



TO: The Campus Community
FROM: Joel E. Anderson
RE: Administrative Restructuring
DATE: August 23, 2013

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock is undergoing significant change. With a number of retirements, we have lost the wisdom and experience of several key leaders. We also, however, have gained the expertise and knowledge of new leaders who bring the benefit of new perspectives to UALR.

This time of transition provides us an unusual opportunity to revise the university's organizational structure, both academic and administrative, to put UALR in a better position to thrive in today's challenging environment.

The language of the "Report on Academic Restructuring: Academic Restructuring Task Force Final Recommendations," submitted to Provost Zulma Toro and posted for campus review last week, captured the moment well:

Now is a propitious moment for UALR to reorganize with a new provost and several vacancies at the vice chancellor and dean levels. At the same time, we are faced with significant challenges—declining state support, soft enrollment, competition with other institutions, and a lingering economic slowdown.

Business as usual is no longer sufficient. To serve our students, we must not only rethink our structure but also reorient our practice. These challenges present an opportunity to become a better institution. The challenges present us with a rare constellation of circumstances to change not only our structure but also the way we carry out our work.

I commend to everyone the recommendations of the Academic Restructuring Task Force. As the name suggests, their focus was only on the core unit of the university—the academic division. The report includes three models for reorganizing the academic division, plus appendices with valuable commentary on interdisciplinary programs, research, advising, the Graduate School, and on-line programs. When you read the report, do not overlook the appendices.

Throughout this process I have told Provost Toro, the Academic Restructuring Task Force, and everyone else involved to look at all parts of the university structure and to feel free to recommend any changes they believe would be beneficial. I have not been disappointed in the breadth of participation across campus, the vigor and scope of the discussions, and the variety of existing and new organizational features that have been discussed or recommended. My thanks to everyone who has participated in any way.

Background on Administrative Restructuring

Administrative restructuring has been occurring over the last two years based on the recommendations of two external consulting organizations. One was Benz Whaley and Flessner (BWF) which provided a post-campaign evaluation of our “It’s Time for UALR” comprehensive fundraising campaign with recommendations for future fundraising efforts. The BWF report recommended the merger of the Alumni Office with the Development Office, which has been accomplished.

Stamats was retained to offer recommendations on student recruitment. Following up on recommendations from Stamats, we separated recruitment from student services and formed a new enrollment management division with vice chancellor-level leadership. The functions of this division are not new to UALR. The new administrative structure for enrollment management, with a vice chancellor leading a unique division focused on recruitment, represents a culture change for UALR—placing enrollment at the forefront of university priorities. Stamats also offered recommendations regarding our use of digital media. As a result, we brought UALR website functions into a single unit called Digital Strategy under the Office of Communications. This group formalized the previous Web Services Team, with staff from Information Technology Services and the Office of Communications, into a single operation with a new director who is responsible for website innovation, maintenance, and progressive functionality of all aspects of digital and social media that will be critical for the university’s future.

In mid-July, the Chancellor’s Direct Report Group held a one-day retreat focused solely on administrative restructuring. During this retreat, the DRG developed two new organizational charts—a four vice chancellor model, and a five vice chancellor model. Those two drafts (Version A and Version B) were then presented to the Chancellor’s Leadership Group the first week of August at their annual retreat, which this year also included members of the Academic Restructuring Task Force. This group of 50 campus leaders analyzed and discussed the two administrative restructuring drafts. There is now a third model (Version C) that reflects ideas from the CLG retreat and some additional new administrative possibilities that resonate with the Academic Restructuring Task Force report.

The Three Models

All three of the models represent a deliberate effort to organize effectively to achieve in today’s environment the enduring university commitments to teaching, research, and public service within the context of UALR’s metropolitan setting.

All three models represent efforts to organize in a way that brings more closely together roles that depend upon each other and reinforce each other in order to strengthen their capacity to achieve their purposes.

All three models reflect a desire to achieve efficiencies in light of the limitations of present and future university resources. It should be noted that savings in operational costs from reorganizations typically are significant in the long run but not dramatic in the short run.

Perhaps the most obvious revision you will notice in each model is a reduction in the number of vice chancellors. Currently there are seven vice chancellorships. In the first model you will see four vice chancellors, in the second you will see five, and in the third six. Among the reasons for these potential changes is that revised groupings of functions that are closely related can reduce overhead costs, simplify communication among senior administrators, and increase effectiveness. These changes would strengthen the function of the vice chancellorships.

While there are many external changes affecting universities today, one that often goes unnoticed is this: year after year the external demands on campus chancellors and presidents are increasing. It would serve

the interests of the university to increase the time available to the chancellor to promote and protect UALR's interests in the local, state, and federal governmental arenas, in donor cultivation, and in other external venues. Fewer direct reports to the chancellor and stronger vice chancellorships would make this possible.

The third model, Version C, includes significant elements from the first two models but also represents an effort to inject some additional organizational features in response to the discussion at the CLG Retreat. Community engagement was an area of emphasis for the Academic Restructuring Task Force but one they recommended be handled in the administrative restructuring. The third model shows a vice chancellorship for community and economic development that brings several sizeable outreach units together in one division, including some outreach units from colleges.

For reference, the chart of the current organizational structure is presented as Version D.

Let me say clearly that none of the three models starts as my favorite. Each has substantial merit. I anticipate that the new model that emerges after additional input and discussion will be at least somewhat different from any of the three as we endeavor to find the optimal distribution of functions and combinations of units.

At this point, I ask for your input on the three administrative organizational chart drafts. You can access the three draft charts—Version A, Version B, and Version C, plus the existing organizational chart (Version D)—in the Office of the Chancellor Blackboard Community. Over the next four weeks—until **September 20**—please offer your thoughts and comments on the drafts. After the four-week period of review, comments will be closed. I encourage you to comment in Blackboard so that the campus community benefits from the conversation. You may also email me directly at jeanderson@ualr.edu.

Administrative Restructuring Hearing Committee

I have appointed an Administrative Restructuring Hearing Committee for the purpose of holding at least two open forums for discussion and explanation of the three models and to report to me the information, insights, and questions that come from the hearings. The members of the committee are Bob Denman, Vice Chancellor for Alumni and Development (chair); Dr. Zulma Toro, Provost; Dr. Bob Adams, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration; Nathan Nolen, Interim Vice Chancellor for Information Services; and Mandy Abernethy, Associate General Counsel.

Schedule

The Provost will submit recommendations on academic restructuring by October 1. The Administrative Restructuring Hearing Committee will also submit their report by that date. I plan to announce decisions on academic restructuring by October 15 and hope to announce administrative restructuring decisions at the same time. Most changes in the academic structure should occur next July 1. Some, perhaps most, of the changes in the administrative structure can occur soon after announced unless their operations are constrained by the beginning and end of semesters. In any event, a plan and schedule of implementation will also be announced once restructuring decisions have been made.

While a time of reorganizing can be worrisome, I ask that everyone approach both academic and administrative restructuring with confidence that the process and the decisions made are in the best interest UALR. Our goal is to maximize the unique strengths of UALR, eliminate barriers to student success, and put the university on the strongest possible footing for its future.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your input.