

Review of the College of Forestry Reorganization Process to Date

The Dean and the Forestry Executive Committee (FEC) have used various means to communicate how the College reorganization process is unfolding and when decisions are made and why. Likewise, faculty and staff committees, all-college meetings, and other venues have been used to obtain input from faculty, staff, and students. The College has created a central repository of all of the reports and other papers concerning reorganization so that the process can be as transparent as possible.¹ Additionally, this review provides a recap of events and a summary of decisions that may prove helpful as we move into the next critical phase in planning.

Dean Salwasser announced the need to seek reduced administrative expenses through reorganization of the College in December 2006. He indicated at the time that reorganization would also be expected to better position the College to meet future needs of students and clients and to enable the College to continue to grow. Seven faculty/staff budget realignment advisory teams were chartered in February 2007 to explore potential budget reduction strategies and reorganization ideas and to promote broad discussion of reorganization options, clarify the nature of potential future client needs, and expose potential problems and issues. An FEC member was assigned to most groups to facilitate communication of group deliberations back to the FEC (see CFAC meeting March 15, 2007 in footnote 1). Team final reports and efforts were largely complete by mid-April 2007.

At its June 14, 2007 meeting, the FEC proposed a specific process for the remainder of the reorganization effort. This process would have the FEC develop a general framework for a reorganized structure on June 29 and then identify a committee, to be appointed by the Dean, to flesh out some organizational alternatives to the existing four-department structure. The committee would also estimate expected cost savings for the alternative models and develop steps for implementation by early November. This plan would be evaluated by the Dean, FEC, College of Forestry Advisory Council (CFAC), Provost, Faculty Senate, and FRL Advisory Committee, with consultations completed by January 1, 2008. Implementation would be targeted for July 1, 2008. In all these deliberations, the current strategic plan of the College would provide guidance relating to values and long-term aspirations. The process outlined above was modified and augmented as events unfolded in late June and early July, particularly by the inclusion of expanded faculty/staff discussion and input.

As an initial step, the Dean and FEC formed a subcommittee of the department heads, executive associate dean, and director of operations to consider the full range of organizational options that emerged from the faculty/staff advisory teams and propose a subset of alternatives to the existing four-department structure (together with estimated cost savings) for deliberation by the full FEC. The alternatives ranged from no separate academic departments to three departments. This subcommittee met on June 26, 2007 and recommended the elimination of "no-department" options from further consideration, forwarding the two- and three-department options to FEC for discussion on June 29.

¹ Staff/faculty committee reports can be found at <http://www.cof.orst.edu/cof/admin/CFAC/cfacschedule.php>, the Reorganization Advisory Committee report can be found at <http://www.cof.orst.edu/rac/>.

Primary concerns leading to the elimination of the no-department options were:

(a) the need to appoint numerous “faculty program leaders” (at 0.25 to 0.4 FTE) to manage the undergraduate and graduate programs presently housed in departments. Program success becomes sensitive to program leader quality and continuity. A significant concern was whether willing faculty could be recruited for these roles. The less than favorable experiences of forestry programs at other universities with this model were also a significant factor.

(b) reduced relations with clients that associate with specific programs. Some programs would be less visible to external constituents. A major factor was the question of who would take on the role of monitoring and maintaining communication with diverse stakeholders. It is unlikely that faculty will be able to fill this role.

(c) more administrative work would be shifted to faculty in the absence of department support. Tasks would remain but non-faculty assistance would be reduced.

(d) a significant expansion of the Dean’s office would be needed to provide necessary administrative services and programmatic leadership. Decisions would become more centralized at the College level with significantly increased involvement of both Dean and executive associate dean positions in internal management. This would be a challenge for the beginning of a major capital campaign.

(e) potential for inefficiency at program level.

(f) the no-department option might result in an extreme case of the “lack of common culture” among unit members with associated potential for morale issues for staff and faculty.

(g) this option would entail the biggest disruption of faculty and the largest transition costs. While the no-department model would appear to save the most money by eliminating department heads, those savings would be offset by the expense of faculty program leaders.

At its June 29 meeting, the FEC concurred with this analysis. It also unanimously voted to drop further consideration of the two-department models as well.

Primary concerns about the two-department models were:

(i) large size and internal diversity of departments would create a need for associate department heads, thus negating some of the savings. Beyond a reduction in office managers, it is not clear that a significant reduction in departmental support staff would be possible. There is a likelihood of increased costs for faculty program leaders as well.

(ii) reduced relations with clients and lower program visibility at a time when increased attention to development activities would be needed. Fewer leaders would mean less connection with key constituencies—it is unreasonable to expect that faculty would pick up this responsibility.

(iii) more administrative work and curricular/programmatic leadership would be shifted to faculty with reduced department support and increased diversity in unit mission.

