

SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Academic Reorganization Omnibus Proposal December 7, 2023

Content Summary

This omnibus proposal describes the new structure of the academic units in the Division of Academic Affairs at Sonoma State University to be implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year. The process of [academic reorganization](#) (AR) will be viewed in the larger context of the Division's administrative reorganization and [Academic Master Planning process](#) (AMP), all of which are designed to respond to the campus' parallel need for budget reduction and enrollment growth. Background information leading to this reorganization and our university goals associated with it are documented below, as are the rationale and assumptions involved in the decision making process. General staffing and budget information are also provided.

Additional details on staffing will be provided in spring semester in accordance with union contract requirements. Budget details and associated Chair assigned time will also be provided at the beginning of the spring semester for comment. Policy or process development for the selection of candidates for Chair to be appointed by the Deans is at the discretion of faculty governance and is therefore not included as part of this proposal or implementation. Results from the Academic Master Planning process and the recommendations of the five Working Groups are being released as each group completes its assignments and will be finalized as a complete Academic Master Plan in early Fall 2024.

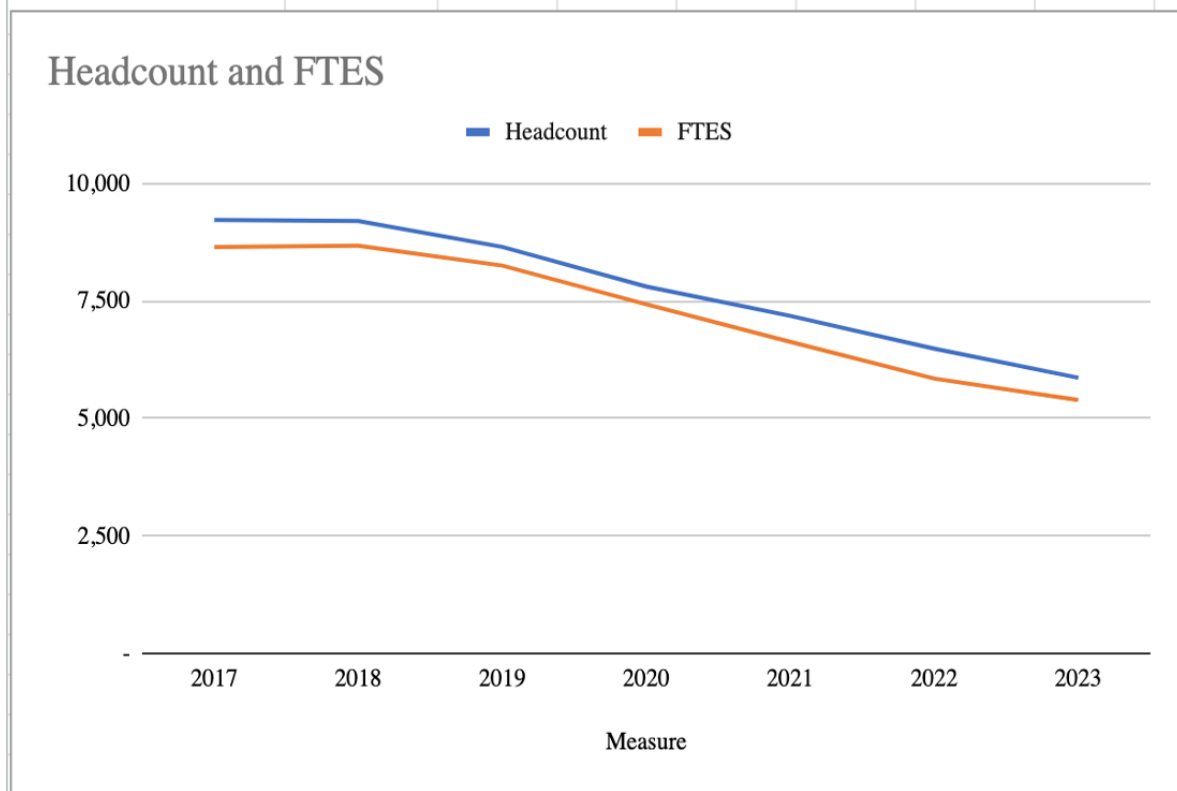
Background and Goals

Discussions about AR developed in response to the Chancellor's August 1, 2022 memo to President Ming-Tung "Mike" Lee requiring that the campus work intensively to increase enrollment and solve our budget deficit by June 2024. As widely reported through budget forums, messages to campus, Academic Senate and Senate Committee presentations, Senate Chair Chats, and a variety of other communication mechanisms, Sonoma State's enrollment has been in precipitous decline for several years, impacted

