

COLLEGIATE STRUCTURE

The strategic planning committee examined the structure of CALS in an effort to assess whether the college is organized in a way that best supports our long-term goals. A workgroup within the strategic planning committee was charged with identifying departments where restructuring may be desirable, making recommendations about options, and defining criteria for determining the college's structural efficiency. The group drew upon UW–Madison Faculty Policies and Procedures guidelines for definitions and processes. What follows is a summation of key points of the workgroup report.³

The goal of restructuring is to build or maintain strength and better use scarce resources by cooperating, collaborating or merging with other units with allied and/or complementary missions. While budget necessities might compel college administration to require restructuring, any unit is better served if its members are themselves able to identify the need for restructuring their unit, and are able to fashion that restructuring in a way that helps them best achieve excellence.

Types of restructuring include:

- Sharing facilities or administrative services to varying degrees (e.g., some departments share IT services; others have formed a “hub” for all administrative services)
- Sharing instructional programs (e.g., Community and Environmental Sociology and Sociology, Microbiology Doctoral Training Program) or sharing courses, cross-listing courses, co-teaching courses and teaching across departments and programs
- Sharing faculty positions (affiliate or joint appointments)
- Forming collaborative units (e.g., but not exclusively, centers) with shared vision, goals and timeline
- Combining departments (e.g., Forest Ecology and Management with Wildlife Ecology) or blending with departments in other colleges (e.g., Genetics)
- Dissolving departments and moving faculty to appropriate homes



Photo courtesy of CALS International Programs

Global Health students from a range of different majors visit a clinic during a three-week Study Abroad program in Uganda run through CALS.

Since its inception in fall 2011, the Undergraduate Certificate in Global Health has become a model of successful cross-campus collaboration. Offered by CALS in partnership with the campus' new Global Health Institute, with support from the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates, the certificate is open to students from any major. It entails a combination of global health-related coursework—which includes the integration of health with food and agriculture—and a designated field experience in the U.S. or abroad. The program resonates deeply with students—it is now one of the most sought-after certificates on campus.

Reasons to consider restructuring:

- If disciplines have evolved to a degree that new boundaries or combinations could enhance potential.
- Stakeholder needs, interests or support have changed such that new alignments might better serve them.
- Restructuring allows departments to recruit and retain excellent faculty, staff and students and to maintain a vibrant department where members can do their best research, teaching/learning, outreach and service.
- The size of the department has shrunk or is approaching critical size thresholds wherein its performance may be impaired:
 - Departments need sufficient size to provide depth and excellence in undergraduate and graduate education opportunities that will attract the best students.
 - Administrative systems require a level of expertise, training and retraining impossible for resource-limited support staff members in a small department to provide.
 - Shared governance requires sufficient faculty resources to be involved in hiring, mentoring, preparing tenure dossiers, leadership (e.g., department chair, associate chair), participation in college and university governance, etc.
 - Departments require sufficient numbers of faculty and support staff to manage undergraduate and graduate programs, graduate recruitment, fundraising, communications, planning and assessment.

Factors in consideration of restructuring:

We identified a set of broad indicators regarding when it is appropriate for a department to consider restructuring (solid squares). We also identified specific metrics (open squares) to convey the challenges and need for flexibility and nuance in applying them to specific departments.

Broad Indicators

- Inadequate department infrastructure/administrative support due to size.
- Inability to address governance, instructional, outreach or service needs.
- High allied programmatic strength exists elsewhere on campus or regionally.
- Existence of duplicative facilities or redundant activities.

- Low stakeholder interest in and demand for research, education and outreach.

- The department has experienced movement of significant numbers of professors to other departments with similar disciplinary orientations.

Specific Metrics (in comparison to similar departments and/or other college units)

- Number of majors or advisees (graduate, undergraduate, non-departmental programs)
- Number of credits (graduate and undergraduate) taught
- Federal and nonfederal funding; generated indirect costs
- Alumni and industry support (e.g., unrestricted gifts)
- Scholarly output, as expected for the discipline (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, citation indices, national rankings)
- Number of person-contact hours resulting from extension/outreach activities

Recommendations

1. The number of state-supported faculty FTEs is an important indicator of department viability. Any department with low numbers should periodically review both the general indicators for restructuring (solid squares) and specific measures of performance (open squares).
2. CALS should encourage and reward cross- and multi-departmental initiatives by supporting cooperation between departments and the creation of interest-area groups that transcend departments. Cooperation between individuals in the college and on campus is ongoing and active. To the extent possible this should be expanded and rewarded.
3. CALS should support new structures by facilitating discussions and, to the extent feasible, providing restructuring incentives that generate operational efficiencies or enhance the college's ability to fulfill its mission within a land-grant university.
4. This workgroup and this document are focused on departments. However, many of the issues considered here are relevant to centers, institutes, and other elements of the college, and we recommend conducting a similar study of those structures.