganization process in general may well prove less confusing to incoming and matriculated students; we recommend that this consideration be taken up by a new committee dedicated to the structural reorganization of CLAS academic units. That said, the reimagine CLAS committee hopes to continue to meet and deliberate with the Dean of CLAS if any formal reorganization of the college itself were to unfold. The committee requests that the CLAS Dean's Office release and discuss the results of the recent **Huron professional staff survey** when they have received and considered the data, since that could greatly inform any restaffing and restructuring determinations that are ultimately made on behalf of college staff.

4. Considering the Budget

This committee acknowledges the ongoing budgetary crisis of the university (COVID-19, lower enrollments, etc.), and the perennial budgetary reductions absorbed by academic units and central service units; we seek to develop a staffing model mindful of budgetary limitations, but realistic in terms of administrative staff work expectations and equity. Based on the several methodological strategies and targeted comparator university research undertaken (as noted above), it is the consensus of this committee that reorganization alone (of staffing structure) will not suffice at creating manageable, sustainable, and rewarding staff roles and positions. It will require at least some additional investment by the university to create new and higher-level professional administrative staff roles that are more in line with actual duties and, potentially, to reclassify existing administrative staff positions by updating the

current entry-level lead staff positions such that they are also more in line with actual duties. In fact, it may be more costly for the university *not* to address the current staffing realities: the sheer number of staff vacancies in the college (7) speaks to just how unmanageable, un-recruitable, and un-retainable many of these administrative staff positions have become (OS2 and DM). The committee observes that the current staffing scenario warrants further investigation of actual cost, including measuring these several points often raised in committee deliberations: the true fiscal and institutional cost of chronic staffing turnover, in terms of perpetual onboarding and offboarding, role inefficiency or inability for role mastery, and steady attrition of institutional memory and erosion of best practices; the true cost to students and to their "success" at the university; and the long-term effects on academic unit sustainability and viability. If a healthy administrative staff foundation, one that well-utilizes staff expertise and upholds staff continuity and community, serves to substantially support student degree completion and student success, then it stands to reason that investment in professional staffing serves the university's core academic mission and larger, longer-term revenue goals.

5. Peer Comparator Staff Numbers and Ranks

A lesson from the committee analysis into the [NCHEMS peer comparator institutions](#) is that there is a significant difference in capacity at these institutions when compared to how CLAS is staffed. While there is variation among peer comparators that were reviewed, the median count of faculty administrators and professional administrative staff in the Dean's office, including deans and directors, is 31, and the average total staff number is 35.22. CLAS currently has only 19 total faculty and professional staff working in the Dean's Office, excluding the Challenge Program. Having just over half as many college-level centralized employees in the Dean's Office that are able to offer support to academic units as our peers is one significant contributor to staff overload at the unit level. It is also likely part of the reason that so many functions that were once handled externally to the college have been shunted on to departments.

Case in point is PaymentWorks, which is an outsourced system now used to add new vendors to Banner in order to remit payment – a process that had been primarily handled by Campus Accounting Services (CAS) in the past. Said one frustrated anonymous staff survey respondent: "PaymentWorks is a huge pain, [recently] pushed to departments by centralized accounting because their vendor person left. Now the burden is on departments to get people signed up. Our department has had a terrible time getting foreign vendors to sign up. We've been told [by CAS] to 'just read the Payment Works instructions,' instead of [CAS] helping the department and the vendor. *It's been months, and we're still trying to get folks paid* (emphasis added)." In short, there has not been systematic and centralized resistance at the CLAS Dean's Office level to university-level business offices ceasing to provide services essential to university operations and student services. Indeed, there is an argument to be made that there has been very little top-level awareness of the extent of this ongoing and critical problem.

Sadly, academic unit staffing figures bear out a similarly critical understaffing reality. The median number of frontline academic unit staff and unit managers among peer comparators is 59, and the average number is 65.05. In CLAS academic units, the total number of academic unit administrative staff is only 43.50, which falls well below both the median and average figures found in the comparator research by **15.5 to 21.5 total employee positions**. In fact, CLAS has the second lowest average number of lead staff per academic unit at **1.83 staff per unit**; only Western Michigan University, which has recently undergone retrenchment, has a lower average lead staff per unit!

6. Peer Comparator Position Type Analysis

Across many peer comparator universities, it is worth noting that titles such as "Program Administrator," "Administrative Specialist," "Administrative Associate," "Program specialist" – or some other similar emphasis on the words "administrator" and "program" – reflect the staff ranks consistently found in academic units as the main lead administrative staff member of record. In general, this role functions as the only entry-level professional staff position for many academic units and departments. That is, there are no or very few "Office Specialist" staff providing frontline, professional, academic, and fiscal services at most of the comparator universities (as there are at PSU). Similarly, the standard in nearly all of the comparator universities is 2-4 administrative staff per academic unit; whereas in CLAS, the standard is approximately 1-2 administrative staff per academic unit; and in some larger unit cases, an assigned "Department Manager." The committee observes that this point is worth reiterating: CLAS is critically understaffed (and staff are persistently under ranked) when compared to nearly every NCHEM comparator university regarding entry, middle, and advanced-level staff positions. Several comparator institutions, for example, create and affirm advanced-level professional staff positions by hiring professional staff as program and division "Directors" rather than partially releasing full-time faculty to do this critical labor (Louisville).

7. Proposed Staff Model

Throughout the project, the committee has dedicated itself to envisioning a staffing model that should be sustainable and resilient over time, and account for the complex nature of the work. As such, the committee designed a hybrid staffing model, wherein some historically smaller units are grouped together to create medium-sized "Clusters." Unit size (students and faculty served) and academic area similarity should guide cluster assignments. Each cluster will include at minimum 2-4 assigned "Cluster Administrators" (APA) who report to a "Cluster Manager" (Un/Un). Cluster Managers (Un/Un) and Department Managers (Un/Un) will work closely with newly created Central Officer Teams that are housed in a "middle tier" above clusters and departments, and below the CLAS Dean's Office. Central Officer Teams will prioritize building effective and sustainable capacity within their office and with Cluster and Department Managers. [see figure. 1.1]

Cluster Administrators (APA) will report to an Un/Un Cluster Manager, a role similar to the existing DM positions in larger departments. The committee strongly recommends that administrative staff currently working as "Office Specialists" (OS2) in historically smaller academic units be reclassified or rehired, where feasible and appropriate, as Academic Program Administrators (APA), as that classification is more reflective of their duties and responsibilities in practice. The committee observes that OS2 professional advancement to APA Cluster Administrators is commensurate with the increase in position duties and complexity, particularly since Cluster Administrators will be tasked with working across historical programs or departments, rather than being assigned to a single academic unit. The APA classification also strongly correlates to the ranks and classifications provided by comparator universities for similar duties and responsibilities.

Cluster Managers (Un/Un) and **Department Managers** (Un/Un) will provide supervisory leadership, academic, and fiscal expertise to each historically smaller program or department contained within their newly assigned cluster; in the case of Department Managers, they will continue to provide supervisory leadership, academic, and fiscal expertise to large departments where size prohibits further consolidation.

Central Officer Teams (represented, advanced) will provide specialized support and expertise to Cluster Administrators (APA), Cluster Managers (Un/Un), and Department Managers (Un/Un). Central Officer

Teams will be housed centrally in a newly created "middle tier" of staffing structure in the college, i.e. above clusters and departments, but below and independent of the CLAS Dean's Office. The committee recommends that Central Officer Teams at minimum include the following functional service areas: (a) **Business Officer Team**, (b) **HR Officer Team**, (c) **Communications and Events Officer Team,** and (d) **Data, Software, and Procurement Officer Team**. This structure, or a similar version of it, can be found in several of the comparator schools, in particular, Georgia State and Louisville. Central Officer Teams are deliberately designed to be independent service units comprised of at minimum 3-4 (represented, advanced) professional staff who will provide specialized service and support to academic units throughout the college, including essential staff onboarding and development in relation to the various specialized/specific service area standard procedures and best practices.