by a variety of factors, including natural disaster, the COVID pandemic, hyperlocality, increased competition, low college preparation rates in the North Bay region, declining community college enrollment rates during the last several years, loss of international enrollment, successful graduation rates that lower our continuing enrollment, and demographic changes in the State of California. Table 1 and the associated figure quantify that decline in SSU's enrollment.

Table 1: SSU Enrollment Patterns, 2017-2023

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Headcount	9,223	9,201	8,649	7,807	7,182	6,483	5,865
FTES	8,646	8,673	8,250	7,428	6,629	5,849	5,392



Sources:

Fall 2018 to 2022 from [CSU Enrollment Dashboard](#)

Fall 2023: from PS Enrollment by Class Level report on 09.19.2023

Notes:

Enrollment reflects all students (res and nonres) in state-funded courses.

We project that Sonoma State will not move swiftly back to its CSU-assigned target of 8,534 FTES. We will be a smaller campus for the foreseeable future, and we must continue to align our structures with that smaller student body.

Sonoma State's campus budget has been directly impacted by its enrollment decline. Enrollment declines since 2018 have led to nearly \$20 million dollars in tuition revenue loss over the 6-year period. Enrollment declines have affected every budget on campus, from Housing and Culinary Services to our instructional budget that allows us to hire lecturers and tenure-track faculty. Through attrition, a hiring slowdown, MPP non-retentions, and voluntary separation programs, Sonoma State has decreased its workforce by 9.7% since 2022 (74.7 headcount). By the end of June 2024, Sonoma State will have totalled over \$30 million dollars in base budget cuts in the last two years, but we must have a balanced budget to begin the new 2024-25 fiscal year.

The budget model for the CSU, with allocations based on FTES, causes a stagnating silo effect in Academic Affairs. Departments and programs compete for student enrollment to meet their targets, which creates barriers to flexibility, collaboration, and innovation. It has prevented us from being creative in resolving workload imbalances and sharing instruction by tenure-track faculty across disciplines. It is time to overcome these barriers and move forward together to make our programs even stronger.

AR provides a crucial pathway for the campus to address its budget and enrollment shortfalls, but not only because we can save money and definitely not because we are stripping the campus of its identity or academic core. Sonoma State is not [West Virginia University](#). We are not denuding the institution of its liberal arts and sciences majors or its tenure-track faculty. In fact, we are trying to sustain, preserve, and strengthen our identity—as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and a liberal arts and sciences focused institution—and our high-quality academics. The reorganization process, in collaboration with the Academic Master Plan, provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rethink the academic enterprise. We have an opportunity to remake our academic structures to serve our new needs and draw new populations of students to our campus.

Reorganization addresses the following issues:

- **Enrollment:** We must create the structures that will support the growth of enrollment through the appropriate mix of academic programs. That is where reorganization and the AMP come together. The structures have to promote the change and expansion of academic programs that will lead to enrollment growth. That means that academic reorganization must cultivate collaborations and partnerships between departments that lead to course sharing, cross listing courses, shared services, interdisciplinary curricula, and curriculum planning.
- **Student, faculty, and staff success:** We must continue to improve coordination of student services, tracking of retention and graduation of students, focus on equity gaps, and retention, tenure, and promotion of a diverse faculty. We must ensure a more equitable distribution of workload for faculty who serve as leaders

of departments and schools. Shared services will help us better manage the workload of our talented staff and create nodes of service for the academic core.

- **Budget:** Academic Affairs has been asked to continue contributing to the reduction of the campus' base budget deficit. Our campus and instructional budget are not aligned with our lower enrollment, which makes it imperative that we move forward to save any money we can from reorganization, without devastating losses of programs and faculty.

