Portland State
UNIVERSITY



# Exploratory School Discussion
## Summer Workgroup: "Proposed Options for the Proposal"

*Exploratory School Discussion Summer Workgroup, September 2023*

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# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Departments of Anthropology, Biology, Environmental Science and Management, Geography, and Geology, and the program of Systems Science (which will very likely enter the School as "Complex Systems"), are exploring coming together as a new school in CLAS at the nexus of these disciplines. You can read more about the Exploratory School Initiative on the Initiative Website.

The Exploratory School Discussion Workgroup released a Report in June 2023, containing the conceptual school model illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 1).  This model is designed to enhance student outcomes and opportunities; better serve our community, nation, and world; and create an outstanding work environment for faculty and staff.
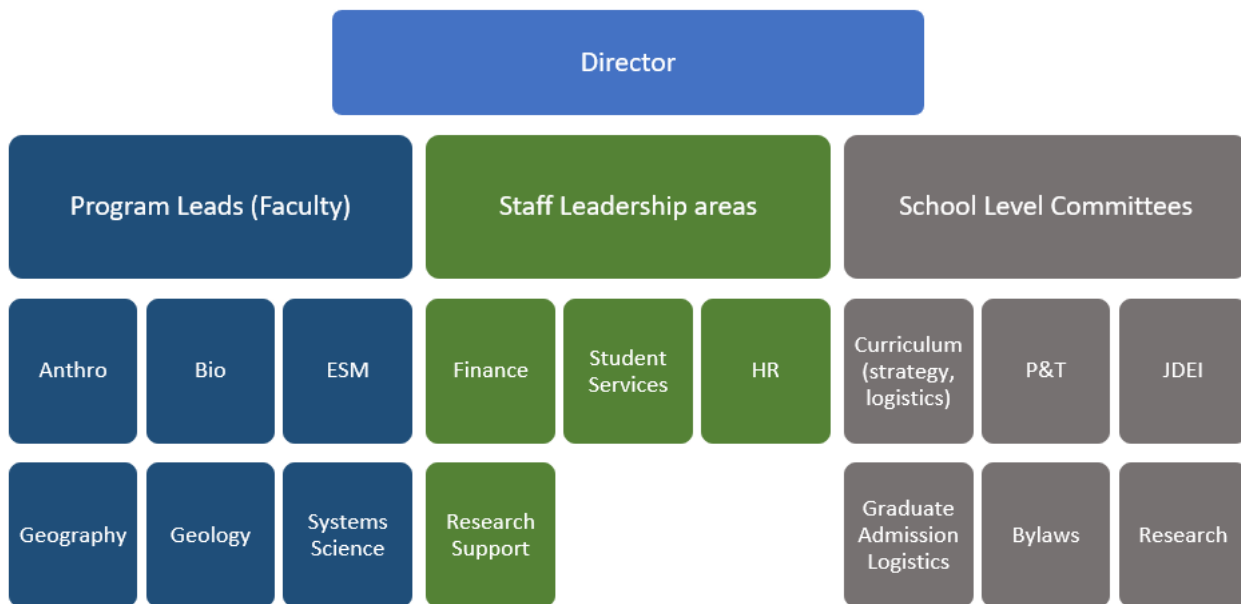


**Figure 1. Conceptual School Model from June 2023.** *Model included a "leadership team" composed of the six "leads" plus staff representation. Source: Exploratory School Discussion Workgroup Report, p. 10.*

Following release of the above model, an "Iterative Phase" began, featuring a Town Hall and opportunities for the departments to provide feedback. Several requests for details and clarifications came in at this stage, as summarized in the June Update from Chairs.

## Summer Workgroup

A "Summer Workgroup" was formed to develop options and recommendations for the items requiring further detail, including those gathered from the Iterative Phase and other gaps identified by the Summer Workgroup during the process. The workgroup included representatives from all six units (see roster on p. 3).