It is absolutely critical that Central Officer Teams are able to explain how their work directly serves academic unit staff, and that they remain open to feedback and revision of practices. When workflows, systems, and central services are not well defined or supported, academic unit staff often face the additional work of sensing, locating, and tracking down item status, nudging stakeholders and purported processors, and developing individualized and redundant "shadow" systems to simplify and parallel centralized services – or to function in the place of actual centralized services. Academic unit staff frustration with existing university-level service teams illustrates the serious structural problem that occurs when a central team or central system breaks down and is no longer accountable to their service-users. In this HR example, as observed by a concerned and clearly overwhelmed anonymous staff survey respondent, the counterpoint idea is captured well:

"Can the Dean's Office … suggest to HR that they be more responsible and transparent? … They act as if they're doing us a favor when they do assist us. Examples: 1) Onboarding new adjuncts, student employees, and temporary employees. HR needs to be an active participant in the paperwork process. They are way too hands-off and often dismissive. It doesn't make sense for a new employee to fill out an I-9 form, then report back to me. HR should notify me when new employees have been processed and tell me their ODIN. 2) HR is the last stop in the hiring process, but they should be involved before contracts are signed. They put all the responsibility on [academic unit staff] and act like they're doing us a favor when they help. *We can't be expected to be HR experts at the department level* because of everything else we have to do. 3) *It's unreasonable to expect all OS2s to be experts on the CBAs* (emphasis added)."

The committee observes that this survey respondent's comments are not entirely reflective of the committee's deliberations nor its general stance toward current university-level central service units; in fact, they may speak more to the systemic understaffing of university-level central service teams, which is keenly felt by academic unit staff across the college, as much as to the culture and team practices represented in the response. In contrast, the proposed central teams in CLAS, such as the HR Officer team, should function to alleviate persistent breakdowns in processing and specialized support as represented in this respondent's feedback.

When faced with institutional changes or university-level central service team understaffing that is simply beyond the college's control, Central Officer Teams in CLAS should have the autonomy to make decisions and resolve problems in creative and novel ways, and the ability to develop and (re)integrate processes regarding new or updated workflows. Most importantly, Central Officer Teams must maintain a high degree of transparency and accountability to their primary service-users: administrative and professional staff, academic units and clusters. This a fundamental shift in focus: rather than "reporting" to the CLAS Dean's Office, though that will occur with some regularity as it does in other academic units,

or existing outside the college and beyond accountability to staff, these central teams will primarily report to their staff service-users.

The role of Central Officer Teams will include a strong emphasis on creating and maintaining standard operating procedures (SOP), specialized unit workflows where necessary, and business and policy standards for the college as a whole; as well as processing more specialized or standardized labor that can be effectively centralized. Central teams will also serve as the primary interface with external central university-level service units, such as Human Resources (HR), Campus Accounting Services (CAS), and Contracts and Procurement (CAPS). They will serve as competency area experts and specialized processors of higher level tasks and duties that are similar and recurring across academic units in the college, as well as advocate on behalf of staff as a form of case management. Duties for these central teams could include, for example, the following more readily standardized processes: PI grant purchasing; CBA policy interpretation, implementation, and best practices; tracking of adjunct faculty accumulated credit loads, average annual course loads, hiring priority across units, and review cycles; specialized budget and payroll reviews related to over/under payroll encumbrances and FTE position creep; drafting of labor distribution forms (LDF); vendor creation in Banner using PaymentWorks; PCard month-close audits in OnBase; drafting of supplemental HR fiscal payroll documents, including Salaried, Hourly, or Supplemental Overload Wage Agreements, and so forth.

8. CLAS IT Example

One example of a team service model that already exists in the college is the CLAS IT model, wherein all team members cooperatively process queries as "tickets," and are co-accountable to each query and the originator of the query as it is received. This kind of "customer service" model underscores the fundamental idea that central teams should (a) serve and include a strong orientation toward academic units, (b) provide consistently high-quality outputs and results, and (c) incorporate responsiveness and accountability as essential values. Another virtue of this model is that it builds in operational redundancy by design. For example, team members are able to provide coverage when another staff member is absent, during a position vacancy, or during business disruptions.

9. Large Academic Department Stratification

In the new model, large academic departments in CLAS that are not able to be clustered due to their existing size (e.g., Biology, Mathematics, Psychology, Chemistry, World Languages, and English) will be slightly better stratified. Department staffing will include at minimum: 1-2 Office Specialist positions (OS2); 1-2 Academic Program Administrator positions (APA); and 1 Department Manager (Un/Un). This will increase already limited staff capacity, realign position types with duties, and allow room for staff advancement within the unit or across clusters.

Department Managers in large academic departments will work at the same structural level as the Central Officer Teams and the new Cluster Managers. Department Managers will liaise with the internal Central Officer Teams toward creating and maintaining standard operating procedures (SOP), staff policy, and staff best practices, among other unit-specific duties. Similar to the Academic Program Administrators (APA) and Cluster Managers (Un/Un), Department Managers (Un/Un) will rely on the new Central Officer Teams to interface with the external university-level central service teams (e.g., HR, CAS, CAPS, UCOM), since they now function as the college competency area experts.

At this time, the committee does not consider large departments with dedicated managers to be appropriate for consolidation into clusters. If the CLAS Dean's Office elects to cluster units strictly by area

similarity (i.e., humanities with humanities, etc.), then larger units could end up being paired with smaller units, and this model may then require some adjustment in terms of staff numbers and staff assignments per cluster. At this point, the committee tentatively recommends that CLAS cluster the existing and historically smaller academic units by size (number of students and faculty served), academic area similarity, and fiscal similarity and complexity, where possible. For example, CLAS units could be clustered as follows: humanities units with other humanities units, social science units with other social science units, and natural science units with other natural science units. The committee observes that though this general concept does find precedent among our peer comparator universities, we strongly recommend that it be further explored and (potentially) revised by a dedicated committee on CLAS structural reorganization.

10. Centralized Advising Model Dilemma

The centralized cluster staffing model approach is partially similar to the centralized and generalist "Pathway" model that Academic Advising Services has recently undertaken. This model fails to fully address the unit-specific and niche knowledge involved in closely managing a single academic unit. Clustering departments may lead to some loss of unit-specific nuance, and this new cluster model could evoke reaction from faculty administrators and faculty leadership currently working in CLAS, as the advising model recently did in some departments. In response to the new advising model, for example, some CLAS academic units, particularly the larger departments, have essentially re-created internally housed unit-specific undergraduate student advisors, typically using full-time faculty members and release time; some units have also reinstated traditional faculty advising and "mentoring" models, wherein a faculty member is assigned to a particular student to (re)establish better advising, scaffolding, and support practices specific to the unit's degree path. The committee observes that if the centralization of duties and the creation of central teams is not undertaken strategically and thoughtfully, it could lead to failure and generalized bureaucracy. Carefully crafted and considered positions, position descriptions, staff numbers, staff expectations, and academic unit-facing support should allow for this committee's recommendations to be successful, especially since our goal is to be deliberate, transparent, and emergent about the reorganization process. Service area gaps and understaffed central teams, for example, will amount to centralized work falling back on academic units and departments – which both created and compounded many of the existing workload and work allocation issues in the first place.