One of the key elements of AR at Sonoma State is its effort to engage in shared governance problem-solving and decision-making. Using the premise that the process is almost as important as the outcome, we recognize that better decisions will be made when we work together in defiance of traditional divisions and distrust, while also recognizing the distinct roles and responsibilities of our employees—faculty, staff, and administration. Through a variety of communication strategies, including forums, workshops, chair chats, presentations in various venues, and a robust [website](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) webpage, we have opened AR to faculty and staff governance structures and, indeed, to all employees for comment and feedback, and we view that as critical to a positive, sustainable outcome.

This proposal will continue the process of review and consultation as it is submitted to the Academic Senate Executive Committee review. Similarly, we recognize the need to work with our bargaining units, Human Resources, and Faculty Affairs to address contractual issues, workload, and other matters associated with department and school reorganization, including RTP concerns, lecture entitlements, and chair workload and assigned time. See [Appendix I](#) for a summary of AR communication and consultation from the beginning of the process through final approval on April 1, 2024.

New College and School Structure

Reorganization is always a balance between historical structures, present circumstances, and future planning. Early in the AR process, feedback from faculty and staff emphasized the importance of retaining departmental structures, in contrast to some reorganization models at other universities in which departments are “merged” to create new structures to house academic programs (see **FAQ 28** on the [FAQ webpage](#), which provides some examples of AR at other campuses). In discussing the number of colleges we should have, it has been important to consider retaining the identity of programs and departments and effectively marketing what we have and what we will build. We cannot make the number of colleges so few that identity is lost and students have trouble finding their intellectual home. At the same time, we also need to reduce

the number of colleges to allow our structures to reflect our new enrollment realities. Additional considerations in the final decision making process was creating a structure that:

- Facilitates collaborative efforts
- Coordinates processes and staff/administrative support
- Brings better balance to the size of the colleges
- Strives to address faculty needs, wants, and concerns
- Supports budgetary savings

It has also been helpful to know that our sister CSUs and many COPLAC institutions have undergone, are currently undergoing, or are considering various levels of academic reorganization as well.

In this new academic structure, departments with potential for collaboration have been clustered to form schools led by a single Chair. A small number of departments have remained as stand-alone entities. One department was split into two new departments and their respective programs moved into the department of the appropriate discipline. Schools and stand-alone departments are then clustered into Colleges each led by a Dean. Overall, this has changed leadership within these academic units from six deans and 37 Chairs to three Deans and 17 Chairs and an as yet to be determined number of coordinators. In addition, the School of Extended Education (SEIE) has been reimaged as the School of Professional and Continuing Education (PaCe) within the School of Business. The proposed new academic structure is included in [Appendix II](#) and Table 2 provides a rationale for the groupings of departments into schools. Wherever possible, the Provost and Deans have abided by departmental preference. Graduate program location is highlighted in the table as well for additional context.

Table 2: Rationale for School Groupings		
College	School Grouping	Rationale
College A: Science, Technology, and Business	Chemistry, Physics & Astronomy, and Geology	Departments chose to group together
	Biology and Kinesiology MS Program: Biology	Departments chose to group together
	Nursing and Health Sciences	Nursing agreed to house a new Health Sciences program; Health Sciences

	<p>MS Program: Nursing Post MS Program: Nursing</p>	<p>may merge with Nursing into a single department or Health Sciences could develop into a department</p>
	<p>Computer Science and Electrical Engineering MS Program: Electrical and Computer Engineering</p>	<p>Departments chose to group together</p>
	<p>Mathematics & Statistics and Economics</p>	<p>Provost initiated this grouping on the basis of potential for collaboration and at the request of faculty in Economics to be partnered with the Math Department. Math faculty reviewed the idea and are supportive.</p>
	<p>Business and PaCE (formerly SEIE) MBA Programs: Business Administration; Executive MBA (in self support)</p>	<p>Business meets guidelines as a standalone school and needs standalone school status for AACSB accreditation; PaCE has already been incorporated into the current School of Business and Economics and will stay with the Business Department. Given donor cultivation, the Wine Business Institute, and other infrastructure, an Executive Director at the College level will likely be necessary.</p>
<p>College B: Education, Counseling, and Ethnic Studies</p>	<p>Counseling</p>	<p>Counseling requested standalone status as part of its move to the current School of Education, and Provost has honored that request in reorganization because of its program accreditation (MPCAC)</p>