The workgroup met seven times over the summer via Zoom, with subgroups working on individual topics between meetings. Chairs worked in parallel to gather details to share via the workgroup and review workgroup progress.

## This report

The summer workgroup tackled three main areas of work: (1) leadership roles and responsibilities, (2) building community and resolving conflicts, and (3) identifying ways for others to connect with the school.  The workgroup helped provide details and options in each of these areas.  The workgroup emphasizes that this document outlines potential pathways forward as a school, and that the structure here is merely a draft to be considered as options to be considered in the final model (i.e., EPC "proposal to become a school") that will be voted on. You can submit input on the details and options in the following ways:
- Attending the September 22 Retreat to discuss as a group.
- Filling out pp 6-20  of this report by hand and returning it to your department chair or the CLAS main office.
- Completing a Google Form version that CLAS student employees are working on, which will be made available as a third option following the Retreat.

# "OPTIONS" FROM THE SUMMER WORKGROUP

1.   **Leadership Roles and Responsibilities**
The summer workgroup continued to work on the conceptual model of the leadership structure of the potential school.  Although there are alternatives, the leadership structure is envisioned to include a director, academic area leads *(note: renamed from "program leads" in the original model for clarity)*, staff leadership, and school level committees.

**The school director** is responsible for managing the operations and strategic implementation of the school vision, and is supported by the academic area leads, staff leads, and the school committees.

**Academic area leads** are responsible for course planning and other curricular affairs, learning objectives, assessment, initiating course and program proposals, and other academic affairs associated with the academic area majors, minors, and certificate programs.

**Staff leadership areas** include a group of professional staff responsible for finance, undergraduate and graduate student services, academic services, research support, and events/outreach/alumni.

**School level committees** are an important aspect of faculty governance, and engagement of staff leadership with committees enhances the potential for faculty and staff to work in partnership. Standing school-wide committees discussed include an Executive Committee *(note: the summer workgroup renamed the "Leadership Team" in the original model)*, Curriculum Committee, P&T Committee, Graduate Affairs, JEDI, and Outreach and Community Building Committees.

The Summer workgroup revised the original conceptual model of the leadership structure presented above on p.4 to represent their work:



Academic area leads, staff leadership, school committee chairs, and the director all interact to form the school leadership structure.

The descriptions below reflect a draft vision of discussions by the summer workgroup. For each element of the leadership structure, options are presented for the selection of individuals for leadership roles, the terms they might serve, and, in some cases, the responsibilities of different roles.

<u>Summer Workgroup Recommendations</u>

### *1.1.1. School Director*

- The School Director is responsible for finance, curricular coordination, faculty reviews and other personnel matters, school-wide outreach and development, fostering school identity and interactions, and managing day-to-day operations of the school. The School Director is supported by a leadership team, including academic areas leads, staff leads, and school committees.

- Duties & Responsibilities
    - Final proposal for annual course plan.
    - Annual budget request and management that is linked to the annual course plan. The School Director also proposes an internal budget for any further budget elements (e.g., S&S spending, special projects, etc.).
    - P&T/CA/PTR related recommendations and annual review letters (similar to what a chair does now), as well as taking on other related personnel issues as needed (e.g., courtesy appt, affiliates, etc.). The School Director is responsible for seeking external reviews.
    - School promotion and outreach, including a school-wide newsletter, academic area specific webpages, exit interviews, tracking graduate outcomes, alumni tracking, and fundraising.
    - School-wide quarterly meetings and other school-wide events.

