

Notes: Exploratory School Discussion Workgroup, Meeting #6

May 19, 2023, 10:30am-12:30pm via Zoom

Attendees: Daniel Ballhorn, John Bershaw, Adam Booth, Mitch Cruzan, Kris Fedor (resource member), Shannon Heuberger (facilitator), Andrés Holz, Kristie Kolesnikov (logistics), Martin Lafrenz, Amy Larson, Jen Morse, Joann Ng, Max Nielsen-Pincus, Hunter Shobe, Leah Tuor, Wayne Wakeland, Becca Wilson-Ounekeo

Workgroup Roster: <https://www.pdx.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/exploratory-school-initiative#workgroup>

Workgroup Goals:

- Continue drafting the notional school model.
- In late May, a conceptual model will be provided to departments for their feedback, in what will be an iterative process.

Workgroup “homework” for next time:

- *Optional* homework is to develop elements of the template for discussing with fellow workgroup members for their reactions/feedback at the next meeting.
- Continue seeking input from colleagues.

Meeting Discussions:

Input Received Standing Item:

- This meeting was added to the schedule, and so the workgroup agreed at the last meeting to post input received to the new Google Chat group that Kristie created for our workgroup to the extent possible. At the beginning of the meeting, we confirmed that all had posted (anonymously) their input from colleagues and that there was no unshared or unreceived input.
- Discussed that a key piece of input (also shared in the Google Chat) was the need to balance the Social Sciences in graphics and text of the notional model.
- *Note: “Input Received” is a standing item at every workgroup meeting. Please share your input with members of the workgroup directly or by sending comments to NewSchool@pdx.edu or <https://forms.gle/x7Pt78YEt51mBBi18>.*

Discussions to Continue Populating the Model Template

This school is intended to create an outstanding work environment for faculty and staff. The workgroup made progress on sections that will describe the school structure and how it is designed to enhance faculty and staff wellbeing, increasing opportunities for professional development, and enhance faculty and staff capacity to serve our students and communities.

Discussions on Leadership and Governance

Discussed the pros and cons of having a “School Director”

Pros	Cons
Longer term strategic perspective	Extra layer of administration
Fundraising	Cost (although may not have higher price tag than having multiple chairs)
Someone's job is to nurture the School / collective	Coming from a discipline and the perception or reality of favoring one program over others (discussed that an external hire could be one way to address this)
Someone owns the mission of increasing SCH	Transparency challenge relative to budgetary decisions (necessitates greater communication and transparency)
Partnerships	
Serving as a hub for providing reliable, timely expertise	
Flexibility in terms of structural functioning due to strategic leadership and coordinated committee structures	

Director attributes: Strategic, understands all the component disciplines of the school, brings significant leadership experience

Director-Elect? Discussed potentially having a “director-elect” to ease the transition between directors. However, advantages were also discussed of not using elections for the director position, to increase the longer-term strategic perspective.

Program Leads: One faculty “program lead” per component unit (i.e., Anthropology, Biology, ESM, Geography, Geology, Systems Science)

Three Staff Leadership Areas: Potential areas of speciality are Finance, Student Services, and HR. The Director/Executive Team works with the Staff Leads to administer school logistics. Other staff members in the school will have a Staff Lead as their direct supervisor.

Executive Team: Assists the director (if there is a director). Includes all six faculty program leads plus staff representation.

Committees

- School-level committees are intended to reduce the faculty burden of committee service
- Example: Curriculum Committee
 - School-wide, strategic committee with one representative per program
 - Each program to decide whether its program lead develops the individual program proposal or whether to have a program-level committee. Either way, program leads must have a coordination meeting to develop a unified proposal that goes to the school-wide committee.
- Include relevant staff representation on school-level committees.

Other leadership notes: Support an approach of deliberately nurturing future leaders.

Next Steps:

- The workgroup will meet again on May 25th to focus on
 1. Finish outlining leadership structure
 2. Define overall budget structure
 3. Refine the vision section (especially regarding edits to the graphic and the newly added research section)
 4. Community building
 5. P&T (especially for the transition)
 6. JDEI
 7. Propose a process for how remaining concepts will be developed
- “Homework” for workgroup members is on p. 1 of these notes
- The workgroup remains on-schedule to release a conceptual model (i.e., discussion draft) containing the major school elements in late May. They will be asked to outline a process for how some of the details that they didn’t have time to address can be developed.