	MA: Counseling	and its distinctive curriculum within the College
	Early Childhood Studies and Children’s School MA: Early Childhood Education	Structure requested by Dean; pairing with Children’s School will involve considerable and distinctive oversight by the department faculty.
	Literacy Studies & Elementary Education, Educational Leadership & Special Education, and Curriculum Studies & Secondary Education; MA Program: Educational Leadership	Departments with only credentials chose to group together
	Hutchins School of Liberal Studies and Liberal Arts Ukiah	Hutchins School has a 50-year tradition as a standalone school; departmental comments included partnership with the Ukiah program; Provost placed Hutchins in this college based on conversations between Dean Alamillo and Chair Dyer
	American Multicultural Studies, Chicano and Latino Studies, Native American Studies; Modern Languages and Literature MA Program: Spanish	Provost placed these programs together after extensive conversations with Ethnic Studies faculty; ES departments requested placement in this college to pair with credential programs. Spanish and CALS expressed interest in working together.
College C: Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Sociology and Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies	Departments chose to group together

	<p>History, Art History, and Political Science</p> <p>MA Program: History Masters in Public Administration</p>	<p>Departments and Program faculty chose to group together; Art History will break away from Studio Art—could be treated as a department</p>
	<p>Anthropology (with Human Development) and Geography, Environment & Planning (with Global Studies)</p> <p>MA and MS Programs: Cultural Resource Management</p>	<p>Departments chose to group together; Human Development and Global Studies were programs already nested inside departments</p>
	<p>English, Philosophy, and Women and Gender Studies</p> <p>MA Program: English</p>	<p>This school was constructed by Provost and Deans; English is interested in partnering with WGS; Philosophy and English will share writing requirements in Area A in the new GE curriculum;</p>
	<p>Music, Theater Arts and Dance, Art-Studio, Communication and Media Studies, with affiliated faculty from English (Creative Writing Track)</p>	<p>Establishing a School of the Arts was a strong theme in comments and discussions. Creative Writing faculty asked to have an affiliated relationship with the School of the Arts; important to note that an MOU will need to be established regarding funding and staffing for each department, including IRA funding; Art-Studio will split with Art History and be treated as a department. Given infrastructure, technical staffing, facilities, and intensive programming</p>

		and scheduling needs, this School will require an Executive Director.
	Psychology	Meets guidelines as a standalone department

A four-college model with the Library as a separate organizational unit was initially considered the best way to highlight the distinctiveness of our academic programs through some centerpieces of academic excellence while encouraging fruitful and collaborative problem solving, shared services, and fiscal efficiencies. After consideration of the factors outlined in the previous section and the feedback provided during public updates, Chairs’ workshops, Deans’ meetings, and individual or group communications, a three-college model with the Library as a separate organizational unit began to emerge. It offers maximum collaboration and budget savings opportunities. Beyond the restructuring of academic departments, schools, and colleges, we have done additional temporary and continuing administrative restructuring over the last year. Those changes are documented here:

- The Library is currently being led by Dean Laura Alamillo and that interim leadership will continue through the 2024-25 academic year. Hiring of an executive leader for the Library will be addressed as soon as the campus budget allows. The Provost and Library faculty and staff are considering a variety of structures, including the internal hiring of an interim associate dean, to ensure the Library has a leadership team with expertise in the management of library spaces, operations, and programming.
- The former School of Extended and International Education (SEIE), to be renamed as the Office of Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) in keeping with changes at the system level, has been downsized considerably because of an internal budget deficit. Former Dean Karen Schneider is serving as Interim Executive Director of PaCE until December 2024, and she and Interim Dean Mike Visser have taken a number of steps to help the unit deal with the upcoming loss of revenue from summer session moving stateside and the enrollment challenges of PaCE academic programs.
- The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP), as communicated in earlier messages, now reports to the Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs and Success (currently Interim AVP Simone Aloisio), with the resulting budget savings from an AVP position. Gabby Utarid has been promoted to a Senior Director position and is responsible for the management of staff and operations in the unit.

