Reorganization Planned for Several Colleges at Metro

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Metro State’s administration is considering changes to the organizational structure of several colleges within the university. The proposed reorganization would affect the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Management, and the College of Health, Community and Professional Studies. It could also result in the College of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice being rebranded as a college focused on public and urban affairs.

In 2014, faculty members from the Communication Writing and the Arts Department (CWA) approached Provost Virginia Arthur with the idea that their department should be designated as a school. The CWA is currently a part of the College of Arts and Sciences, which houses 12 departments and programs including natural sciences, philosophy, mathematics, communication and social science. According to Arthur, faculty members provided evidence that becoming a school would improve the CWA's national visibility and make it more competitive when applying for grant money.

As new construction began around campus, the idea of a reorganization gained momentum. Arthur began to consider organizational changes to the whole College of Arts and Sciences. “With the opening of the Science Center, with the increase of the number of science programs — we're adding programs now in chemistry, chemistry teaching, environmental science,” said Arthur. “It seemed to me that it becomes a more manageable job if we think about separating them into two separate colleges.”

Arthur began pitching the idea to various stakeholders. “I put out a proposal and then held forums and I've invited people to send me their comments and I've met with different groups. And I think it seems that everybody's happy about that,” said Arthur. “As I began to consider the possible division of the College of Arts and Sciences into two smaller colleges, it seemed the right time to also designate CWA as a school. Within the college … there will be a school of CWA and departments of social science, history, practical philosophy and ethics, ethnic and religious studies, literature and language.”

The College of Arts and Sciences will not be the only college affected by the reorganization. The College of Management may also see some changes. According to Arthur, “Within the College of Management, they have just a single department and that includes accounting, management, marketing, management information systems. So it has all the disciplines which are usually broken up into departments. And I think, again, it's gotten kind of unwieldy for them to manage.” Under the reorganization, most existing programs would remain under the auspices of the College of Management, but they would be divided up into small departments.

Changes have been proposed for the College of Health, Community and Professional Studies (CHCPS) as well. The college contains departments for nursing, psychology, social work and human services. Arthur wants to know if creating a separate college for nursing and health sciences would open up more opportunities for programs like occupational therapy or physical therapy in the future. “I had really just asked that college to have conversations among themselves,” said Arthur. “Did they have the right structure now? Should we think of dividing that college and making nursing into a separate health science?” The answer is still forthcoming, but Arthur thinks that if the nursing department does not split off from the CHCPS, then the school will probably appoint an associate dean to help oversee the nursing department.

Another proposed change will rebrand the School of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (SLC) as a school of public and urban affairs. The new college is as yet unnamed, but it will be focused on urban issues. It will take the current SLC’s emphasis on policy and combine it with programs from the College of Management such the Masters of Public Administration, Masters of Nonprofit Leadership, and Masters in Advocacy and Political Leadership. According to Arthur, “This college will allow the university to establish a stronger identity as a public, urban institution which is deeply engaged with urban issues.”

Metro administration will make the final decisions on all organizational changes for next year by the end of the fall semester. The changes will be enacted over the course of the spring semester and be finalized on or before July 1, 2016. The reorganization will have little to no effect on current classes or degree requirements, so the impact on student experience should be minimal. However, it may allow students to feel more connected to their own programs. “I think having that stronger sense of identity is good for students ... Having smaller colleges to navigate are also easier. You can get the attention of your department chairs and your advisers and your dean if you need him or her more easily,” said Arthur.