*Please indicate agreement or comments on School Director Duties and Responsibilities below:*

_____

_____

*Selecting the School Director. Indicate your preference for one of the following:*

☐     ***Internal nominating process for School Director, followed by a majority vote of the school's voting members*** *(Recommended by Summer Workgroup).*

☐     ***External search and hire*** *(Summer Workgroup noted that this is probably not realistic given PSU context, especially if every 3 years).*

☐     ***Appointment by the Dean of CLAS*** *(Not preferred by Summer Workgroup, and*

*likely not in compliance with faculty governance rules).*

☐ ***Internal candidate, with director selected from within each Academic Area on a rotating schedule, with no renewal*** *(Summer Workgroup identified some problems here, e.g., for very small units)*

*Director's duration of service. Indicate your preference for one of the following:*

☐ ***3 yr appointment, with possibility of renewal (possibility of 2- or 3-term limit)***

☐ ***No term limit***

☐ ***If rotating schedule, no renewal***

*Checks and balances on the Director. The workgroup notes that the school by-laws would identify some decisions that require a vote of the voting school membership. For decisions not requiring a school-wide vote, indicate your preference for one of the following:*

☐ ***The School Director makes all final decisions, except those specifically requiring a vote of the eligible school members according to the school by-laws.***

☐ ***Major decisions that do not require a vote of eligible school membership (e.g., annual course plan, curricular changes, major financial decisions/annual budget, etc.) are proposed by the School Director, but require approval of the Executive Committee.***

### 1.1.2. Academic Area Leads

■ Academic Area Leads are elected by each academic area, and are responsible for major curriculum, learning objectives, assessment, initiating course and program proposals, and other academic affairs associated with the academic area major(s), minors, or certificate programs. Consider staggering their elections to preserve institutional knowledge of the leads as a group. Academic areas will maintain orientations, graduation ceremonies, and other academic area specific events. All Academic Area Lead responsibilities are supported by relevant school staff.

■ **Duties & Responsibilities of the Academic Area Leads**

- Maintaining curricula for academic majors, minors, certificates, and graduate programs, including learning objectives and assessment.
- Draft annual course plan for their area with assistance of relevant staff, and review and provide feedback on the final proposed school-wide course plan, including identification of adjunct instructors and area-level hiring needs.
- First responders for faculty related issues (e.g., course assignments, etc.), and partner to academic advisors for student related issues (e.g., DARS exceptions); refers issues that cannot be solved at the academic area level and those that involve disputes among faculty to the School Director.
- Partner with the School Director on school-wide events, and coordinate academic area specific events with support from school staff and academic area faculty where appropriate.
- Maintaining regular academic area meetings (each academic area decides cadence).

■ *Duration of academic area leads' service. How many years should academic area leads serve?:*

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*1.1.3. Committees*

■ Committee service is an important aspect of faculty governance. Further, engagement of staff leadership on committees enhances the potential for faculty and staff to work in partnership with each other. Standing school-wide committees discussed in this section from the School Model include the Executive Committee, Curriculum Committee, P&T Committee and Graduate Affairs Committee. The Summer Workgroup notes that the JEDI and research committees are also essential components of the School Model, although not addressed in this section. A proposed Outreach and Community Building Committee is described on page 12.

■ **Executive Committee –**
From the June Report: "The leadership team *[Note: renamed by Summer Workgroup as "Executive Committee]*, tasked with assisting the director, includes the six academic area 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 and decision makers."

*Note that the Summer Workgroup took a more expansive view of this team:*
The Executive Committee is composed of faculty representing each of the academic areas who are tasked with reviewing and proposing revisions to the budget, strategic direction, bylaws, P&T guidelines, etc.  Given the link between budget and course plan, the executive committee also reviews the final proposed annual course plan.  The Committee chair is selected by committee members.  Committee has staff financial leadership as a resource member.

*Executive Committee Composition. Indicate your preferences the following:*

☐ ***The committee is composed of the academic area leads plus staff representation.***

☐ ***The committee includes a position for the previous school director.***

■ **Curriculum Committee –** Committee composed of faculty from each of the academic areas tasked with reviewing and providing feedback on curriculum proposals, and conducting program assessments, and other strategic considerations. Committee chair is selected by committee members.  Committee may include academic area leads as needed, and has staff undergraduate and graduate program coordinators as resource members.