- The Center for Community Engagement (CCE), as communicated in earlier messages, now reports to Loriann Negri, the Director of the Learning and Academic Resources Center. CCE will move to the IT wing of Schulz Information Center and be co-located with Career Services and other units. CCE, in keeping with the clear mission and purpose of the CSU’s [Community Engagement office](#), will expand its services to include students.
- The Office of Budget and Planning has changed its scope and name. Now known as the Office of Academic Resources (OAR), that unit has responsibility for the Academic Affairs budget and planning process, space allocation, usage, and maintenance facilitation, classroom technology, and oversight of the preserves. CTET reports to OAR, with a dotted line to the Provost for matters related to teaching and learning. The Center for Environmental Inquiry reports to OAR, with a dotted line to the Provost for matters related to teaching and learning. Mike Ogg’s title is now AVP for Academic Resources.

Cost savings from these changes total approximately \$360,000 in base budget savings. The reorganization resulted in the reduction of 2 FTE (MPP) roles that were combined into existing roles. Incremental increases to cover changes in administrative responsibilities were covered from a central (university-wide) base budget and benefited funding pool set aside last year. This savings represents base budget in the Operating Fund and does not include the savings garnered in reorganizing the School of Extended and International Education.

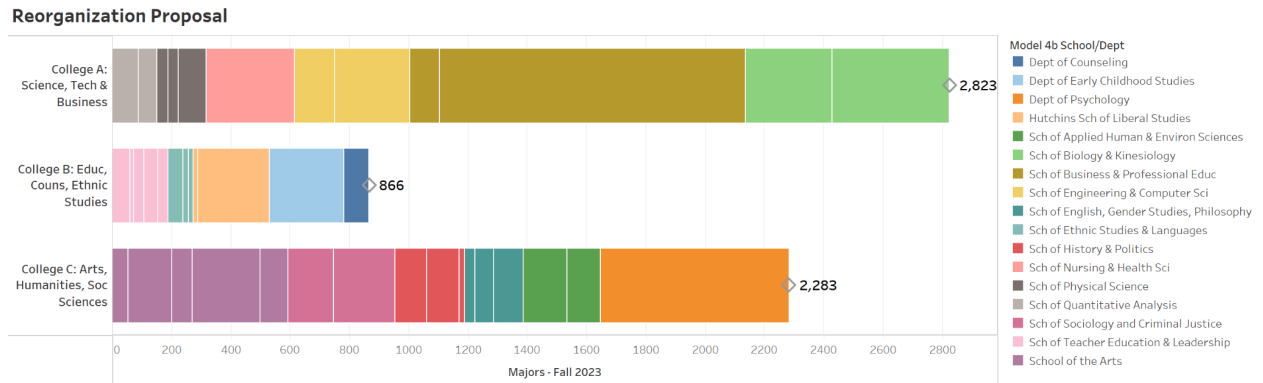
In addition, there were positions that remain unhired and are being held temporarily. These positions will generate a savings of 1 FTE (MPP) and one-time savings of approximately \$236,000. The incremental increases to cover changes in the administrative responsibilities were covered from the salary line of the position being held.

In this new structure, each College is led by a Dean as follows:

College	Dean
Science, Technology, and Business	Elisabeth Wade
Education, Counseling, and Ethnic Studies	Laura Alamillo
Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	Troii Carleton

Each College will also be supported by at least one Administrative Manager. With shifting needs, no Administrative Manager will lose their position.

This table indicates student headcount per College:



Salary savings (described below) will also provide additional leadership for departments and/or schools with substantial external boards, self support, and/or facilities needs. This includes an Executive Director for the School of the Arts and additional administrative support structures for the School of Business and Professional Education

The Provost’s Office will work with the Dean and Administrative Managers for each College to ensure appropriate staffing for each School or Department and the Colleges. The new School and College structures and centralization of some services in the Provost Office will allow us to find ways to address and redistribute workload in the Colleges. All CBA requirements will be followed.

Academic Unit Leadership Structure

Academic Unit Leadership will consist of three different roles: Chairs, Department Coordinators, and Graduate Program Coordinators: Chairs will be governed by the Senate Policy, [Selection, Appointment, and Duties of Department Chairs](#), and any revisions approved by the Senate and the President to account for the new organizational structure. See below for more specifics.

- *Chair Training:* The Provost accepts and will implement the recommendation made by FSAC on December 5, 2023: “Given the expanded administrative role of the new position, formal training of the new chairs should be provided. Such training would be similar to the current training provided by Faculty Affairs to new department chairs, but would require further discussion and documentation of the role of the school chair. This training would need to draw on expertise of former

department chairs and specialized positions within departments, including accreditation and oversight of facilities, as some examples. Included in this training should be how department administrative coordinators and chairs work collaboratively and their individual roles in department/school administration. We hope such training would be on-going as more information arises.”