11. Operational Resilience and Redundancy

The committee observes the distinction between multi-level operational redundancy versus same-level task replication. Lead staff (OS2) work that is being replicated repeatedly across the college in different units at the unit level, particularly work that is not unit-specific or niche, creates operational redundancy that is not especially efficient or useful, and creates a pervasive and discordant asymmetry. Conversely, higher-level components of the same type of work being undertaken by staff working in a Central Officer Team creates net-positive operational redundancy, in that teams are available to field questions about and provide support for staff work, workflows, and problem points. Operational redundancy allows for teams to maintain service levels even during coverage disruptions, such as leave, vacation, COVID-19 emergencies, or persistent staff position vacancies. A central team member, for example, could step in while a lead staff colleague is on leave or out on vacation in order to provide coverage and upkeep processing of critical tasks. It is worth noting that the absence of real coverage while staff are on leave or vacation arose in several discussions centering around staff equity and position sustainability (versus position burnout).

In the proposed staffing model it is the Central Officer Teams that create this important operational redundancy factor. These "middle tier" teams allow for higher-level handoffs of the later steps of a workflow and the more easily standardized steps of a task. Academic unit levels could continue to operationalize most steps of a fiscal process, such as certain purchasing or procurement duties, for example, but then hand off later or higher-level steps to a central team for completion, troubleshooting, auditing, or recordkeeping (OnBase). The recommendation bullet-point section below details where these "handoffs" could make the most sense by listing very specific, centralizable duties. In summary, the committee recommends a multi-tiered staff ecosystem and a dynamic relationship between academic units, academic clusters, central teams, and the CLAS Dean's Office. This system generates and underpins the concept of "operational resilience" as well; that is, a staffing structure that can bend but not break.

12. Recommendations for the College

(A) Standing Staff Committee

The committee strongly recommends that the CLAS Dean's Office establish a **Standing Staff Committee** to (a) review existing and new work allocation and policy, (b) coordinate with the CLAS Dean's Office and external university-level service units when work distribution changes; and (c) to protect staff from systemic work "creep." According to reimagine committee members who have worked at PSU as administrative staff for many years of service, the prevailing trend has been for central university-level service and business offices to implement systems that delegate the ability to perform functions at the department level, and then offload all or some of that formerly centralized work to academic unit staff. The committee observes that in recent years CLAS administrative staff have come to realize that the myriad new trainings (on new software, systems, and platforms) that they have been "invited" to attend were often without the knowledge of the CLAS Dean's Office. This caused administrative staff to reflect further and acknowledge that college leadership may not always consider protecting staff from work creep to be a priority. Recent examples include but are not limited to: OnBase document uploading/month-close submission of PCard documentation (rather than academic units maintaining hard copies for an annual audit); WebSpace/Maximus training by SPA so that administrative staff working with Principal Investigators (PI) on external grants are able to readily calculate F&A cost (to ensure that PSU is fairly reimbursed by the Federal Government for investment in research infrastructure and administrative grant support); and the Google Form recently created by the Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) for PI purchasing requests, which sends purchasing emails to academic unit staff with no vetting of said requests by grant support specialists (Department Research Administrators), despite academic unit staff repeatedly voicing at roll-out trainings that they are neither specifically trained nor compensated to perform that level of grant decision-making.

The committee recommends that the **Standing Staff Committee** function as a rotating staff membership body that is comprised of varying levels of academic unit professional and administrative staff as well as some CLAS Dean's Office staff. The standing committee should serve to review all new work or newly proposed distribution and repackaging of existing work, and to estimate the impact of that work on the academic unit workload and work efficiency. The idea is to enable college leadership to prioritize when to collaborate with centralized university-level service and business units, and when to develop alternative options and push back on work reallocation and work creep. This provides a vital measure of workload protection to professional and administrative staff.

(B) Centralization of Duties

The committee recommends that the college centralize all steps – or in some cases just the substantial but extractable components of workflow steps – for certain specialized and recurring work that lends itself

to being centralized by the nature of the work itself. This strategy includes: work that is easily replicable or systematized across units; work that does not require niche or unit-specific knowledge; work that can be collected by form, survey, or unit reporting; work that requires unique, more advanced, or specialized expertise; work that is unusually infrequent in recurrence but nonetheless important and standard across academic units (e.g., J-1 Scholar). Indeed, there are some examples that can already be found in the college that demonstrate the merit of extricating and regrouping certain specialized and critical services at a higher tier and higher compensation rate:

- Graduate and GEU work (Graduate APA position, search recently failed)
- P&T, PTR, and PCAR work (Fedor)
- CLAS IT Services work (Fullmer, Bourguignon)

(C) Central Officer Teams
The committee observes that at nearly all of the peer comparator institutions that were closely reviewed, including universities with divisions or clusters as well as departments, the institutions had more total professional and administrative staff positions to get the work done, including some level of specialization by functional or competency area. Centralized work must include well-described expectations for both academic unit staff and staff that are completing the centralized work, including a new set of Central Officer Teams with a "customer service" relationship to academic units. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) should be regularly reviewed and updated via Central Officer Teams and the Standing Staff Committee nestled within the middle tier of the college staff structure. Communication expectations and workflows should be well-described and defined in the newly proposed multi-tier professional staff ecosystem. New central teams and systems in general need to incorporate transparency, accountability, and responsiveness as essential values. This helps to ensure strong centralized services and dynamic and productive teams, rather than ending up with "black holes" where emails, requests, and reports languish perpetually in the digital ether, with little or no accountability across units, levels, or teams. An anonymous staff survey respondent substantiates this pervasive staffing dilemma: "... If I have a general question about how to perform my role in interpreting policy, I should be able to locate an answer fairly easily -- or receive an answer from someone within a matter of business days, not weeks/months. Some service accounts in PSU administration are *black holes*: I send questions and receive nothing back. We need [to be able] to reach out to 'real live human beings,' not faceless and anonymous email accounts."

In the bullet point recommendations below, "Centralize" refers to (re)assigning existing staff work to a new middle tier of Central Officer Teams: **Business Officer Team**, **HR Officer Team**, **Communications and Events Officer Team**, and **Data, Software, and Procurement Officer Team**. Central teams provide specialized support, processing, research services, and training to academic units. The committee recommends that the core duties and responsibilities specifically listed by team below are adopted, but also that they are developed in more detail as the transition to team structures unfolds.

1) Business Officer Team
The function of the Business Officer Team is to absorb duplicative work that lends itself to centralization. Officers will collaboratively: manage academic unit budgets, provide strategic and transparent support and financial analysis to academic unit chairs, coordinate and support budgetary activities and workflows, develop and route contracts that require a business purpose, and oversee the financial management of accounts. Officers will collect user data, provide transparency and oversight, and engage in ongoing improvement processes.

Additionally, committee research data indicates that the following actions need to be taken:

- Group smaller academic unit budgeting and payroll processes at the cluster and central team levels rather than at the academic unit level (since there are often fewer unit staff)
- Centralize higher level payroll work, such as over/under encumbrances, reconciliation of adjunct payroll (often inaccurate in DataMaster)
- [35.14% of survey respondents] Centralize vendor creation and PaymentWorks
- Centralize PCard month-close audits in OnBase
- [53.85% of survey respondents] Centralize the J-1 Scholar process, from request to arrival and departure of visiting scholars
- Centralize creation and maintenance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

2) HR Officer Team

The function of the Human Resources Officer Team is to absorb duplicative work that lends itself to centralization. Officers will collaboratively: oversee hiring and performance management for faculty and staff, coordinate and manage processes as per the collective bargaining agreements, perform the necessary actions for managing chair appointments (including but not limited to onboarding and offboarding support), manage position descriptions, process reclassification and salary adjustments for CLAS staff, reinforce roles and role clarity, and engage in ongoing improvement practices.