*Curriculum Committee Responsibilities and Composition. Indicate your preference for either of the following:*

☐ ***Committee focus is long-term and on the strategic aspect, considering new ways to change the current curriculum (expand, combine, modify, etc.).***

☐ ***Committee members are nominated by and voted on by each academic area faculty.***

■ **P&T Committee –** Committee composed of faculty from the academic areas and is tasked with promotion, tenure, continuous appointment, PTR, and related faculty personnel reviews.  Committee chair is selected by committee members.

Committee has the staff HR director as a resource member, but is not responsible for soliciting external reviews.

*P&T Committee Composition. Indicate your preference for one of the following:*

☐   ***The committee includes one member of each academic area plus at least one additional ad-hoc member from each academic area that has a candidate up for review to ensure representation from academic areas in faculty reviews. Third year, promotion, tenure, and milestone/continuous appointment reviews are done by a subpanel of 3 P&T committee members, including two from each reviewees academic area, one of whom presents the relevant case and the subpanel recommendations to the full committee; full committee makes recommendation to the School Director.***

☐   ***The committee includes one member from each academic area, and all reviews are conducted by the full committee; the full committee makes recommendations to the School Director.***

- ■   **Graduate Affairs Committee –** Committee composed of faculty from the academic areas tasked with managing the graduate application review process (the committee is NOT a deliberative body deciding which applicants are accepted), annual review process for graduate students, reviewing graduate curriculum proposals, and other graduate affairs as needed.  Committee chair is selected by committee members.  Grad program coordinator staff is a resource member to the committee.

*Graduate Affairs Committee Composition. Indicate your preference for one of the following:*

☐   ***A representative from a majority of the academic areas (e.g, if there are 6 academic areas, at least 4 need to be represented, but all are welcome; committee could range between 4 and 6 members)***

☐   ***Representative from each academic area (6 members).***

- ■   **JDEI Committee –** To identify and implement best practices that keep JDEI at the center of the school

*Submit ideas on tasks for the JDEI committee that keep JDEI at the center of the school:*

_____

_____

● **Additional Committees**

*Select any of the following committees that should be adopted <u>in addition to </u>those in the original [School Model](), which included **JDEI, Graduate Affairs, Curriculum, P&T, Research, and Bylaws**. You may select more than one.*

☐      ***Outreach and Community Building Committee:*** Assists in integrating our programs with the city, including partnerships (internships and research), career paths, easing community college transfer / pathways, external advisory panel(s), marketing / communication, overseeing the seminar series, etc.

☐      ***Student Affairs Committee as a standalone committee (includes Graduate Student Affairs)***

☐      ***Student Affairs added as a task of the Outreach and Community Building Committee** (only select if "Outreach and Community Building Committee" is selected above)*

☐      ***The** [School Model]() **already had enough committees***

*Comments (optional)*

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**1.1.4. Staff Leadership**

This fall the CLAS Dean's Office will be rolling out a new staffing model that focuses on the hiring of academic professionals to perform specialized tasks like budgetary, student affairs, academic services, and events and outreach.  The Summer Workgroup did not try to identify options for staff leadership areas, but instead focused on what staff duties each of the leadership areas from the

[School Model](#) might cover in a manner that might fit with the new CLAS staffing model.  As a reminder the School Model includes "staff leadership areas" (see diagrams on pp. 4 and 6).  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.

- **Finance**
    - Budgeting & reporting
    - Purchasing
    - Reimbursements
    - LDFs/buyouts/course releases

- **Student Services**
    - Graduate Programs Coordination, including annual reviews, program assessment and outcomes
    - Undergrad Programs Coordination, including assessment, exit interviews, and outcomes
    - Student Research, Internships, Experiential Learning
    - CARE Referrals
    - Student Events and Outreach
    - Prior Institution Transcript and Syllabi Reviews
    - Community College and other program articulations
    - Course Planning and degree mapping (including pre-transfer)

- **Academic Services**
    - Course scheduling
    - Student evaluations
    - Academic area operations