- *Chair Assigned Time:* Chair assigned time guidelines will be proposed by the Office of the Provost through shared governance and submitted to the Academic Senate Executive Committee for review and comments. The model will include metrics for decision making and should recognize the complexity of circumstances faced by different departments and schools in number of faculty, number of students and FTES, technical components including technical staff, facilities management, programming, performance and event planning, accreditation, etc. The Provost, the AVP of Faculty Affairs and Success, and Deans will work to ensure equity in assigned time across departments, schools, and colleges and will implement the recommendation made by FSAC on December 5, 2023: “the compensation in re-assign time must be made available prior to schools selecting their new chair.” FSAC further recommends that “The description of specialized positions within departments . . . needs to be provided, and the relationship among these individuals and the school chair clearly laid out. Any issues of compensation for department/school administrative work vs. work as service activity should also be clarified.”
- *Chair Selection:* Chair selection is governed by the Senate policy indicated above and any revisions duly approved. The Provost upholds departmental and school autonomy in forming recommendations for approval by the President’s designee, the Dean of the College, whether that occurs by vote, consensus, a system or rotation, or any other equitable means. Deans will be responsible for monitoring Chair selection processes to ensure their fairness and to ensure that size of departmental faculty is not the sole mechanism by which school chairs are chosen.
- *Coordinators:* Coordination roles are at the department rather than program level and will only be available in schools with multiple departments. Coordinator roles ensure that departmental curricular oversight, scheduling, hiring, and RTP decisions have appropriate representation. FSAC recommended the following on December 5, 2023: “A clarification should be made university-wide of the rights and responsibilities of departments to self-govern via committee work and that the role of a school chair is limited to helping direct such deliberations, but not to override them.” Guidelines for coordinator compensation will be developed and forwarded with chair compensation on January 18, 2024.
- *Graduate Coordinators:* Graduate coordination is at the program rather than at the department or school level and is not, therefore, part of this proposal. The

Graduate Studies Subcommittee has recommended that equitable metrics and compensation for graduate program coordination and compensation be established. GSS may make further recommendations as part of the Academic Master Plan process.

Budget Savings

Consolidation of SEIE/PaCE with the School of Business and Economics in academic year 2022-2023 resulted in \$450,000 in salary and benefits savings through elimination of three MPP FTE positions and minimal backfilling of vacant positions. That savings reduces the self support budget deficit. Through completion of this primary phase of reorganization and attrition, we expect an additional loss of three to five MPP positions totalling an additional \$600,000 to \$1.1 million dollars in salary and benefits. Although Chair assigned time is still being determined using APARC guidelines and current practices, we project a modest savings of \$100,000 dollars. These savings include preserving funding for modest department coordination as well as leadership positions for PaCE/Business and the School of the Arts.

There are some one-time costs associated with implementation of the new structure. These costs include \$12,800 for PeopleSoft database rentals to construct and test the new academic hierarchies in MYSSU and MYHR. Facilities estimated \$60,000 in budget for new signage to support student way-finding. In addition, Facilities has projected that any location changes for personnel would not exceed a cost of \$1000/person in total moving expenses (moving, office clean-up, etc.). Cost/person will be dependent on individual office situations related to technology, furniture, and maintenance.

Comment Process

From December 7 - 15, 2023, this proposal is being distributed to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, Staff Council, Associated Students. These groups are invited to prepare comments on the proposal due back to the Provost, in writing, by March 14, 2024. These documents can be submitted to provost@sonoma.edu. This proposal is also being distributed to the entirety of Academic Affairs. Faculty, staff, and students should reach out to their representatives in these groups to have their comments included as directed by their respective groups' leadership. Faculty from new schools and colleges are also invited to submit additional recommendations for the names of their schools to be included in their groups' comments. Staff are encouraged to provide feedback with respect to how academic and student support will be organized around the new academic structure.

Implementation

An outline of the AR implementation plan can be found in [Appendix III](#). As described in the plan, additional information and data related to AR, such as the draft of Chair assigned time and

guidelines related to fall 2024 planning, will be provided at later dates. For additional detail on implementation, please reach out to the Project Manager (Jennifer Lillig).