Additionally, committee research data indicates that the following actions need to be taken:

- Centralize HR PeopleAdmin and faculty hiring work
- [39.02% of survey respondents] Centralize faculty and staff general onboarding steps: W-4, I-9, keys, out-of-state employees, etc.
- Centralize union and CBA interpretation and implementation work (AAUP, PSUFA, SEIU)
- Centralize specialized HR and fiscal document drafting, such as Hourly, Salaried, and Supplemental Overload Wage Agreements
- Centralize adjunct faculty tracking, including: accumulated credits [31.58% of survey respondents], average annual course load [28.95% of survey respondents], online applicant portal submissions, hiring priority [38.46% of survey respondents], and professional evaluation review cycle [35.90% of survey respondents] work
- [28.21% of survey respondents] Centralize adjunct PeopleAdmin processes and hiring proposals
- [36.59% of survey respondents] Centralize drafting and processing of Labor Distribution Forms
- [26.32% of survey respondents] Centralize full-time faculty and emeriti offboarding paperwork
- [39.02% of survey respondents] Centralize new Department Chair and Program Director onboarding paperwork
- Centralize some new Chair training and role expectations, including best practices that are standard across the college
- Centralize creation and maintenance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

3) Communications and Events Officer Team

The function of the Communications and Events Officer Team is to absorb complex, specialized, and technical work that lends itself to centralization, or is out-of-scope for academic staff. Officers will collaboratively: manage and implement a strategic communications plan for its internal academic stakeholders, provide marketing and outward-facing communications support and

comprehensive events management services; act as both a resource and liaison for academic unit staff, and engage in ongoing improvement practices.

Additionally, the data indicates that the following actions need to be taken:

- [55.88% of survey respondents] Centralize website accessibility work
- [38.24% of survey respondents] Centralize syndication website work
- [Survey result] Centralize major event planning work
- Provide timely and effective communication to staff, connecting with staff about events, resources and services
- Centralize creation and maintenance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

4) Data, Software, and Procurement Officer Team
The function of the Data, Software, and Procurement Officer Team is to absorb duplicative, specialized, and technical work that lends itself to centralization. Officers will collaboratively: administer the collection and management of data (including and not limited to) student evaluations, internal audits, student and stakeholder surveys and systems optimization. Officers will be responsible for managing data-driven and technical resources for academic units; providing transparency, oversight, and training; acting as both a resource and liaison for academic staff; and engaging in ongoing improvement processes.

Additionally, committee research data indicates that the following actions need to be taken:

- [41.03% of survey respondents] Centralize pulling and distributing of OIRP reports for student course evaluation work (formerly processed by OIRP, but now mostly defunded)
- Centralize Telecommunications management work
- Provide procurement services for unit-specific and specialized software, and provide operational support
- Provide procurement services for unit-specific and specialized hardware and office equipment
- Maintain and update unit-specific software licensing
- Provide wrap-around support for software and database management for staff, including but not limited to gathering and managing data for units (e.g., Qualtrics and Google Form surveys, and specialized DataMaster reports)
- Centralize the procurement of standard office supplies and services (e.g., copier and shredding company contracts, business cards, etc.)
- Gather, manage, store, and strategically develop data in order to support to Staff Standing Committee initiatives and recommendations
- Centralize creation and maintenance of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

Nearly all of the "centralize" items listed in the above bullets received a 30-55% or higher affirmative response rate in the "Centralized/Reorganized" category of the internal staff survey that was sent to every administrative staff member in the college. Some items were not included in the survey, but are more easily standardized and centralized across units, and have been the subject of many larger committee deliberations.

13. Recommendations for the CLAS Dean's Office

- Assess current administrative and professional **staff vacancies** and devise a strategy to refill these positions in consultation with the Standing Staff Committee; any strategy should be mindful of the model contained in this report
- Convene a dedicated review committee on **CLAS structural reorganization** comprised of CLAS Dean's Office leadership, CLAS faculty leadership, and CLAS academic unit staff
- Convene a dedicated review committee on **CLAS staff surveying and operations** designed to assess the feasibility and usefulness of an annual staff survey and an internal culture audit; this committee could later execute the survey if it were found to be a worthwhile operational investment
- [41-44% of all four SPA categories recommended for centralization by survey respondents] Remove SPA and grant work from academic units, including budgeting, personal reimbursements, PI purchasing, grant-funded travel, and advances; assign this work to the current SPA team housed in the CLAS Dean's Office

Survey and Data Collection

As part of the internal audit process, the committee designed and distributed a [staff survey](). Initially, survey discussions were focused on questions and content concerning job satisfaction, specific aspects of staff work and work allocation, and overall happiness at work.

The committee later determined that job satisfaction questions and content regarding job overload, meaningful interactions, reciprocity, engagement, and culture were a different area and conversation. Instead, the committee focused on universal tasks that had the potential to be centralized or reorganized as a way to understand what could be more helpful or effective in the short term. A number of open-ended responses were included in the survey for staff to provide optional feedback, and have been cited throughout this report in order to represent CLAS administrative and professional staff voices. The committee recognizes the benefit of an employee satisfaction survey and recommends the implementation of a staff audit and survey on a regular or semi-regular basis. An internal audit would help to assess the effectiveness of oversight strategies, risks and strengths, deficits and surpluses, and would allow for a real-time snapshot of the landscape at the staff level. Survey data, for example, would provide abundant information that could then be used to generate new ideas about how to prevent position burnout and staff turnover; it could also be well used to capitalize on staff experience and recorded strengths.

14. Position Description Analysis and Audit

The committee recommends that college leadership undertake a comprehensive review of existing classified position descriptions and actual performed duties to develop a better understanding of staff work and to inform greater staff equity and duty alignment. The practice of staffing the college has been near-sighted at best, and over the years, administrators have instated staff positions in response to "squeaky wheel syndrome," and in order to offset immediate shortfalls. This absence of strategy or thoughtfulness has created vastly asymmetrical position descriptions; including position descriptions that contain prominent errors and typos, outdated titles, outdated supervisory information, inaccurate or obsolete duties, and out-of-scope work. To continue to operate under the assumption that the position descriptions are adequate in their current state may well become a liability for the college.

15. Conclusion

In this report, we have endeavored to explain the historic and present challenges that affect academic staff in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, with a particular focus on structural revisions that could offer a foundation for future possibility. We hope to provide a cogent set of interdependent recommendations to support the next phase, including actions that can be taken immediately, such as the creation of a staff standing committee, the rethinking and refilling of critical staff vacancies, the reclassifying of misaligned staff positions, the removal of grant-related SPA work from unit-level staff, the formation of a review committee on staff surveying and operations (tasked with administering an annual climate survey and culture audit), and the comprehensive review of staff position descriptions and duties.

Furthermore, our work indicates that an informed and systemic approach to structural redesign will maximize the benefit to the college, stakeholders, and staff – as the context and justification for structural change is nearly irrefutable. The committee would like to emphasize that the narrative and subsequent recommendations provided in this report are founded on the principles of emergent properties and dynamic and complex systems, and that support efforts to develop and integrate a new structure will require deep and specialized expertise, and considerable and thoughtful planning.