- **Events, Alumni, and Outreach Coordination**
    - Events coordination
    - Community outreach
    - Donor/alumni relations
    - Website

- **Research Support**
    - School related travel & Personal reimbursements
    - Coordinating with CLAS and SPA staff
    - Supporting proposal development

- ■ (HR- see proposed CLAS staffing model)

### 1.2 Interdisciplinary Academic Areas

*Indicate your preference for <u>one of</u> the following:*

☐ *Hold discussions about potentially adding, over time, one or more interdisciplinary "Academic Areas" that would also have leads (i.e., beyond the suggested Graduate Program Lead)*

☐ *Not interested these discussions happening at this time*

*Comments (optional)*

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### 1.3 Disciplinary Identity

<u>Background:</u> Many faculty have expressed an interest in maintaining disciplinary identity in the new school, while others have expressed interest in developing a new school-wide identity. The Summer Workgroup has explored ways to maintain disciplinary identity while concurrently forming a strong identity as a new school.

<u>Recommendations from the Summer Workgroup:</u>

- ● *Maintain student disciplinary groups within academic areas.*
- ● *Tie faculty to their academic areas on the school website.*
- ● *Academic Area Leads to convene academic area faculty to coordinate academic programs and maintain academic affairs for majors, minors, certificates, and other programs.*
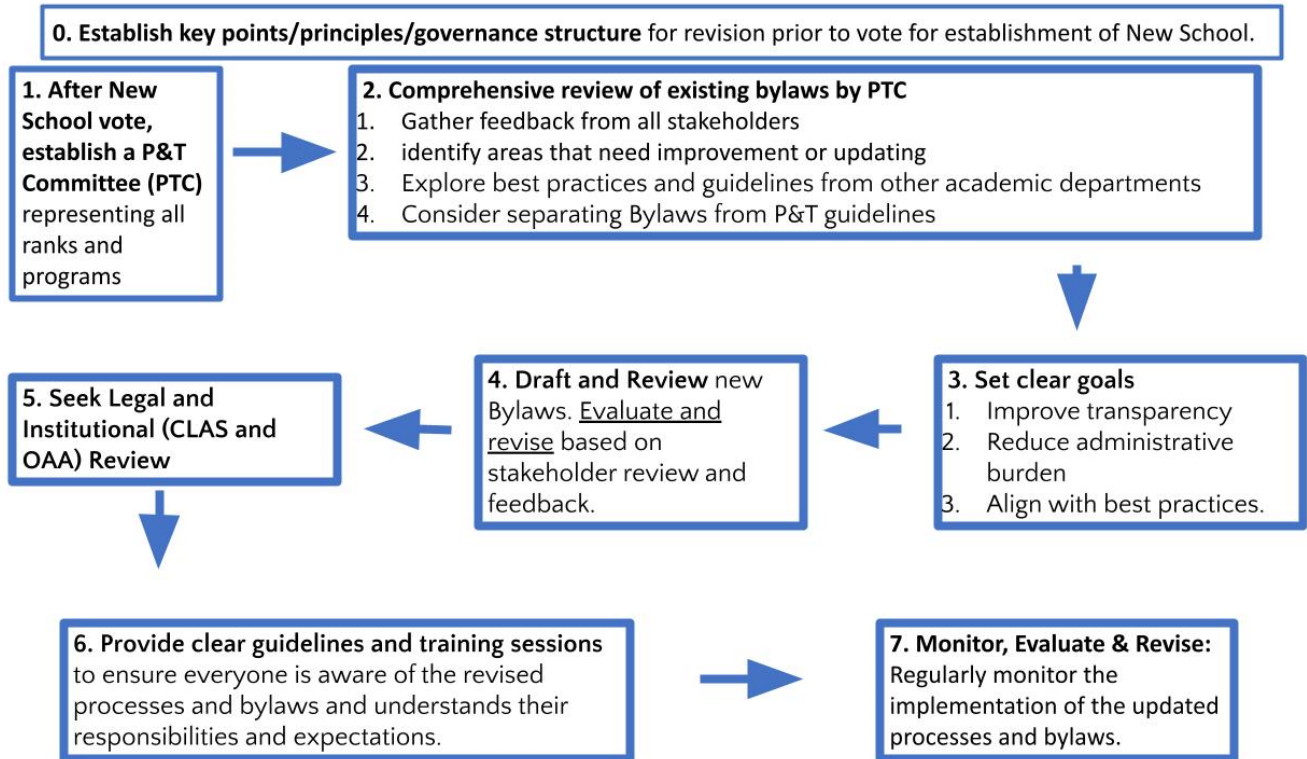
*Comments on these recommendations*

