Exploratory School Discussion Workgroup

TOWN HALL - FINAL WORKGROUP REPORT

June 1, 2023

Portland State
UNIVERSITY

Town Hall Agenda

10 AM   *Workgroup Report on Conceptual School Model*

School Vision
School Structure and Culture
        Leadership and Governance
        Faculty and Staff Wellbeing
        JDEI
        Building Community
Student Success Strategies
Recommended Next Steps

11 AM   *Discussion*

Workgroup

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And thank you to CLAS Office Coordinator Clare Quinn, Communications Manager Cristina Rojas, and Student Employee Roger Pardo-Monahan!

LATEST UPDATES

- Conceptual School Model [Discussion Draft] - May 30, 2023

- Workgroup Meeting #6 [Notes] - May 19, 2023

- Workgroup Meeting #5 [Notes] - May 16, 2023

- Exploratory School Town Hall [Recording, Slides, Notes] - May 10, 2023

- Informational Report [PDF]- May 9, 2023

- Workgroup Meeting #4 [Notes] - May 4, 2023

- Workgroup Meeting #3 [Notes] - April 28, 2023

- Peer Models Subgroup [Notes] - April 13, 2023

- Outreach Subgroup [Notes] - April 11 and 12, 2023

- Workgroup Meeting #2 [Notes] - April 7, 2023

- Workgroup Meeting #1 [Notes] - March 23, 2023

- Exploratory School Engagement Session [Slides, Notes] - March 10, 2023

- Exploratory School Information Session [Recording, Slides] - Feb. 24, 2023

Conceptual School Model

Discussion Draft

"School Theme"

School Value Proposition

How will the school bring value to our students, our community, and our nation/world?

Value Proposition - Students

- **Innovative interdisciplinary coursework, degree pathways, and research opportunities** in addition to the current programs and pathways.
- **Providing holistic advising and wraparound student support**, including mentoring, shared cohort opportunities for identifying a major and career path, and smooth transfers from community colleges.
- **Offering community-building** spaces and events to help students network with their larger cohort and prepare for professional interactions and job/career opportunities.

Value Proposition - Students

- **Partnering with employers to create new experiential learning opportunities**, such as paid internships, collaborative field trips, and inquiry-based learning inside and outside the classroom.
- **Improved course scheduling** with reduced scheduling conflicts and increased breadth of course options.
- **Placing JDEI values at the center of the school.**

Value Proposition - Community

- **Producing capable, enthusiastic and resourceful community members and workforce leaders,** trained in state of the art thinking, methods, decision making, environmental stewardship, and creative problem solving.
- **Connecting employers with our students and graduates.**
- **Serving as a hub for providing reliable, timely expertise** to schools, government agencies, organizations, media, and industries locally and beyond.

Value Proposition - Community

- **Serving as a thought partner and resource for our local communities**, including to help revitalize our local Portland Community following the pandemic.
- **Addressing climate change and resiliency issues around heritage, health, and the environment,** through interdisciplinary research on human-environment interactions.
- **Serving as an incubator for solutions**, leveraging our transdisciplinary expertise in systems thinking and process-based understanding.

Value Proposition - Science/Society

- **Training the next generation of scholars and professionals** in interdisciplinary methods and approaches, with an emphasis on science that can be applied to community/societal problems.
- **Fostering a supportive research environment** within the school through collaborative governance, creating a school culture centered around trust and collaboration, and providing research administrative support to enable research successes.
- **Recruiting diverse new faculty, staff, and students** who have a passion for interdisciplinary research and teaching on issues related to the Earth, environment, and society.

Value Proposition - Science/Society

- **Supporting faculty, staff, and students in seeking external research funding** related to our shared interests, through school-based mentoring/peer mentoring, collaboration, and resources.
- **Leveraging our existing and new laboratory spaces, equipment, and facilities** where possible through resource sharing and collaborative proposals for new equipment.