The reimagine committee, and the CLAS staff body that it represents, are broadly diverse, deeply dedicated to the college and university, and includes PSU alumni, industry professionals, Higher Education Coordinating Committee Commissioners (HECC), union specialists, unit leaders, and devoted learners from a wide variety of backgrounds. A common core purpose unites us, and that is to support the college and our colleagues, and to serve our students and city faithfully. In summation, we are simply asking PSU leadership for an equitable, deliberately designed, and sustainable environment in which we can continue to do this essential higher education work together.

16. Acknowledgements

The committee would like to thank CLAS staff who have remained invested in, engaged with, and willing to contribute to the constellation of ideas and actions recently undertaken to better serve the college and its fellow staff members. The conversations and events that led to the formation of this reimagine initiative have been long in the making, and any successes rest on a rich and broadly collaborative foundation. The committee recognizes that staff exhibitions of courage and curiosity – and their willingness to invest in each other's shared success – have led to the successful advocacy for and eventual formation of the reimagine committee.

The committee observes that staff regularly practice and inherently understand the value of many essential aspects of leadership: openness, honesty, supportiveness, empathy, and the ability to recognize shared talents and strengths. Although staff are continuously engaged in professional development and regularly exercise qualities of outstanding leadership within their units or in addition to the scope of their work, we recognize that utilizing shared staff expertise and experiences to collaboratively reimagine how we can best engage with our work and each other is both a rare and special opportunity. We are grateful to CLAS Associate Dean Matthew Carlson who has provided expert and dependable facilitation, guidance, and leadership throughout the reimagine process. Additionally, we thank Associate Dean DeLys Ostlund and Director Angela Canton for their collegial support and coordination throughout the 9-month project. Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to Dean Todd Rosenstiel for his early belief in and acknowledgement of our collective abilities – and for leveraging the reimagine grant proposal request for the benefit of all CLAS administrative staff.

17. Figures and Tables

Fig. 1.1 Proposed Staff Model
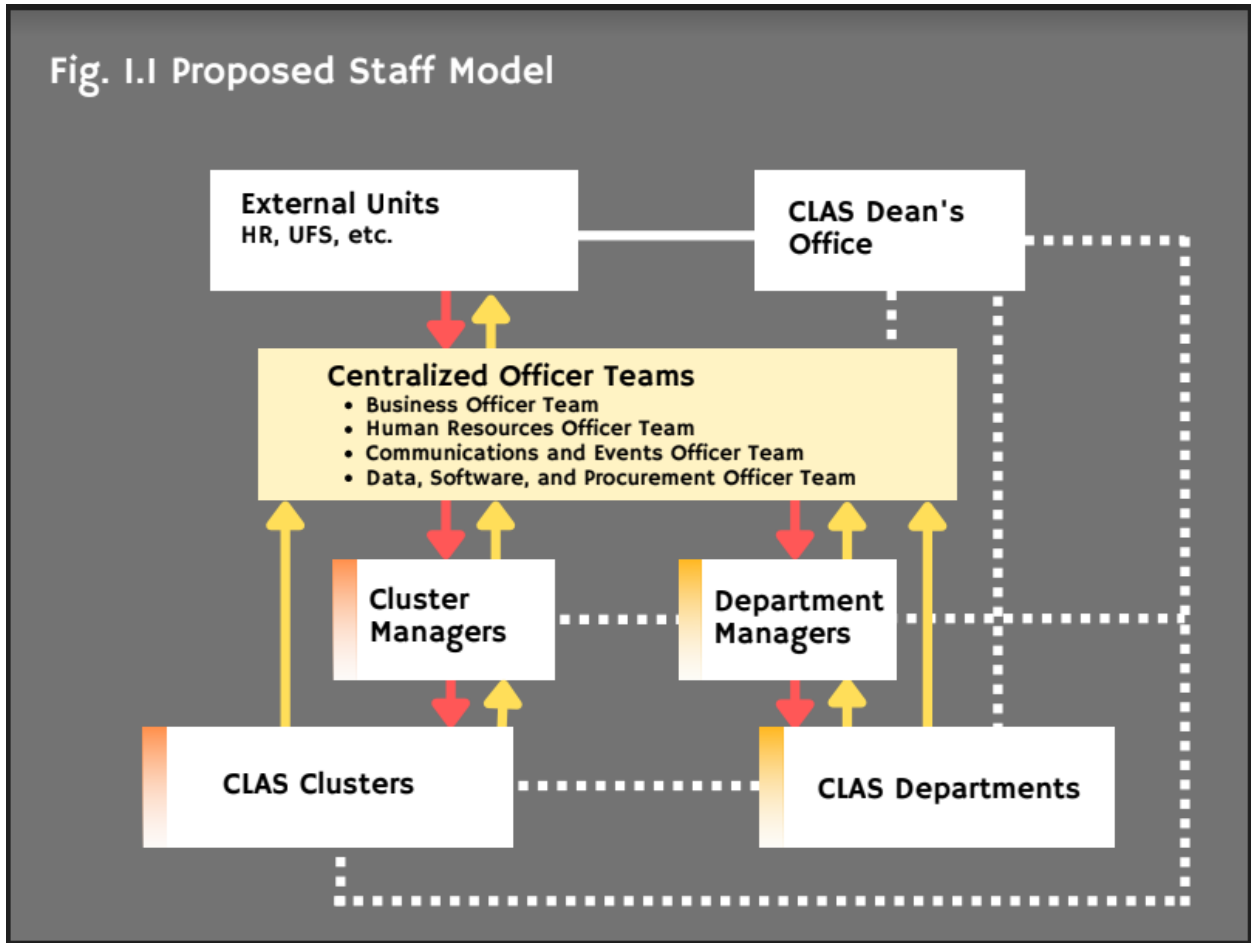
ReImagine CLAS: CLAS Staff Survey 2022

Methodology

The ReImagine CLAS survey group conducted a web survey of department staff in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Portland State University. The goal of the survey was to determine various categories of tasks that could or would either be 1) centralized and reorganized or 2) stay within the various departments. The survey was conducted between February 24 and March 9, 2022, and resulted in a total of 32 completed surveys.

Background

The purpose of conducting the survey was to gain a better understanding of which tasks the staff felt could be centralized or reorganized. Five people from the ReImagine CLAS committee were on the survey group: Vicky Mazzone, Joann Ng, Julie Bilski, Becky Horven and Josh Powell. The survey was programmed into Qualtrics web survey software, and testing was conducted to ensure appropriate wording of questions and accurate recording of data responses.

Respondent Population and Recruitment

The target population for the survey was the department staff in the 24 departments that are part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Anonymous emails were sent to a list of staff in the departments and those who do similar work in the Dean's Office, inviting them to participate. Participation was voluntary. At least two reminder emails were sent after the initial invitation, to give staff members time to participate and/or complete survey responses.

The online survey went live on February 24, 2022 and concluded on March 9, 2022. A total of 51 responses were collected: 32 completed responses and 19 partial responses, out of a total of 60 email invitations sent.

Survey

Six specific categories of tasks were examined:
Human Resources; adjunct-related tasks; academic/faculty-related tasks; budget/accounting tasks; Foundation tasks; and sponsored projects administration tasks.

For each section, there was an open-ended feedback question for respondents to add something specific for that category.

The seventh category was marked as "various" and addressed website and telecom tasks. The eighth category was marked as "other" and was more open-ended, allowing respondents to add a task not covered in the previous seven categories.

For each of the first eight categories, respondents selected responses in a matrix, with the response choices for each task listed as:

1) Stay in dept 2) Neutral 3) Centralized/Reorganized and 4) N/A (I don't do this).