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1.4 **Updating P&T and Bylaws**

As noted in the June Update from Department Chairs, which summarized input from the "Iterative Phase," delineating a process to efficiently update bylaws should be a priority.

The Summer workgroup proposes the following workflow:

**0. Establish key points/principles/governance structure** for revision prior to vote for establishment of New School.

**1. After New School vote, establish a P&T Committee (PTC)** representing all ranks and programs

**2. Comprehensive review of existing bylaws by PTC**
1. Gather feedback from all stakeholders
2. identify areas that need improvement or updating
3. Explore best practices and guidelines from other academic departments
4. Consider separating Bylaws from P&T guidelines

**5. Seek Legal and Institutional (CLAS and OAA) Review**

**4. Draft and Review** new Bylaws. Evaluate and revise based on stakeholder review and feedback.

**3. Set clear goals**
1. Improve transparency
2. Reduce administrative burden
3. Align with best practices.

**6. Provide clear guidelines and training sessions** to ensure everyone is aware of the revised processes and bylaws and understands their responsibilities and expectations.

**7. Monitor, Evaluate & Revise:** Regularly monitor the implementation of the updated processes and bylaws.

*Please indicate agreement or comments below:*

Is it prudent to build in an internal review of the bylaws after, say, 3 yrs of operation?

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1.5 **Strategies for investment in the school**

Background: The Summer Workgroup discussed the objective of securing future investment in the school, to better serve our students and community while improving workloads (i.e., better work-life balance to enhance job satisfaction and productivity) for faculty and staff. Success will rely on 1) demonstrating that we use our current

resources in the most efficient ways possible, 2) collaborative input from all disciplines combined with school-wide strategic planning tools and market analysis tools to identify areas where investment will have the highest impact, and 3) identifying external funding opportunities. See Appendix II for details.

Option from the Summer Workgroup:

*No action required on this item, but comments are welcomed below*

_____

_____


## 2. Building Community

### 2.1 **Ensuring that faculty working on all areas feel like an important part of the school**

Background: To be a school does not mean our research needs to align to be successful or to be an inclusive workplace and community.

Workgroup Recommendations:
To create faculty & staff cohort:
- Find common goals across the school
  - Student success
  - Reduced admin loads for faculty and staff
  - Academic freedom
  - Unified voices & greater impact at college & university level
  - Weathering the storm together (i.e. PSU budgets)
- Annual retreat with topical breakout sessions. Chance to talk about where we are and where we are going.
- School wide mixers/functions
- Celebrate school wide successes, celebrate program, faculty & staff successes
- Team teach cross disciplinary courses (i.e. new intro series, and other courses at upper division level)

*Please indicate agreement or comments below:*

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2.2 **Conflict Resolution**

Background: Conflict resolution was another theme raised during the Iterative Phase, as noted in the June Update from Department Chairs.

Workgroup Recommendations:

**Conflict Resolution Coordinator:** New position, hopefully someone with actual training in conflict resolution and mediation. Potentially an outside neutral party. Be aware of and work with existing PSU resources, collective bargaining agreements, Human Resources, Unions, and other PSU policies and processes. Perhaps one of the existing campus members at PSU with this skill set could apply FTE to this work.