School Structure and Culture

Leadership and Governance, Faculty and Staff Wellbeing, JDEI, and Building Community
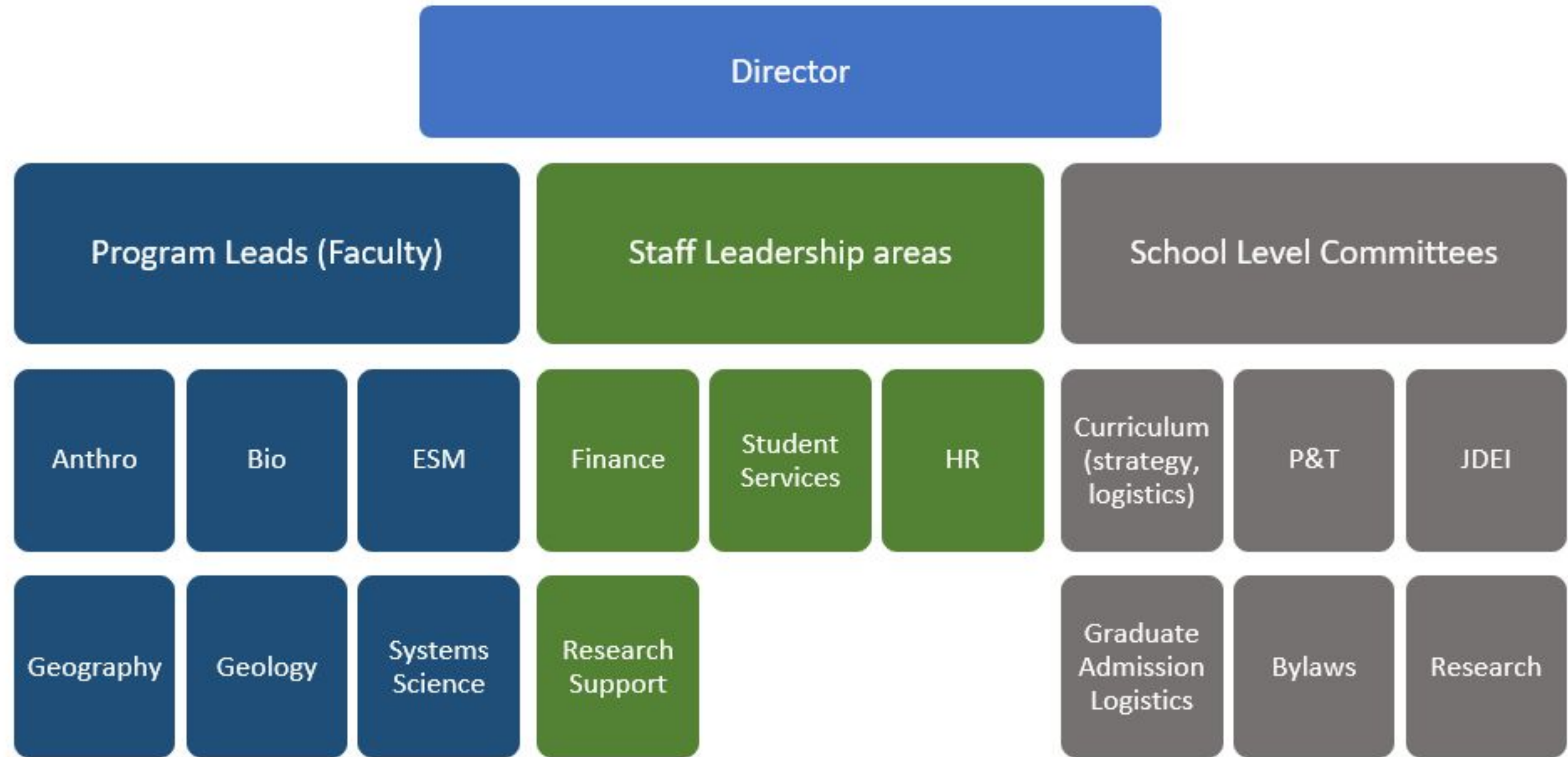
In addition to the specific faculty and staff "leadership areas" defined above, *all* of the existing faculty and staff from the six units will be key to making this vision a reality!

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School Director

- The school model includes a director position. This individual must be a strategic, experienced leader who understands all the component disciplines of the school, and who understands how to leverage collaborative approaches. The director must embrace transparent communication and the missions of increasing SCH, fundraising, building community in the school, forging new partnerships, and strengthening research collaboration.
- The director reports to the CLAS dean and attends CLAS department chairs' meetings. The workgroup discussed pros and cons of this being a long-term position, an elected position with an accompanying chair-elect for continuity, or a position that the program leads rotate into– a topic for further discussion.

Program Leads

The model includes a faculty "program lead" corresponding to each unit joining the school (i.e., Anthropology, Biology, ESM, Geography, Geology, Systems Science). Program leads are the primary responsible parties for their programs' curricula, with strategic and logistical support from the school-level Curriculum Strategy and Coordination Team and implementation support from the school director.

Staff Leadership Areas

This model includes four "staff leadership areas," and other staff members in the school, which will leverage the talents of all current staff, would have one of the staff leads as their direct supervisor. The "areas" include Finance, Student Services (including advising and recruiting), HR, and Research Support.

Leadership Team

The leadership team, tasked with assisting the director, includes the six faculty program leads plus staff representation. The director and leadership team work with the staff leads to administer school logistics. School leadership will prioritize nurturing future leaders/decision makers.

Committees

Curriculum Strategy and Coordination Team
- 1 rep per program + staff rep
- Discusses/coordinates curricula among programs (but does *not* have authority over the programs)
- Identifies convergence, ensures that disciplines have unique offerings, and identifies cross-program pathways
- *Individual programs may also use program-level curriculum committees if they wish*

P&T Committee(s) – include representation from each program area

Committees

JDEI Committee – identifies and implements best practices to keep JDEI at the center of the school

Bylaws Committee – to draft bylaws at the beginning of the process and update as needed

Research Committee – to strategize on leveraging resources, strengthening graduate student support, and fostering interdisciplinary research opportunities

Committees

Graduate Admissions Logistics Committee – supports logistics of the graduate student admissions process (note: *not* tasked with making graduate admissions decisions)

Ad hoc Committees – to be formed as needed

Bylaws

- The workgroup discussed that joint bylaws for the school would be ideal and recommends creating a committee to draft a summary of key bylaw ideas for the new school (i.e., a one-pager) in early fall, including for P&T and voting.
- The workgroup's preliminary analysis of bylaws during the Information Phase revealed that they are similar among the six units. They noted that the main difference among existing bylaws was on who is able to vote. The workgroup recommends an inclusive approach to discussing voting in the school, based on a shared philosophy of wanting to maintain everyone's rights and privileges.

Faculty Wellbeing

- Faculty will benefit from committees being at the school level, which will reduce individual faculty workload overall.
- Curricular alignment across the programs will create opportunities for interdisciplinary courses and team teaching opportunities.
- Having a broader pool of faculty for graduate students to draw on can positively impact faculty workload and advising.

Faculty Wellbeing

- Faculty who advise graduate students will have more options for suggesting graduate committees members, which will improve graduate student and advisor experiences.
- To ensure a smooth and fair transition, it will be important to offer faculty the option to be reviewed (i.e., pre- and post-tenure/milestone) under their current faculty review processes (i.e., tenure, milestone, promotion, PCAR, PTR,) until the new school fully develops its P&T guidelines. That said, the workgroup's Informational Report noted that P&T guidelines are very similar between the units (*Note: Details in Report Appendix IIE*). All school-based review committees should have representation from the faculty member's program area (*Note: as currently specified in P&T guidelines*).

Staff Wellbeing

Staff will benefit from the continuity of reporting to a staff lead. Opportunities will be created for staff who would like to specialize, via a staffing model that will be designed to match the priorities emphasized in the school model, while simultaneously safeguarding the existing roles of staff who are already specialized. Cross-training of staff will be employed to the extent needed for staff to achieve work-life balance (i.e., not being the only staff member qualified to perform a critical, time-sensitive function).
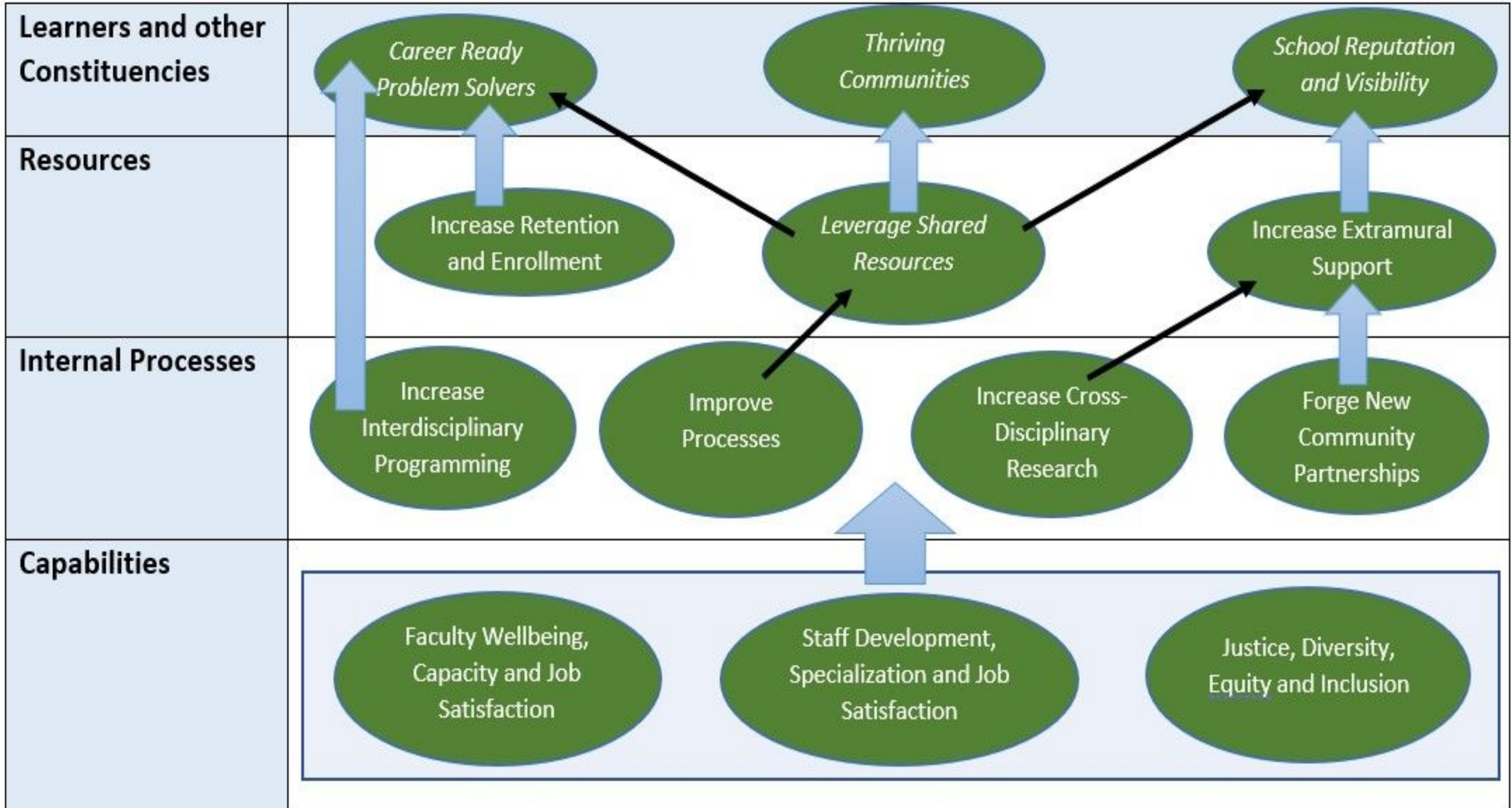
JDEI

In addition to forming a school-level JDEI Committee, the workgroup proposes the following strategies that keep JDEI at the center of the school:

- Affinity groups for students at the school level.
- Employee recruitment and retention strategies, including school-wide policies and processes that attract diverse applicant pools.
- Leverage the school size to design structures that promote JDEI, including through distributing committee service and enhancing work-life balance (*see Appendices IA and IB of the report for example org charts from PSU's School of Business and information on the formation of the School of Business*).
- Include continuous review and assessment.

Building Community in the School

Creating a sense of community in the school is a priority. Strategies include:
- Holding regular school-level events for students and stakeholders.
- Holding regular meetings of faculty and staff to discuss school relevant decisions, celebrate shared interests, and report on school outcomes.
- Creating shared spaces such as a "lounge" space for informal gathering and discuss potential co-location.

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Learners and other Constituencies		
Career Ready Problem Solvers	*Thriving Communities*	*School Reputation and Visibility*

Resources
- Increase Retention and Enrollment
- *Leverage Shared Resources*
- Increase Extramural Support

Internal Processes
- Increase Interdisciplinary Programming
- Improve Processes
- Increase Cross-Disciplinary Research
- Forge New Community Partnerships

Capabilities
- Faculty Wellbeing, Capacity and Job Satisfaction
- Staff Development, Specialization and Job Satisfaction
- Justice, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Student Success

Curriculum, Experiential Learning, Advising and Belonging, and Graduate Students

Curriculum

- Preserve all existing majors and minors.
- House curricular control with the programs, not at the school level (i.e., with the program leads).
- Leverage the school size to improve scheduling through reducing conflicts while preserving unique discipline-specific offerings, allowing students to access a greater variety of courses, especially at the 400 level.

Curriculum

- Specific cross-disciplinary program or course ideas:
  - o Intro level courses that help outline major pathways.
  - o Methods courses housed at the school level, including training on basic statistics, interdisciplinary research design, writing, communication, and research ethics.
  - o Increase stackable credentials.
  - o Improve general education pathways.
  - o Explore potential for a school-wide online pathway to increase access to students wanting online, while preserving in-person options for those who succeed in the face-to-face format.

Experiential Learning

- Partner with employers to offer paid internships, including opportunities for field and community based work.
- Offer collaborative, holistic field trips.
- Incorporate inquiry based learning, including course based undergraduate research experience.

Advising and Belonging

- One-stop for academic, career, internship and research advising.
  - o Clearly communicate the various pathways and how to move through them.
  - o Provide meaningful connections to research, internships, and career opportunities.
- Have "school-level advisors?"
- Connect students with other campus resources as needed.
- Apply a cross-disciplinary approach to mentoring and advising.

Advising and Belonging

- Provide opportunities for students to learn about transdisciplinary themes beyond their majors (e.g., "sustainability," "science in a social context," "complex systems").
- Leverage the larger cohort to help students network through student organizations, student events, and collaborative workspaces.
- Provide a smooth transition for transfer students.

Graduate Students

- Allow graduate committee members to be more easily drawn from across the school.
- Pool some coursework to allow for more graduate only courses.
- Being part of a larger community of graduate students will help morale and a sense of belonging, along with greater networking opportunities.

Recommended Next Steps for Planning

- Budget
- Partnerships
- Faculty
  - ○ investments in faculty positions
  - ○ Establishing an equitable approach for teaching, advising, research loads, and common standards for graduate assistant pay across units
- Staffing Model

Questions and Feedback

Thank you for joining us today!

Please share feedback at any time via the initiative email box
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