(iv) long-term productive options for combining current WSE with FE or splitting WSE to combine with FR and/or FS seem unlikely. The net result of such a split would be a management unit with little common culture or few shared stakeholders. Examples of this model at other universities suggest potential for long-term conflict unless it is carefully managed by the Dean.

(v) reductions in the Dean's office would be unlikely unless more functions were shifted to department leadership.

Positive aspects of the three-department model:

- (1) least disruptive to faculty productivity and student programs.
- (2) more flexible in building programmatic synergies and allow for more focused, less generic, departmental missions.
- (3) retain program visibility and alumni/constituent/donor relations.
- (4) less time to implement.

Three departments give the College greater ability to retain key identities and use leadership and management models similar to those presently in place. There may be more opportunity to build communities of interest through similar cultures. On the downside, the three-department model may not save as much money as a two-department model. Emphasis on "may".

The FEC unanimously voted to pursue the three-department model and the Dean outlined this decision and next steps in his July 12, 2007 letter to the College.

The Dean and FEC established a Reorganization Advisory Committee (RAC) of faculty to consider three-department models in which a bio-based materials group (composed largely of WSE) would be maintained as the core of one department, in light of item (iv) above. The RAC was established on July 17 and was to report by October 1, providing a detailed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a set of three-department models provided by the FEC and any other three-department models the committee elected to review.² The RAC was to use a list of key criteria developed by the FEC and to identify any other important factors. The RAC held numerous open meetings in July, August, and September and presented its draft report to the College in a public meeting on September 18, including the results of a College-wide research affinity study. The RAC final report and all supporting documents are available at the URL in footnote 2.

At its October 11, 2007 meeting the FEC reviewed the RAC report and proposed that the reorganization process proceed with three parallel efforts:

- (1) begin identifying and anticipating the major actions that will be required to implement a reorganization once a final decision is made on a specific three-department model. To this end, a Reorganization Implementation Committee (RIC) was established to begin mapping the

² See the RAC charter and final report at <http://www.cof.orst.edu/rac/>.

steps required for implementing a new structure. Issues identified by the RIC would be brought into discussions in (2) and (3) below as they emerge. Two key items here are how to identify specific faculty to include in specific departments and how to organize support services at departmental and College levels.

(2) engage College faculty/staff again in a discussion of the three-department options developed by the RAC through a series of all-College meetings and subsequent debate and discussion by the CFAC. Two cycles of all-College meetings and CFAC meetings are envisioned (see attached schedule). Summary CFAC results would be communicated to the FEC by the committee and Dean. The objectives of these meetings are:

- to reduce the number of 3-unit options remaining for final decision;
- flesh out the detailed allocations of programs in remaining models;
- elaborate costs and benefits of the various models; and
- provide faculty/staff opportunities to consider which structure would best fit their interests.

Options other than 3-unit models will be considered in these discussions if clear arguments can be made for their net benefits relative to the 3-unit cases. This process should be completed by November 26.

(3) seek input and reaction to the reorganization options generated to date from outside the College--Provost, other colleges, Faculty Senate, the FRL Advisory Committee and a broad range of external clients. Complete by November 26.

The target date for a final decision on the specific reorganized structure is December 11, 2007. After that date the RIC will develop necessary proposals and other details to obtain University approval and begin implementation. A target date for having the new organizational structure in place is July 1, 2008.

Reorganization Internal Timeline to December 11, 2007

Date	Time	Group	Location	Tasks
Mon, Oct 29	1:30-5:00 pm	FEC	RH 115	Circulate white paper on history/reasons for focus on 3-unit models
Wed, Oct 31	8:30-10:00 am	All-College	PVY 272	Explain path to 3-unit models, strengths and weaknesses, hear concerns and other alternatives
Wed, Oct 31 and Thurs, Nov 1	3:00-4:30 pm 1:30-3:00 pm	CFAC	RH 313 RH 313	Distill main points from All-College meeting, debate RAC recommendations in light of comments from All-College meeting. Report discussion to FEC and staff/faculty.
Tues, Nov 13	1:30-5:00 pm	FEC	RH 115	Debate comments from CFAC, further narrowing of models, feedback from departments
Mon, Nov 26	10:00-11:30 am	All-College	RH 107	Discuss any further proposals from FEC and CFAC, open comments.
Mon, Nov 26	1:30-5:00 pm	FEC	RH 115	Discuss progress of process, feedback from departments
Tues, Nov 27	1:30-3:00 pm	CFAC	RH 313	Distill main points from All-College meeting, debate remaining organizational models in light of comments from All-College meeting. Report discussion to FEC and staff/faculty
Tues, Dec 11	1:30-5:00 pm	FEC	RH 115	Debate final choices in light of CFAC and departmental feedback. Dean and FEC make Final decision.