-Ensures that existing resources and structures are included in the process

***Conflict Resolution Goals:***
- Reduce employee workload
- Increase effectiveness
- Protect vulnerable parties in cases of large power differential
- Comply with all Institutional policies related to fair/safe workplace
- Facilitate and encourage clear and respectful communication.

See Appendix I for a full table.

*Please provide comments on the Summer Workgroup's Conflict Resolution ideas below:*

_____

_____


2.3 **Community Building Events**

*Please indicate which of the following community building events are of interest. You may select more than one.*

- ☐ ***Annual retreats for the School.***

- ☐ ***Joint seminars once a month, each program holds their seminar the other 3 weeks of the month. School wide happy hour after the School seminar.***

- ☐ ***School wide mixer for faculty & staff - New Year Party (end of calendar year party at Alumni House)***

- ☐ ***Monthly School faculty & staff meetings and monthly faculty & staff program meetings, alternating by week.***

☐    *Other:_____*

### 2.4    Colocation or Gathering Spaces

*Please indicate which of the following options are of interest. You may select more than one.*

☐    *Co-location in a building and/or adjacent buildings is essential for this to flourish, rather than just be a school in name only (e.g. problems SOE faced).*

☐    *Seminars - space large enough for the school.*

☐    *Location for the New Year party - Alumni House (?)*

☐    *Other: _____*

### 2.5    Involving Students

*Please indicate which of the following options are of interest. You may select more than one.*

☐    *Information session for students - what are we doing, how can we involve you. One page write-up on topics for students unable to attend. Followed by Mixer across academic areas for graduate students (School to supply snacks).*

☐    *Grad rep to school meetings/program meetings*

☐    *Grad seminar across the school. Grad rep reports back to students at Grad seminar - and takes new issues to school faculty and staff at meetings.*

☐    *Undergrads & Faculty team teaching - Curriculum Committee to make an intro series that is cross disciplinary - so it is easier to move across academic program areas  earlier in a student's academic career.*

☐    *Other: _____*

3.  Serving as a Hub for Partnerships across Campus and the Community

**Multiple ways to connect with the School**

Background: The Summer Workgroup identified the following three routes for faculty to associate with the school. See Appendix II for details

*Member Faculty-* Faculty members of the units that vote to join the school, including joint faculty appointments and adjuncts.

*Affiliate Faculty-* Members of other PSU departments or scholars outside the PSU community who affiliate with the school to collaborate on research, teaching, or service. Requires a formal letter of appointment.

*Community Partners-* Scholars or employers in the community who collaborate in areas such as research, service (e.g., serving on job panels or graduate committee), advisory panels, or providing experiential learning or job opportunities to students. Does not require a formal letter of appointment.


*Please provide comments on "ways to connect" below:*

_____

_____


4. Staffing Model

Background:
As described in Section 1 above, the School Model included "staff leadership areas," with staff members in the school reporting to the staff leads. Opportunities are created for staff who would like to specialize, and staff are represented on school committees as appropriate. Staff career development is valued in the school.


Options from the Summer Workgroup
*Select one of the options below:*


☐ **Task a Transition Steering Team comprised of the chairs of the current departments, staff representatives and representation from the CLAS Dean's Office, to perform transition-related tasks of the new school, including but not limited to monthly outreach to staff from the relevant departments. Goals of the staff outreach are 1) to collect staff feedback, and 2) work collaboratively with staff on developing a staffing model for the school that reflects best practices for achieving our mission while enhancing staff well-being and providing opportunities for staff leadership development.**


☐ **Use another process to work collaboratively with staff to achieve these goals (use "Comments" section below)**

Comments:

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5. Bylaws

See Appendix III for a summary of bylaws in the current six units.

# ONLINE APPENDICES

### I.   Conflict Resolution, II. Partnerships, III. Bylaws

Click here to access the three online appendices or use the following QR code: