

Conceptual School Model Town Hall, Exploratory School Discussion Workgroup June 1, 2023, 10:00am-12:00pm via Zoom

Town Hall Objective:

The Exploratory School Discussion Workgroup released their final report containing a conceptual school model. This “discussion draft” is now being provided to the departments for input, in what will be an iterative process.

Presentation:

During the first hour of the Town Hall, the workgroup presented their conceptual school model. Please visit the initiative website for a recording of the first hour of the Town Hall and a link to the final report: <https://www.pdx.edu/liberal-arts-sciences/exploratory-school-initiative>

Discussion:

The second hour was dedicated to informal discussion of the school model. This section was not recorded. Main discussion topics included the following:

- Program Lead Role:
 - Discussed that having six program leads and maintaining their respective “program areas” could reinforce silos. However, also discussed that this structure could be useful, particularly during the initial years of the transition, to have someone on-point for each program who is familiar with the program’s majors and minors.
 - Discussed considering all faculty as eligible for the program lead roles.
 - Clarified that “program leads” are not “chairs” and discussed that it will be necessary to define the program lead roles as having less responsibility than a chair role (i.e., the “director” role), to ensure that the model isn’t merely adding a layer of administration to the existing structure.
- Discussed that it will be important to develop a conflict resolution system for handling items like hiring decisions. Discussed the importance of the six units collaborating on hiring decisions.
- P&T and Bylaws: can the school identify efficiencies to avoid making frequent revisions, which are time consuming and difficult?
- Discussed the question, “how can we build a culture of trust, in what we know (from our peer models research) will be a years-long transition?”
- Discussed adding a school climate or a community and culture committee. Discussed having the committee organize interdisciplinary talks and themed get-togethers.
- Discussed potentially co-locating via a gradual process and creating gathering spaces in the near-term. Talked about the importance of in-person gatherings for getting to know one another.
- Discussed that the director needs to be a person who can build community.

Please share feedback on the conceptual school model with your department chair, or by sending your thoughts to NewSchool@pdx.edu.