There was a separate section for questions concerning the CLAS intranet. A final open-ended question was added, for respondents to share anything else not covered in the survey.

The committee acknowledges and appreciates the time and thought that the respondents put into filling out the survey.

Responses and Recommendations:

Summary of responses within each category are included below. The final open-ended responses are included in a table at the end.

Category 1: Human Resources task category

There were 6 specific tasks listed in this category:

1. Labor Distribution Forms (LDFs)
2. PeopleAdmin (not including annual adjunct questionnaire)
3. EPAFs (summer appointments)
4. EPAFs (student)
5. General training for student employees
6. Onboarding: general (W-4, I-9, keys, out-of-state employees, etc.)

Recommendations based on survey results:

Three areas were recommended to be centralized/reorganized, and three areas were recommended to stay in the department.

HR tasks: Centralized / reorganized	HR tasks: Stay In Dept
1. Labor Distribution Forms (LDFs) 2. PeopleAdmin (not including annual adjunct questionnaire) 3. Onboarding: general (W-4, I-9, keys, out-of-state employees, etc.)	1. EPAFs (summer appointments) 2. EPAFs (student) 3. General training for student employees

#	Question (HR related tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
1	Labor Distribution Forms (LDFs)	9.76%	36.59%
2	PeopleAdmin (not including annual adjunct questionnaire)	7.32%	36.59%
3	EPAFs (Summer appointments)	31.71%	14.63%
4	EPAFs (student)	35.00%	12.50%
5	General training for student employees	39.02%	26.83%
6	Onboarding: general (W-4, I-9, keys, out-of-state employees, etc.)	14.63%	39.02%

Open-ended feedback for HR related tasks:

	Feedback comments
1	I have never been trained on HR/Payroll, so I am constantly learning as I go. I am not sure what the purpose of having Melissa Scholl's previous position was since we were just re-routed to our HR partner. I am glad that seems to be changing. DO should support depts through hiring proposals, posting and advertising Faculty (TT & NTFF, visiting scholars)positions, as well as helping coordinate searches.
2	Can the dean's office put any pressure on or suggest to HR that they be more responsible and transparent? They are the least helpful dept at PSU and they act as if they're doing us a favor when they do assist us. Examples: 1) Onboarding new adjuncts, student employees, and temp employees: HR needs to be an active participant in the paperwork process. They are way too hands-off and often dismissive. It doesn't make sense for a new employee to fill out an I-9 form, then report back to me. HR should notify me when new employees have been processed and tell me their ODIN. 2) HR is the last stop in the hiring process, but they should be involved before contracts are signed. They put all the responsibility on us and act like they're doing us a favor when they help. We can't be expected to be HR experts on the dept level because of everything else we have to do. 3) It's unreasonable to expect all OS2s to be experts on the CBAs.
3	Seems to me there is some duplication of effort across departments. Maybe one designated person (or small team) could manage a certain type of task across all 24 depts (e.g. webpage google analytics reports, social media support, hashtag research, QR code creation and data tracking, syndicated news items, event promo design tasks, enrollment tracking and insights).
4	No background in HR related matters but expected to be department expert.
5	I would love to have more intentional, organized, guided collaboration with our HR Partner. It feels like there's opportunity there to receive updates, reminders, instruction that originates with a Partner and connects those of us who work with them.
6	If you are going to centralize these tasks, it is vital that CLAS maintain timely communication with the originating department.
7	All student employees should be centrally located/housed in the DO (training, hiring, etc.) and then be deployed out to each department that needs them. It is duplicate work department staff doesn't need to do.
8	The HR partner model is one I'd like to see replicated elsewhere with Foundation, Finance, etc.
9	We aren't all equally taught how to do HR tasks but those letters are time consuming and sometimes need to be done quickly. It's a perfect situation for error.

Category 2: Adjunct-related tasks

There were 8 specific tasks listed in this category:

1. Adjunct letters of appointment

2. PeopleAdmin hiring for new adjuncts (and related PeopleAdmin tasks such as hiring proposals)
3. PeopleAdmin annual questionnaire for returning adjuncts (any related PeopleAdmin tasks such as hiring proposals)
4. Uploading adjunct letters each term (unable to batch upload)
5. Adjunct tracking of credits for evaluations
6. Adjunct tracking of credits for average annual course load
7. Tracking of accumulated credit load
8. Onboarding: adjuncts with department-specific information

Recommendations based on survey results:

Five areas were recommended to be centralized/reorganized, and three areas were recommended to stay in departments.

Adjunct-related tasks: Centralized / reorganized	Adjunct-related: Stay In Dept
1. PeopleAdmin hiring for new adjuncts (and related PeopleAdmin tasks such as hiring proposals) 2. PeopleAdmin annual questionnaire for returning adjuncts (any related PeopleAdmin tasks such as hiring proposals) 3. Adjunct tracking of credits for evaluations 4. Adjunct tracking of credits for average annual course load 5. Tracking of accumulated credit load	1. Adjunct letters of appointment 2. Uploading adjunct letters each term (unable to batch upload) 3. Onboarding: adjuncts with department-specific information

#	Question (Adjunct-related tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
1	Adjunct letters of appointment	41.03%	15.38%
2	PeopleAdmin hiring for new adjuncts (and related PeopleAdmin tasks such as hiring proposals)	10.26%	38.46%
3	PeopleAdmin annual questionnaire for returning adjuncts (any related PeopleAdmin tasks such as hiring proposals)	10.26%	28.21%
4	Uploading adjunct letters each term (unable to batch upload)	34.21%	7.89%
5	Adjunct tracking of credits for evaluations	10.26%	35.90%
6	Adjunct tracking of credits for average annual course load	15.79%	28.95%
7	Tracking of accumulated credit load	15.79%	31.58%

8	Onboarding: adjuncts with department-specific information	50.00%	5.26%

Open-ended feedback for adjunct-related tasks:

	Feedback comments
1	listed tracking adjunct credits, new CBA changed the need to track, I think?
2	Adjunct credit tracking and evaluation processes should be centralized through HR. I currently don't have the capacity or support to track my adjuncts and that leaves the dept and the College open to liabilities.
3	A CLAS Staff shared calendar with deadlines and reminders would be helpful in completing the winter survey, letters of offer, communications related to evaluation, summer guidelines.
4	If you are going to centralize these tasks, it is vital that CLAS maintain timely communication with the originating department.

Category 3: Academic/Faculty Related tasks

There were 4 specific tasks listed in this category:

1. OIRP reports - as of Winter 2022 departments now responsible for facilitating their own end-product course evaluations. (Note: After the survey was sent out, staff learned OIRP would still be providing paid service to generate course evaluations for now; if that changes, we will need to address this again.)
2. J-1 Visa, from request to arrival/departure (visiting scholars)
3. Paperwork & approvals to transition in new chairs
4. Emeriti/Offboarding/Retirement

Recommendations based on survey results:

All four areas were recommended to be centralized/reorganized.

Question (Academic/faculty related tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
OIRP reports - as of Winter 2022 departments now responsible for facilitating their own end-product course evaluations.	10.26%	41.03%
J-1 Visa, from request to arrival/departure (visiting scholars)	5.13%	53.85%
Paperwork & approvals to transition in new chairs	10.26%	35.90%
Emeriti/Offboarding/Retirement	5.26%	26.32%

Open-ended feedback for academic/faculty related tasks:

	Feedback comments

1	I enjoy working with faculty on P&T processes for faculty, I wish I had more time to devote to these tasks. ALL immigration related work for TT/NTFF/ Visiting Scholars should be centralized and completed by the Dean's office. I was tasked with completing some of this work this past AY and it was incredibly intimidating. I am not a Paralegal, I don't get compensated like a paralegal and have had ZERO training on H1b visas, immigration processes by CLAS. I was learning as I went and this is extremely frustrating and scary when dealing with someone's ability to remain in this country and work.
2	Dept Chairs: It would be nice if the Dean's Office made it clear to new chairs that they are now running a dept, not just doing a bit of admin work on top of research/teaching. Chairs rely too much on staff and we end up training them, but it doesn't excuse us from our other duties, so it's a burden. They need to know to ask questions of someone higher up, like a dean or whoever is their boss. I'm not familiar with everything a chair does, but I'm expected to have all the answers (some faculty are too egotistical to ask a dean and admit they don't know everything). Many chairs have never been properly trained on managing people. Having a PhD doesn't confer managerial skills on anyone, and advising grad students isn't the same as managing employees, so please provide HR training for new chairs.
3	If you are going to centralize these tasks, it is vital that CLAS maintain timely communication with the originating department.
4	This should stay in the departments because faculty work is so unique to the departments that house them.
5	The offboarding/onboarding paperwork for department chairs should be handled by CLAS DO or staff should be paid overtime since it's extra work.

Category 4: Budget/accounting tasks (non-SPA related)

There were 8 specific tasks listed in this category.

1. PSI (one-time invoices)
2. PSC and other contract approvals (e.g., renting off-campus venues, task orders, etc.)
3. Payment Works (vendor ID number setup)
4. PCard monthly document upload to OnBase
5. Journal vouchers
6. Purchase orders
7. Personal reimbursements on department-managed indexes (PIN, IPDA/PDF, FEA, startups, etc.)
8. Travel authorizations & reimbursements on department-managed indexes

Recommendations based on survey results:

One area was recommended to be centralized/reorganized, and seven areas were recommended to stay in department.

Budget/accounting tasks (non-SPA related): Centralized / reorganized	Budget/accounting tasks (non-SPA related): Stay In Dept

	1.	Payment Works (vendor ID number setup)	1. PSI (one-time invoices)
			2. PSC and other contract approvals (e.g., renting off-campus venues, task orders, etc.)
			3. PCard monthly document upload to OnBase
			4. Journal vouchers
			5. Purchase orders
			6. Personal reimbursements on department-managed indexes (PIN, IPDA/PDF, FEA, startups, etc.)
			7. Travel authorizations & reimbursements on department-managed indexes

#	Question (Budget/accounting tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
1	PSI (one-time invoices)	39.47%	18.42%
2	PSC and other contract approvals (e.g., renting off-campus venues, task orders, etc.)	31.58%	28.95%
3	Payment Works (vendor ID number setup)	29.73%	35.14%
4	PCard monthly document upload to OnBase	43.24%	5.41%
5	Journal vouchers	47.37%	10.53%
6	Purchase orders	44.74%	13.16%
7	Personal reimbursements on department-managed indexes (PIN, IPDA/PDF, FEA, startups, etc.)	55.26%	7.89%
8	Travel authorizations & reimbursements on department-managed indexes	50.00%	15.79%

Open-ended feedback for budget/accounting-related tasks:

	Feedback comments
1	More training on reconciliation, running reports and overall support on this section of duties. I would appreciate greater levels of support from the Finance team on catching mistakes before it is too late. I also think that being responsible for multiple dept, faculty indexes as well as managing Foundation accounts should be a position in itself for units. NOT a percentage of our 1.0 FTE.
2	The new P Card process is a lot more work. I'm just now (Feb 2022) getting around to the P card log and the check requests. Payment Works is a huge pain, pushed to the depts by centralized accounting because their vendor person left. Now the burden is on depts to get people signed up. Our dept has had a terrible time getting foreign vendors to sign up. We've been told to "just read the Payment Works instructions" etc. instead of helping the dept and the vendor. It's been months, and we're still trying to get folks paid.
3	If you are going to centralize these tasks, it is vital that CLAS maintain timely communication with the originating department.
4	Department specific

5	It should not fall on department staff to invite/track vendors in PaymentWorks, a system we don't manage or have deep access within (and I don't want more access or training)
6	Of recent, I'm noticing way too many breakdowns in the VikingPro portal for personal and travel reimbursement. Once I've done my part, I have no sense of where along the queue a request is stalled. The system should send out a reminder to whomever is next in the queue to perform their action, and I should be cc'ed. For a system that ought to take a matter of days to complete now sometimes takes months. This never happened with paper forms.

Category 5: Foundation

There were 4 specific tasks listed in this category:

1. Check requests
2. Personal reimbursements
3. Honorariums or stipends
4. Payroll payout to Banner index (XXXF99)

Recommendations based on survey results:
All four areas were recommended to stay in department.

#	Question (Foundation tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
1	Check requests	44.44%	8.33%
2	Personal reimbursements	50.00%	8.33%
3	Honorariums or stipends	33.33%	11.11%
4	Payroll payout to Banner index (XXXF99)	19.44%	13.89%

Open-ended feedback for Foundation-related tasks:

	Feedback comments
1	Dept specific support around fundraising. I currently don't have the capacity to engage very intentionally with the "Day of Giving" and other campus wide fundraising campagains and this places my units at a disadvantage.
2	I love that our dept has a designated person in PSUF for us to go to when we have questions. Grace has been responsive and super helpful.
3	Having every honorarium/stipend over $1000 go through contracts on the PSU side is a huge time suck and a laborious process.

Category 6: Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)

There were 4 specific tasks listed in this category:

1. SPA/grant work - personal reimbursements
2. SPA/grant work - purchases for PIs using numbered grant indexes
3. SPA/grant work - travel authorizations/reimbursements
4. SPA/grant work – operating advances

Recommendations based on survey results:

All four areas were recommended to be centralized/reorganized.

#	Question (SPA related tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
1	SPA/grant work - personal reimbursements	5.88%	41.18%
2	SPA/grant work - purchases for PIs using numbered grant indexes	2.94%	44.12%
3	SPA/grant work - travel authorizations/reimbursements	2.94%	41.18%
4	SPA/grant work - operating advances	0.00%	41.18%

Open-ended feedback for SPA-related tasks:

	Feedback comments
1	I have not had to engage with SPA too much yet, but I have heard how frustrating this process can be.
2	Please urge SPA to hire more admin staff assist with all grant-related work. I feel like a middleman who knows very little about the process, but is stuck going back and forth between faculty and SPA staff. It's an incredible time waster.
3	I would be more willing to collaborate on SPA-related tasks if we can get to a point where SPA folks are committed to regular and responsible communication with department staff.
4	All research related work should be done in the DO (central) or in a central group of people who only do research/grant related labor.
5	I don't have many dealings with SPA, but I know this is a hot-button issue for many of my OS2 peers. Regulations and protocols should be the domain of experts in SPA who help move things along. We should not be doing the majority of the heavy lifting here.
6	I don't mind managing grant purchases, but I don't want to use their ridiculous form.

Category 7: Various (website and telecom)

There were 5 specific tasks listed in this category:

1. Website - page creation/curation
2. Website – accessibility
3. Website - broken links and maintenance
4. Website – syndication
5. Telecom requests/issues

Recommendations based on survey results:

Two areas were recommended to be centralized/reorganized, and three areas were recommended to stay in departments.

Various (website and telecom): Centralized / reorganized	Various (website and telecom): Stay In Dept

1. Website – accessibility 2. Website – syndication	1. Website - page creation/curation 2. Website - broken links and maintenance 3. Telecom requests/issues	

#	Question (Various - website/telecom tasks)	Stay in dept	Centralized / Reorganized
1	Website - page creation/curation	47.06%	23.53%
2	Website - accessibility	20.59%	55.88%
3	Website - broken links and maintenance	38.24%	29.41%
4	Website - syndication	32.35%	38.24%
5	Telecom requests/issues	44.12%	20.59%

Open-ended feedback for various (website/telecom) related tasks:

	Feedback comments
1	training is an issue - training chairs and incoming staff. Communication with DO is shamefully non-existent.
2	Web: When PSU decided the website needed a change, dept staff were asked to train on web development/design on top of our already jam-packed schedules. People train specifically to be web developers and design websites for a living, yet PSU thought it was okay to train some of the lowest-paid employees to do work that should have been done by people who are professionals in that field. I know we can't go back and fix this, but I thought someone needed to hear it.
3	Seems to me Cristina Rojas serves as a resource for many departments in certain areas where she has deep knowledge. Maybe we can build from that model. Identify who can be the "go to" resource on a certain topic and adjust their workload to allow them to serve all 24 depts in that area of expertise.
4	Would like information on CLAS intranet about CLAS IT services - policies and procedures, what kinds of things we should request from CLAS IT vs OIT, clarify what IT support tasks that staff are expected to do vs. CLAS IT and training or guides to help staff with the tasks. Why are there only two IT support positions in CLAS to assist so many departments?
5	In general, trying to get anything accomplished at PSU often takes a great deal of effort and time. The Travel module is horrible to work with. Often Viking Travel need to unfreeze a reimbursement so changes can be made, no matter how careful you are to use the correct browser and exit the proper way. Another huge waste of time to email/call/beg someone to unfreeze it.
6	If you are going to centralize these tasks, it is vital that CLAS maintain timely communication with the originating department.

7	Being staff in a department is starting to feel like working at an outsourcing center. Please stop work from coming to departments when Accounting, HR, SPA and others should be hiring and doing the work themselves. Otherwise, we'll keep losing CLAS department staff.
8	University-wide, policies and procedures should be accessible on unit websites. If I have a general question about how to perform my role in interpreting policy, I should be able to locate an answer fairly easily -- or receive an answer from someone within a matter of business days, not weeks/months. Some service accounts in PSU administration are black holes: I send questions and receive nothing back. We need to reach out to "real live human beings," not faceless and anonymous email accounts.

Category 8: Other (allowing respondents to input tasks not listed in the prior 7 questions)

There were 11 individual entries for this category:

1. Event Planning
2. Social media efficacy
3. GTA/GRA hiring
4. Course scheduling
5. Events marketing support
6. Grad program admissions
7. Dept purchasing
8. QR codes creation and management
9. IT inventory dept tracking
10. Student/Alum stories and news
11. Google analytics & insights

Recommendations based on survey results:

Six areas were recommended to be centralized/reorganized, and five areas were recommended to stay in department.

Other: Centralized / reorganized	Other: Stay In Dept
1. Social media efficacy 2. Events/marketing support 3. QR codes creation and management 4. IT inventory dept tracking 5. Student/Alum stories and news 6. Google analytics & insights	1. GTA/GRA hiring 2. Course scheduling 3. Grad program admissions 4. Dept purchasing

Open-ended feedback for other tasks:

In this category, there were no open-ended responses.

INTRANET SECTION OF THE SURVEY

This section asked questions about CLAS intranet use and familiarity. At the end, a question was included gauging interest in having a point person in CLASDO who could contact other departments about the usefulness and efficacy of instructions (PSU campuswide).

Awareness of intranet site:

38.71% responded that they used the site
38.71% responded that they didn't use the site
22.58% responded that they were not aware of the intranet's existence

Use of the site to find information:

31.25% use the site
53.13% do not use the site
15.63% were not aware of the intranet's existence

Possible interest of utilizing the intranet in the future by those not familiar with the intranet site (if updated regularly)

56% very interested
40% somewhat interested
4% not interested

Rank of items by those who were familiar with the intranet site:

Do you find CLAS intranet instructions adequate?
        Yes 4.76%, No 33.33%, Sometimes 61.9%
Do you often look for instructions regarding tasks?
        Yes 23.81%, No 33.33%, Sometimes 42.86%
Would you find it helpful to have a point person to manage the central site?
        Yes 90%, No 0%, Sometimes 10%

Do you rely on other CLAS colleagues to get information and/or get instructions?
        Yes 72.73%, No 9.09%, Sometimes 18.18%

Useful instructions on campus (having a main contact in the DO to update/facilitate getting useful instructions):

68.75% of respondents were very interested
25.00% of respondents were somewhat interested
6.25% of respondents were not interested

FINAL RESPONSES: OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

There were 16 responses in the final question. They are listed below in order.

1	Other depts at PSU treat staff in academic depts like we are their secretaries and they can just pass off every any random administrative work to us. Please make it stop!
2	I think when people are confused or frustrated they want to reach out and engage with a human being - so often going to a webpage with written instructions just feels like a waste of time. Either the info is not relevant, not updated, poorly written or it just doesn't solve the problem. It's preferable - and such a gift - to contact a real person that you know just has the solution for you.
3	Centralizing should be optional. And dept should be allowed to initiate priority/time sensitive items – I desperately need an EPAF done for spring term, but despite numerous requests this has not been done. It would be much easier if I could do this myself. Centralizing will not work if a black hole syndrome is created.
4	Thank you for creating this survey! very interested in having multiple "someones" to do the higher-level work, not just one person.
5	I'm happy that Reimagine CLAS project is happening and welcome more communication about progress. Thanks
6	So many tasks keep rolling down to the departments while it appears that more and more administrators are hired. So many of the tasks in the departments now could be centralized (as they were circa 2005) and handled much more efficiently. Thank you for pulling this together survey together!
7	It is very stressful when you're expected to be the department expert for everything at PSU. If others consider department staff one stop shopping for all matters, where is similar support for staff?
8	Thank you for doing this work of gathering feedback!
9	I rely on my CLAS colleagues for 'real-world' information about how to get something done. The general PSU attitude of shoving work down to the dept staff needs to stop. Likewise, the attitude toward hiring dept staff - I've literally heard that it's a dead-end job, and that people are expected to leave after a year or two. I find that attitude, and the acceptance of "that's just the way it is", highly disturbing, and it says a lot about PSU's attitude towards staff.
10	There is a real time lag with sending an email to clasgrad and then hearing back. Makes me not enthusiastic about centralizing anything else with CLAS.
11	With all of these areas, I feel like many of them would be much easier to do at the departmental level if we were given more training on those specific tasks. I can only speak to my own onboarding, but I've been in my role for a few years and still feel like I'm clueless in some areas. If we got more (clear, thorough) training on core duties, I think that would go a very long way.
12	I really appreciate the team that put together this survey. I hope that we can take these results and imagine a new, different CLAS together. There is so much knowledge and experience in all of our department staff team and I am so excited folks are listening and taking time to hear what everyone has to say.
13	I'm support staff, so a lot of this is really outside of my day-to-day. Glad that these questions are being asked!
14	Yes. Rather than write a long email response, I invite the ReImagine CLAS survey team - Joann, Julie, Becky, Josh, and Vicky -- to email or speak to me if they would like further input. Thanks for the work you all are doing not just on our behalf, but for CLAS and PSU as a whole.

	Committee note - this person was contacted, but they couldn't remember what they were going to say
15	I am aware of the intranet site. I would use it occasionally if it was maintained. Your questions didn't fit that scenario
16	The common theme is no training. This is frustrating and time consuming.