

Record of the Proceedings of the  
GSW Academic Reorganization Examination Committee

Fall 2023-Spring 2024

**A Faculty Senate Report**

**March 26, 2024**

**Note: This document, with the exception of the Appendices, was written and prepared by Faculty Senate President John LeJeune, and is not a product or representation of the Academic Reorganization Examination Committee.**

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# I. Executive Summary and Recommendation

## 1. Committee Charge

At a highly attended November 29, 2023 Town Hall, GSW President Neal Weaver requested the creation of a task force to explore academic reorganization. Dr. Weaver defined the core research question as follows: “*What are the implications to realigning our academic colleges from 4 to 3 to allow for moving the academic priorities needle?*”, specifying in addition that “The following must be achieved in the process: Ensure academic quality; Protect and grow low producing programs; [ ] Begin addressing consistent feedback on academic needs.; [and] Drive undergraduate and graduate enrollment growth.” (Weaver Town Hall, Sl. 10; see Appendix below).

Dr. Weaver also asked for specific recommendations on *how* the school might be reorganized, requesting the committee to: “Structure option(s) with justification on how academic departments fit and support college,” and to explore “Within proposed structure(s), options to expand department chairs positions or other methods for individual and department growth opportunities; Issues that would need to be addressed if changes were made” (Weaver Town Hall, Sl. 11).

A subsequent slide outlined the anticipated process: “Dr. Drake work with taskforce that includes stakeholders from Faculty Senate, colleges, and academic support units. Report due March 15, 2024. Outcome of report will determine the job description and search process for the Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences position” (Weaver Town Hall, Sl. 12).

On several occasions, both during (see e.g. 1:04:19-1:04:53; 1:28:18-1:28:30) and after the Town Hall, Dr. Weaver pledged to respect the Task Force’s recommendation, and that “we will take that outcome and put it in our strategic plan...no matter the outcome” (*What’s in the Cup? Podcast* 1-25-24, 28:47-29:33).

## 2. Committee Membership

In December 2023 Provost Jill Drake and Faculty Senate President John LeJeune subsequently recruited an “Academic Reorganization Examination Committee”<sup>1</sup> of seventeen core members, including Drake and LeJeune as co-Chairs, the four Deans, four Faculty Senate Representatives (one from each college), institutional representatives from QEP, FYE, and Institutional Research, and additional “Research and Writing Team” members from each college (see table below).

That team, in turn, was later subdivided into a Dean-centric “Finance + Administration” subcommittee chaired by Drake, and a faculty-centric “Academic Programs Subcommittee” chaired by LeJeune. The former would research financial and administrative implications of a three-college model versus a four-college one, while the latter would explore the academic implications of various three- and four-college scenarios.

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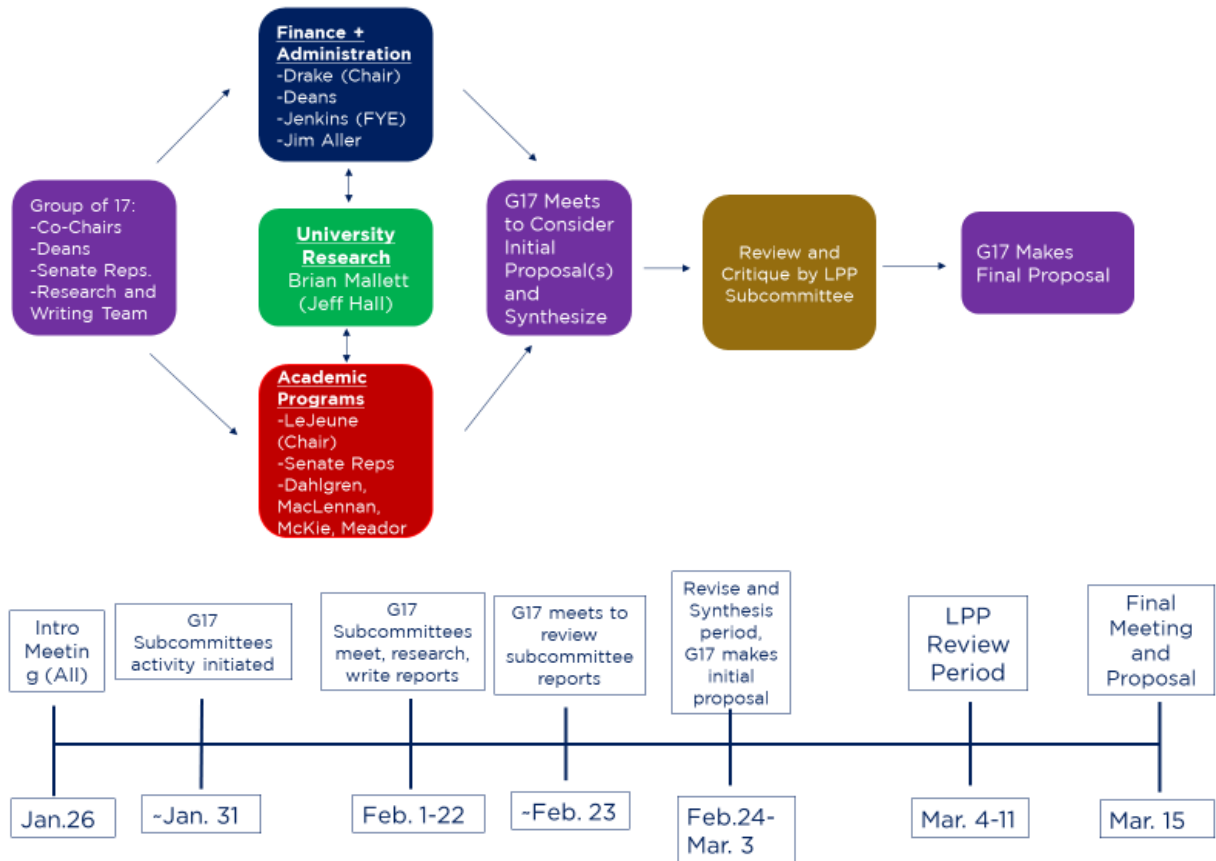
<sup>1</sup> Because “committee” was the language most often used internally to describe the group’s work, that will be the language most used throughout this document. As a technical matter, “task force” is more appropriate.

A tight calendar was established requiring each subcommittee to submit reports relevant to their charge, and then to reconvene and synthesize. That initial synthesis would be turned over to a separate Low-Producing Programs subcommittee, consisting of representatives from GSW’s most at-risk programs, for written feedback prior to a final committee recommendation.

<b>Committee Co-Chairs</b>	<b>Provost</b> Dr. Jill Drake		<b>Faculty Senate President</b> John LeJeune	
<b>Academic Programs Group</b>	<b><u>Deans or Dean Representative</u></b> <b>Arts and Sciences:</b> Mark Laughlin <b>COBAC:</b> Gaynor Cheokas <b>Education:</b> Rachel Abbott <b>Nursing:</b> Teresa Teasley		<b><u>Faculty Senate Representatives</u></b> <b>Arts and Sciences:</b> Ashley Jones <b>COBAC:</b> Amber Stovall <b>Education:</b> Michael Crosby <b>Nursing:</b> Leisa Easom	
<b>Core Research and Writing Group</b>	Jim Aller <b>Associate Dean of Grad. Program (COBAC)</b> Paul Dahlgren <b>QEP Director</b> David Jenkins <b>FYE Director</b> Jamie MacLennon <b>Chair of Psychology and Sociology (Arts and Sciences)</b> Brian Mallett <b>Director of Institutional Research</b> Michele McKie <b>Assist. Prof. of Special Ed. &amp; COE Assessment Director (Education)</b> Benjamin Meador <b>Assoc. Prof. of Exercise Science (Nursing and Health Sciences)</b>			
<b>LPP Subcommittee</b>	<b><u>Arts and Sciences</u></b> <b>1. Art/Fine Arts:</b> K. Wynn <b>2. Biology:</b> I. Brown <b>3. Chemistry:</b> E. Gurnack <b>4. English:</b> M. Moir <b>5. Math:</b> C. Gugg <b>6. Music:</b> J. Megginson <b>7. Hist/PoliSci.:</b> S. Bragg		<b><u>COBAC</u></b> <b>1. Information Tech.</b> <b>2. Computer Science</b>  Sondra Smith Sai Mukkavilli	
			<b><u>Education</u></b> <b>1. Special Education</b> <b>2. Health and PE</b>  Thelma Sexton Zachary Ward	

### 3. Calendar and Process

The committee’s process proceeded according to the following flow chart, and in rough alignment with the calendar below. Here we highlight key dates in the timeline, and refer the reader to various documents in “Section III: Appendix” for more details.



**January 25-26, 2024:** On January 25 Dr. Drake and Dr. LeJeune met with President Weaver to clarify the mission. At that meeting Dr. Weaver gave new information not presented at the November 29 Town Hall, including that GSW would, in fact, be hiring a Director of Graduate Studies (or some equivalent) irrespective of the committee’s recommendation. When subsequently asked to clarify the priorities of any reorganization exploration, Dr. Weaver highlighted the need to (1) achieve financial benefits, and (2) pursue academic gains via leveraging integrative or interdisciplinary synergies. When asked to clarify what models would realistically be considered in a reorganization plan, Dr. Weaver openly shared that, while he was certainly willing to abide by a four-college recommendation, the only three-college model he was seriously considering involved a redistribution of College of Arts and Sciences programs into the three other colleges. Finally, Dr. Weaver extended the final report deadline until after the March 18-22 Spring Break.

The following day, January 26, an all-hands Teams meeting was held including Group of 17 (G17) and LPP subcommittee members, at which the flow chart and work calendar were communicated. An “Academic Reorganization” Microsoft Team was created to coordinate work and share data.

**March 4, 2024:** Having worked independently for approximately six weeks, on March 4 the “Academic Programs” and “Finance + Administration” subcommittees of the G17 met together to synthesize ideas and offer provisional recommendations to the LPP subcommittee for critique. In advance, the Academics team circulated a summary of their activities and recommendations (See Academic Programs Subcommittee Report in the Appendix.)

In order of preference, and consistent with exploring both four- and three-college options, the Academics subcommittee recommended: (1) A modified four-college model moving Math to COBAC and Biology and Chemistry to Nursing and Health Sciences (and the renaming of several colleges), as well as an independent Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (B.I.S.) program with its own Chair or Associate Dean; (2) A three-college model that distributed the Arts and Sciences programs to the three remaining (and renamed) colleges, and which also included an independent B.I.S. program; and (3) No Change. (See tables below for the Recommendation 1 and 2 models).

For its part, the Finance + Administration subcommittee provided a Power Point presentation on how, generally speaking, a shift to three colleges would look from a financial and administrative standpoint (See the ‘Finance and Administration Subcommittee Finding’ in the Appendix). The presentation did not include any specific recommendation. After discussion, the full committee agreed to send all three of the Academic subcommittee’s recommendations to the LPP subcommittee for review, noting that Recommendation 2: The Three College model, should be understood as incorporating the information from the Finance + Administration subcommittee’s Power Point. A response from the LPP subcommittee was requested no later than March 12.

### Recommendation 1: Altered Four College Model

Business & Computing		Humanities and Social Sciences	Health & Natural Sciences		Education
Business & Formal Sciences					
Accounting		English	BSN		Middle Grades
Human Resources		Art	LTCM		Health and PE
Management		Fine Arts	XSCI		Secondary Ed
Marketing		Music	RN-BSN		SPED
Computer Science		Comm & Media	Biology		Early Childhood Ed
IT		History	Chem		BSED - History
Maths		Psychology			BSED - English
		Sociology			BSED - Math
		Political Science			
		Criminal Justice			
		Interdisciplinary/Integrated Studies			



Physical Education; B.S. Ed. in Middle Grades Education; B.S. Ed. in Special Education; B.S. in Biology; B.S. in Chemistry; B.S. in Computer Science; B.S. in Geology; B.S. in Information Technology; B.S. in Mathematics; B.S. in Political Science.

*b. Incorporation of LPP Feedback and Final Vote*: In addition to the three recommendations initially proposed on March 4, a fourth recommendation (“No change + B.I.S. program”) was added to represent the feedback of the LPP subcommittee. This was done at the suggestion of Dr. LeJeune, and without objection from the floor.

Now with four options on the table, a ranked-choice voting procedure was adopted whereby members in a closed vote submitted their preferences in ranked order from “most preferred” to “least preferred.” The ballots were then processed one round at a time, eliminating the least popular choice after each round, and counting each voters’ highest-ranked remaining preference (i.e. the highest ranked preference that had not been eliminated) in each round, until one option achieved a majority. “Option 2: Three College Model” emerged as the winner.

#### **4. Committee Recommendation**

**After two rounds of elimination, a majority vote was counted in the third round favoring Option 2: Three College Model** (for more about the voting process, see Section II.1 “Assessing the Final Committee Vote” below).

After additional discussion, the committee also voted to allow representatives from Education to submit a modified response in association with the LPP subcommittee’s charge. This was to account for what was perceived to be a lack of sufficient space for minority viewpoints in the initial LPP discussion [For the integrity of the record, both the original and modified versions are included in the “Low Producing Programs Report” in the Appendix.].

A motion was also made, which did not carry a majority, to submit the issue to a full faculty vote. After discussion, it was generally agreed that, in a process separate and distinct from the current task force, the matter might be brought before the Faculty Senate at its March 28, 2024 meeting, at which point the Senate could determine its own next steps, including whether or not to sponsor a faculty survey on the issue of reorganization.



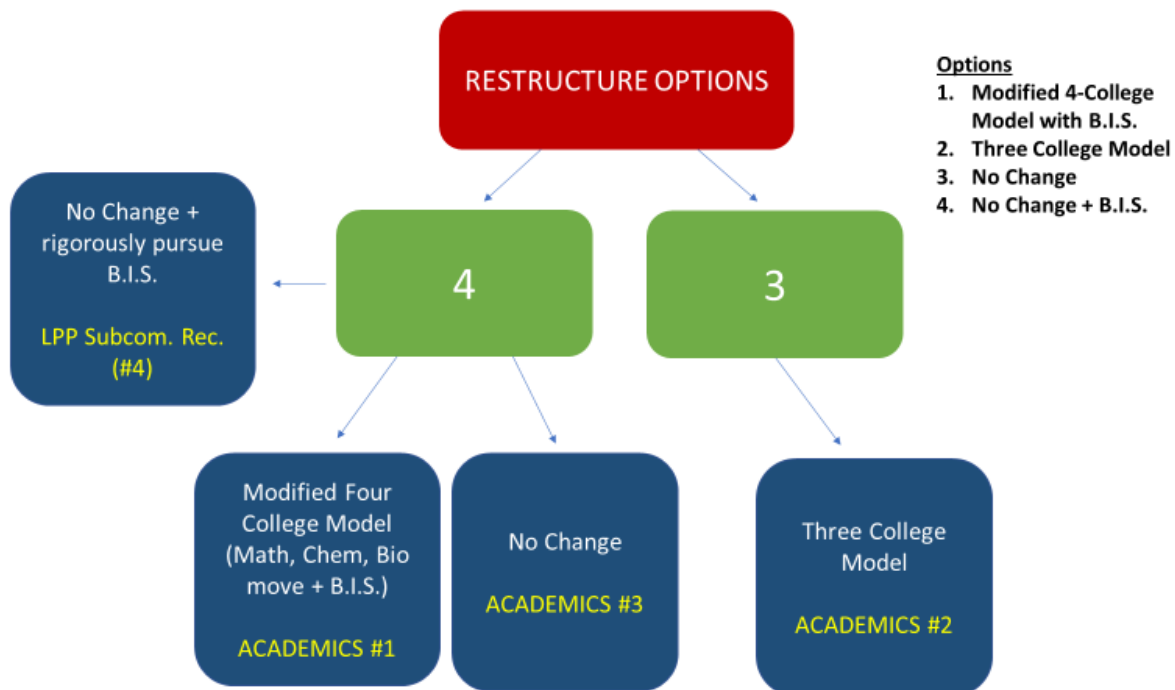
## II. Discussion and Next Steps

### 1. Assessing the Final Committee Vote

The purpose of this section is to clarify how the G17’s final vote was taken, and offer provisional interpretations of the pattern of votes. This discussion seems necessary (a) to avoid confusion, (b) in the interest of transparency, and (c) because, while a voting process may establish clear “winners” and “losers” among given options, a holistic assessment of any vote requires a closer look at the numbers.

On March 15 the following options were presented to the G17 committee members. The first three options were the three recommendations initially proposed by the Academic Programs subcommittee and sent to the LPP subcommittee for review. A fourth option was added that, in the committee’s best judgment, reflected the feedback from the LPP subcommittee. For the record we have included the image displayed as committee members voted.

It should be noted that while the B.I.S. is not formally indicated for the Three-College Model below, it was communicated clearly and without objection that Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 were consonant with the previous recommendations from the Academic Programs subcommittee, in the form that they were submitted to the LPP subcommittee for review. This is indicated by the labels “ACADEMICS #1,” “ACADEMICS #2,” and “ACADEMICS #3” in the blocks below. As such, the Three College Model (ACADEMICS #2) would also include the independent B.I.S. recommendation, as well as the input from the Finance + Administration subcommittee outlining the financial and administrative implications of a three-college transition.



### a. Ranked Choice Voting Explained

The voting method was “ranked choice voting.” Fairvote.org describes this method as follows:

*Ranked choice voting (RCV) — also known as instant runoff voting (IRV) — makes our elections better by allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference. RCV is straightforward: Voters have the option to rank candidates in order of preference: first, second, third and so forth. Ballots that do not help voters’ top choices win count for their next choice. It works in all types of elections and supports more representative outcomes. RCV means better choices, better campaigns, and better representation. That’s why it’s the fastest-growing nonpartisan voting reform in the nation.<sup>2</sup>*

The method ensures that true voter preferences are not ignored due to vote-splitting – for example, imagine that 10 of out 17 people strongly preferred *any* four-college model to *any* three-college model. Given our four options, we can imagine a world in which all the “4-college” votes are spread thinly among the three “4-college” options (let’s say 5, 3, and 2 votes, respectively), while the single “3-college option” gets the remaining 7 votes. In a raw plurality system, the 3-college option would win, since it had the most votes (7) of anyone, even though it did not carry a majority. In a ranked-choice vote this is avoided, and the full picture of each voter’s preferences is accounted for. In the example just described, after all the first preference votes were tallied, and no single option achieved a majority, the lowest performing 4-college option would be eliminated, and the votes associated with that eliminated option would be transferred to their next-best choice. This continues until one option has a legitimate majority.

### b. The Committee Vote

Committee members were subsequently asked to rank their preferences in order, from most preferred to least preferred. This was done in a closed ballot setting to ensure the independence of votes (Note: A closed vote in this situation does not violate Georgia OMA because the reorganization task force is an ad hoc creation of the President, and thus distinct from formal committees—like the Faculty Senate—that exist according to USG and/or GSW bylaws, and which play a formal role in passing public policy.).

The ballots came out as follows (see table below for vote count by round):

1. 1,2,3,4 → Vote transferred from “Option 1” to “Option 2” in Round 3
2. 1,2,3,4 → Vote transferred from “Option 1” to “Option 2” in Round 3
3. 2,1,4,3
4. 2,1,4,3
5. 2,1,4,3
6. 2,1,4,3

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, including a short and helpful video, go to: <https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting/>

- 7. 2,1,4,3
- 8. 2,1,4,3
- 9. 2,1,3,4
- 10. 2,1,x,x
- 11. 3,4,1,2 → Vote transferred from “Option 3” to “Option 4” in Round 2
- 12. 4,3,1,2,
- 13. 4,3,1,2
- 14. 4,3,1,2
- 15. 4,3,1,2
- 16. 4,3,1,2
- 17. Abstain

## VOTING

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
<b>Option 1:</b> Modified 4-College + B.I.S.	xx	xx	
<b>Option 2:</b> 3 College Model	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxx	xxxxxxxxxxx
<b>Option 3:</b> No change	x		
<b>Option 4:</b> No Change + B.I.S.	xxxxx	xxxxxx	xxxxxx

c. What observations can be drawn from these data?

1. **There was a clear winner among the four options:** Based on the ranked choice voting method, Option 2: Three College Model was the winner. On half the ballots (8 of 16) it was the first ranked preference, and on two ballots it was the second ranked preference. There is no controversy over which single option had the most overall support.
2. **On the question of 4 vs. 3 colleges, the committee overall was divided:** This is especially evident when considering *only* first preferences, where 8 first-preference votes were for a four-college option, and 8 were for the three-college option. So, in terms of what is “best” for GSW—a four college or three college model—there was clearly no consensus.
3. **Notwithstanding the lack of 4 vs. 3 consensus, a clear majority of the committee favored structural change of some sort:** For 10 out of 16 voters, Options 1 and 2 were,

collectively, their first and second-preferences. These were the options involving the most structural change. Though 10 of 16 is hardly a consensus, it is at least suggestive of more cross-cutting agreement that structural change is needed, and something like a B.I.S. alone is insufficient to address GSW’s academic needs. On the other hand, the remaining six voters ranked Options 3 and 4 both in their top two (and all of them ranked Option 2 last), suggesting strong opposition among those 6 to major structural change at this point.

4. **Relative consensus on the B.I.S. program:** If there was anything approaching consensus on the committee, it was the support for (not to say the sufficiency of) rigorously pursuing a B.I.S. program to support academic programs. Fifteen out of sixteen ballots indicated as their *first* preference an option including the B.I.S.; and on 11 of 16 ballots, Option 4: “No Change + B.I.S.” outranked Option 3: “No change.” Notably, the LPP subcommittee, though it did not support Option 1 or 2, indicated a consensus of support for a strong B.I.S. program.

It is perhaps worth noting that there was no three-college option *without* the B.I.S. on the ballot, so we do not know if those who strongly preferred the three-college model would have rather pursued a three-college model without the B.I.S., or saw it as pointless. But indirect evidence suggests that the B.I.S. was appreciated by these voters, since six of the eight members who placed the Three College model first on their ballot *also* preferred Option 4 to Option 3 – that is, they preferred the B.I.S. to No Change.

## 2. Next Steps and Faculty Role Moving Forward

### a. Constructing the Three-College Model

Assuming there is follow-through on reorganizing into a three-college model, the recommendation of the Reorganization Committee should be the beginning of the discussion, but it should not be the end. All affected program chairs—and, if necessary, representatives of faculty who no longer have a program due to deactivation—must have a seat at the table when discussing the future placement of their programs and their faculty.

Starting at the Provost’s office, a process must be established through which chair and/or faculty input can be gathered on the record, and responsibly and reliably incorporated into any final reorganization plan. A reasonable recommendation, under these circumstances, is the creation of an additional 2024-25 “Reorganization Committee” involving the Provost, Deans, and all directly impacted Department Chairs.

### b. Nursing Dean Position

At the November 29, 2024 Town Hall, Dr. Weaver explained the urgent timeline given the reorganization task force principally in terms of the impending search for a Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences: “We’re gonna have to start looking for a new Dean for the College

of Nursing and Health Sciences one way or the other. The reason I picked March is because, I would like to know, if as an institution we are going to change the way we organize ourselves, so that when we hire a new Dean, we don't hire them for a job that will no longer exist when they get here...It might affect, or impact, the person that we hire...So that's kinda why I put that time limit on it" (1:02:48-1:03:51).

In a post-vote conversation between Dr. Drake and Dr. LeJeune on March 20, Dr. Drake communicated a timeline that had been given to the Nursing school—namely, that the position would be advertised in Summer 2024, and a search conducted in the Fall, with an expected start date of Jan. 1.

This suggests that, at minimum, the future structure of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences must be determined by Summer 2024. This contradicts the timeline suggested for a new “Reorganization Committee” as suggested in II.2(a) above, and may require advance, executive level meetings with the chairs of departments/programs most likely to be moved into that college. Or, to put the matter differently, one way or another clarity about the future of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is needed, as well as a process through which to fairly and fully involve those most likely to be impacted.

In addition, it is highly advised that the chairs and/or faculty of departments/programs that will, or are likely to, move into the College of Nursing and Health Sciences be involved in the process of drafting the Dean's job description, and be included on the job search committee.

### c. Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (B.I.S.)

As of this writing, GSW has a Bachelor of General Studies program in the process of converting to a Bachelor of Integrated Studies program. In addition to the branding change, the program is being partially restructured in response to the most recent CPR and External Review, including (a) adding “INDS 2000: Foundations of Integrative Learning” as a required course, and (b) moving the required number of minors from three to two, with free electives replacing the third minor. These changes undoubtedly have merit and will benefit that degree program.

At the same time, our research suggests that the most successful B.I.S. programs (most often cast as “Interdisciplinary Studies”) apply a more aggressive marketing and more strategically integrative approach than is our current practice. As noted in the 2022-23 program CPR, the General Studies program began in 2016 and “was designed to create soft academic landings” (p. 2), and “to help students who were struggling to complete other degree programs have a soft-landing in a program that was flexible enough to ensure their ability to complete a bachelor's degree” (p. 3). Though the program has grown modestly over the years, from 5 students in 2016 to 23 students in 2023, it remains among the GSW programs “two cycles below threshold” and vulnerable to deactivation. In addition, the following concerns were noted in the CPR: “Advising students is challenging because doing so requires a mastery of a wide variety of programs and schedules” (p. 2); “General Studies is reliant on other programs and outside faculty for continued functioning and development” (p. 2); and “Because students don't take courses until late into the

program, they often are not given the opportunity to develop connections between their programs until late and may not understand how the program can help them get employed” (p.3).

Our research shows that the most successful B.I.S. programs—which at several USG institutions (e.g. Georgia State, North Georgia, Clayton State, Middle Georgia, and others) are among the most highly enrolled—address each of these problems in an intentional way. First is by combining maximal flexibility on one end, with concrete, structured interdisciplinary concentrations on the other. Having pre-defined interdisciplinary clusters (“Law and Society,” “Professional Writing,” or “Environmental Studies,” etc. as opposed to only “pick two or three minors”) facilitates a more direct and clearly career-oriented marketing approach. Thus, rather than wait for students to fall backwards into the B.I.S. (which can happily still happen if “pick 2 + electives” also remains an option), freshmen can be recruited *actively* and *intentionally* into the program if appealing and career-oriented interdisciplinary concentrations are clearly defined within it.

In addition, successful programs address the problem of student advising and inter-departmental coordination by dedicating trained staff to these tasks. To be clear, there is no guarantee that even our best effort at a B.I.S. program will work, but one thing is certain; it will not work without strong, enthusiastic, and effective leadership. This includes leadership with the administrative capacity to make sure the paperwork is right and updated; the political capacity to coordinate ideas and negotiate across departments; and the logistical capacity to make decisive and data-driven decisions regarding programming, concentrations, scheduling, and the like.

As ASPIRE takes effect and many of GSW’s liberal arts programs (and others) are deactivated, a strong B.I.S. program may provide an alternative path for supporting upper division courses in those disciplines, to say nothing of maintaining the widest variety of options for students in light of these program deactivations. Such a program, by its very nature, does not easily belong in one college or another, and in the interest of morale, there should be no sense that it “belongs to” or is “coopted” by a single college. Therefore, it is probably best maintained independently.

For all of these reasons, in addition to the broad support given the idea in the final committee vote, it is advisable that a rigorous B.I.S. program—existing independently, and with its own Chair or Associate Dean (most likely reporting directly to the Provost)—should be established along these lines. To facilitate this process, it may be appropriate to form an additional, ad hoc B.I.S. Committee for the 2024-25 academic year.

#### d. Faculty Senate

A serious question raised at the March 15 meeting concerned the role of the full faculty, facilitated by the Faculty Senate, in giving their own feedback regarding reorganization. The question can be viewed through two procedural lenses that do not necessarily conflict.

i. Committee Pledge and Dissolution: From the beginning, the Reorganization Committee operated on the assumption, based on a pledge from GSW President Neal Weaver, that the President would move forward based on its recommendation. And while there may be meaningful play in the joints, in terms of precisely *how* a three- or four-college model might look, the strategic core of the

committee's mandate was to make a recommendation as to the number of colleges. Thus, if the committee in spirit hopes that the President will honor his original pledge (whatever the outcome of its work), its logical expectation will be for the President to act in accordance with its recommendation, and to initiate steps towards implementing a three-college structure. It should be noted in passing, however, that as of this writing the committee's final report has not been submitted, and so the committee has not formally spoken. Nor does this account for any other relevant perspective, including the President's. In any event, once the final report is submitted, the work of the Reorganization Committee will be complete, and the committee will dissolve.

ii. Faculty Senate and General Faculty Feedback: Notwithstanding the above, the Faculty Senate exists, works, manifests, and promulgates a general will wholly distinct from the Reorganization Committee; and the formal relationship of the Faculty Senate (and the General Faculty as an institutional body) to the President and Provost both exists and functions independently of any executive task force. Having duly respected the process of the Reorganization Committee (in which the Senate was represented) to this point, the Faculty Senate crosses no procedural lines if it subsequently seeks to express its own general will on the same issues.

Should the Faculty Senate (or the General Faculty, via Senate-created processes) present to the President a procedurally legitimate expression of its general will (and/or feedback) in formal terms, and in a timely manner, it is reasonable to expect the President to duly consider, and appropriately weigh, such information.

### **3. Additional Comments and Concerns**

a. Timeline: The timeline offered the Reorganization Committee—from Dr. Weaver's November 29, 2023 Town Hall to March 15, 2024—raises serious concerns about the validity of any conclusion drawn from our committee's activities. Given the university's schedule, serious coordinated work could not begin until mid-to-late January, allowing no more than seven weeks of committee activities. While committee members worked diligently to gather data of all sorts – qualitative and quantitative, institutional and system-wide, historical and anecdotal – this is simply not enough time to make a fully informed decision regarding such monumental change. Lack of a reasonable amount of time was also a refrain in feedback from the Low Producing Programs subcommittee.

The problem becomes especially evident when compared with examples of similar processes recently conducted at other institutions. In the 2020-21 year, for example, Seton Hall's *Seeds of Innovation* restructuring proposal followed a process similar to ours, via a "University Structure Committee" that included faculty members and Senate representation. That committee worked from September 2020 through the end of June 2021, a full ten-months. After the committee

presented its initial *Seeds of Innovation* proposal in April, the time allotted for feedback *alone* lasted “for more than 70 days” and included “over 70 meetings and office hours.”<sup>3</sup>

In sum, for all the work that our committee members committed to this project, there remains an element of absurdity when comparing the gravity and complexity of the task to the time allotted.

b. Executive Transition: The following occurred during and immediately after the Reorganization Committee’s work.

**February 22, 2024:** The Texas Tribune reports that, “The University of Texas System has named Neal Weaver as the sole finalist to lead Stephen F. Austin State University.”

**March 18, 2024:** Neal Weaver formally announces to the GSW faculty that, “Earlier today, the University of Texas Board of Regents officially approved my appointment as the next President of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas...I don’t have an [sic] official information regarding my replacement[.]”

The reorganization examination project was initiated by President Neal Weaver in November 2023. In March 2024 it was announced that Dr. Weaver, though he will complete this academic year as President, will not return for 2024-25; and the future of GSW leadership, including in 2024-25, remains uncertain. Awareness of this may have impacted how some committee members viewed the prospect of immediate structural change; and more generally, the uncertainty and instability surrounding GSW’s leadership, occasioned by Dr. Weaver’s departure, raises serious concerns about the prospects of effective implementation of any restructuring plan at the moment.

c. ASPIRE and Low Producing Programs: Throughout this process, the future of GSW’s so-called Low Producing Programs remained uncertain. As late as the March 15 meeting, at which a final recommendation vote was held, committee members were informed that programs currently “two cycles below threshold” (a large number, most of them in the College of Arts and Sciences) were at serious risk of deactivation, although no specific programs were confirmed.

The ASPIRE plan, and the deactivations this plan may ultimately entail, are not university-initiated, but mandated by the USG. And though the reorganization examination process existed independently of ASPIRE, it is nonetheless difficult to coherently understand the implications of reorganization without prior knowledge of how the ASPIRE initiative will impact the number and kinds of programs that actually exist. Any reorganization implementation, reasonably, must include complete and transparent information about program deactivations and timelines.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.shu.edu/news/approval-of-modified-seeds-of-innovation-proposal.html>



d. Explaining the Recommendation(s): It is reasonable that those potentially impacted by the committee's recommendation would expect clear, on-the-record arguments explaining preferences for one option or another. The record on this point is incomplete, but not empty. The most relevant source material is available in the Appendix, including the Academic Programs Subcommittee Report (March 3, 2024), Finance and Administration Subcommittee Finding Power Point (March 4, 2024), and Low-Producing Programs Report (March 12, 2024). Beyond what is written there, further discussion would be speculative and post hoc.

e. Faculty Governance: Notwithstanding the concerns expressed above, the Academic Reorganization Examination Committee was a meaningful exercise in faculty governance. An express goal of this project, as noted by Dr. LeJeune at the November 30, 2023 meeting of the Faculty Senate, was to “prove once and for all – to make it indisputable in the future – that it is a wise and necessary thing to reach out to the faculty and/or the Faculty Senate, in serious ways, about these kinds of decisions.” Given the seriousness with which the faculty approached this task, and the quality of work produced under less-than-ideal circumstances, we hope this sets a strong precedent that, on matters including but not limited to decisions of this scope, the Faculty Senate should be, and will be, not only consulted, but afforded a central decision-making role in the process.

### **III. Appendix**

- 1. Neal Weaver Town Hall Slides (November 29, 2024)**
- 2. Academic Programs Subcommittee Report (March 3, 2024)**
- 3. Finance and Administration Subcommittee Finding Power Point (March 4, 2024)**
- 4. Low-Producing Programs Report (March 12, 2024) with Additional Documents**

# **GSW TOWN HALL**

**Fall 2023**



**GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

# MEETING AGENDA

1. Academic Needs
2. Considerations
3. Budget Landscape
4. Organization Examination
5. Next Steps – The Process

# ACADEMIC NEEDS

- Pay increases
- Investment in faculty development
- QEP funding
- Scheduling software
- Graduate Program support
- College based academic advisors
- Career Services
- Internship coordinator

# CONSIDERATIONS

**GSW headcount enrollment has grown 15.7% in the last 5 years.**

*What actions need to be taken to leverage the momentum?*

**Graduate enrollment growth 45% over last 5 years.**

*What would the return on investment be if we created a Dean of Graduate Studies?*

# CONSIDERATIONS

**In the last 5 years, freshmen enrollment has increased 15.4% and dual enrollment 154%.**

**USG's Gen Edu redesign to IMPACTS.**

*What is needed to support Gen Ed course management?*

**USG is zoned in on eliminating low producing programs.**

*What strategy do we need to take to protect our programs on the list?*

# CONSIDERATIONS

**GSW must focus academic priorities on quality programs that meet market demands, accreditation standards and enhancing learning environment.**

*How do we align organization infrastructure to advance our academic profile?*

*How do we build an infrastructure for our new QEP to sustain?*



# CONSIDERATIONS

**We have to be mindful of the higher education landscape across the nation, in Georgia Legislature and with USG.**

*What strategic steps do we take to do our part in addressing student access, minimize debt burden, and graduate individuals workforce ready?*

*How do we align our efforts with USG in order to leverage future funding and support?*

# BUDGET LANDSCAPE

**We need to prepare for a baseline budget increase beginning in the 2025-26 (FY26) academic year.**

## *Factors*

- This year's increase in unbudgeted funds from enrollment growth will cover expenses beyond set budget. (utilities, overload pay for Gen Ed courses, health insurance, etc.)
- 2024-25 (FY25) academic year budget covers a reduction from state allocations from a credit hour decline from FY22, academic accreditation expenses, and other expenses beyond set budget from external cost increases and mandates.

# BUDGET LANDSCAPE

## *Priorities*

- FY24 - Goal to have a one-time stipend program depending on spring enrollment.
- FY25 - Cover \$980k reduction from state funds with minimal impact.
- FY26 - Examine organization structure for decision making on best use of upcoming budget increase.

# ORGANIZATION EXAMINATION

**What are the implications to realigning our academic colleges from 4 to 3 to allow for moving the academic priorities needle?**

*The following must be achieved in the process:*

- Ensure academic quality;
- Protect and grow low producing programs; and,
- Begin addressing consistent feedback on academic needs.
- Drive undergraduate and graduate enrollment growth.

# NEXT STEPS

## *Charge*

- Structure option(s) with justification on how academic departments fit and support college.
- Within proposed structure(s), options to expand department chairs positions or other methods for individual and department growth opportunities.
- Issues that would need to be addressed if changes were made.

# NEXT STEPS

## *Process*

- Dr. Drake work with taskforce that includes stakeholders from Faculty Senate, colleges, and academic support units.
- Report due March 15, 2024
- Outcome of report will determine the job description and search process for the Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences position.

# GSW



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## **GSW Reorganization Examination Committee**

### **Academics Subcommittee**

**March 3, 2024**

## **Preliminary Report: On University Restructuring**

### **1. Introduction**

On November 29, 2023 GSW President Dr. Neal Weaver hosted a Town Hall. The question presented was, “Can we, as an institution, move from 4 academic colleges to 3?...[C]an we do it? Should we do it?...Today is the beginning of a conversation around this topic, and it’s gonna go on for several months” (Town Hall 3:15-4:01). By the end, Dr. Weaver clarified that a taskforce co-chaired by Provost Jill Drake and Faculty Senate President John LeJeune would be charged with examining the following question: “What are the implications to realigning our academic colleges from 4 to 3 to allow for moving the academic priorities needle?” In addition, he noted, “The following must be achieved in the process”: “Ensure academic quality,” “Protect and grow low producing programs,” “Begin addressing consistent feedback on academic needs,” and “Drive undergraduate and graduate enrollment growth” (Town Hall Power Point, Slide 10).

In a magnanimous gesture towards faculty requests for input into major academic decisions, Dr. Weaver said he would honor the taskforce’s recommendation: “I don’t know that we have to have everything ironed out, but we need to know... ‘Ok’ ...or... ‘Absolutely not.’ Either one of those is acceptable as an answer, but it then determines our course of action following. So you want to be involved in the decision making process...this is your chance” (Town Hall 1:04:19-1:04:53; see also 1:28:18-1:28:30, “[I]f you come back to me and the two of you [Dr. Drake and Dr. LeJeune] together say... ‘we can’t, we’re not gonna do it, it’s a bad idea, it would be bad for our academic programs,’ then we’re done.”). A taskforce report was requested by March 15 (later extended to after Spring Break), which would “determine the job description and search process for the Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences position” (Town Hall Power Point, Slide 12).

Dr. Drake and Dr. LeJeune subsequently recruited an “Academic Reorganization Examination Committee” of seventeen core members, including Drake and LeJeune as co-Chairs, the four Deans, four Faculty Senate Representatives (one from each college), institutional representatives from QEP, FYE, and Institutional Research, and additional “Research and Writing Team” members. That team, in turn, was divided into a Dean-centric “Finance + Administration” subcommittee chaired by Drake, and a faculty-centric “Academics Subcommittee” chaired by LeJeune. A tight calendar was established requiring each subcommittee to submit reports relevant to their topics, and then meet to synthesize (See Appendix 1). That initial synthesis would be turned over to a separate Low-Performing Programs subcommittee, consisting of representatives from GSW’s most at-risk programs, for written feedback prior to a final committee recommendation.

**The current report is the preliminary report from the Academics Subcommittee to facilitate the initial synthesis for LPP subcommittee review.**



## 2. Academics Subcommittee Background

The Academics Subcommittee members are: John LeJeune, Michael Crosby, Paul Dahlgren, Leisa Easom, Ashley Jones, Michele McKie, Jamie MacLennan, Benjamin Meador, and Amber Stovall. The subcommittee met on four occasions: February 2, February 14, February 22, and March 1. Committee members conducted the following research and exercises to better understand how models of 4 or 3 colleges could address the identified academic priorities:

- **Internal Assessment of Subcommittee Priorities:** An internal assessment identified the following four priorities, which were consistent with Dr. Weaver’s Town Hall mandate, as well as additional emphasis Dr. Weaver placed at a strategic meeting on January 19, 2024 on the importance of interdisciplinary synergy and “opportunities for students to better understand how to put things together.” The top priorities identified were: Improve or reimagine programs; Support retention and academic outcomes; Support enrollment and marketing; New Interdisciplinary programs. (See Appendix 2)
- **Interdisciplinary Programs at GSW:** What interdisciplinary programs do we already have; what is their enrollment like; can you find any success or decline indicators in terms of enrollment, growth, retention, student performance, etc. Any preliminary data or good reasons to think that some programs might work well together? (Dahlgren and McKie)
- **Internal Reorganization History:** What have we learned from recent examples of academic reorganization? Examples include Computer Science moving to Business, Math to Arts and Sciences, and Exercise Science to Nursing. Why were these moves made, and did they help, hurt, or have no impact on enrollment and student performance? What efforts were made by the college to support or develop or integrate these programs, and with what results? What were the challenges of integrating these programs into new colleges? (Easom and Stovall)
- **Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Programs outside of GSW:** Data on the size, enrollment, and program characteristics of interdisciplinary programs in all USG schools, as well as ~50 other institutions around the U.S. Data analysis included a list of most frequent interdisciplinary combinations, frequency of program involvement in interdisciplinary programs, program enrollments in the USG, and the most successful (and struggling) interdisciplinary programs in the USG. (Meador and MacLennan)
- **Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs at GSW:** In terms of interdisciplinarity, what does our current graduate landscape look like at GSW? How is it working? And looking at other colleges, what interdisciplinary graduate programs exist? And are there any, in particular, that look like useful models for us? (Jones and Crosby)
- **Online Programs at GSW:** What conclusions might reasonably be drawn from GSW data about online programs, in terms of enrollment and retention and strengthening programs? What about external data? (LeJeune)

- **Interdisciplinary and Restructuring Processes:** Emails were exchanged, and interviews were conducted with outside administrators to get a better understanding of interdisciplinary programs. Searches were also conducted for recent examples of university restructuring at other universities, and those resources were gathered.
- **Department Chair Survey:** The subcommittee surveyed faculty chairs in the Arts and Sciences regarding their preferences in terms of department movement in the event of restructuring, and possible improvements in the event of no restructuring.

### 3. Committee Recommendations

The Academics subcommittee established the following restructuring recommendations in strong order of preference. Having not reviewed financial or other data from the Finance + Administration subcommittee, we consider these recommendations tentative and “all else equal.”

Recommendation 1 includes a slightly restructured four-college plan and an independent Interdisciplinary/Integrated Studies Program, and was the consensus choice for how to best move forward academically. Recommendation 2 adopts a three-college format, and is the committee’s consensus recommendation for how best to proceed assuming a three-college model. By majority vote, Recommendation 2 is also preferred to Recommendation 3, which is to make no changes.

Our recommendations, at this stage, are limited to the most important structural matters. We did not discuss in detail the issue of department consolidations, although in some instances (see esp. Recommendation 2) we do anticipate a need for Associate Deans (or equivalents) for purposes of annual evaluation and assessment. For each recommendation, we have also provided explanations and data to explain our approach.

#### Recommendation 1: Altered Four-College Model

Business & Computing		Humanities and Social Sciences	Health & Natural Sciences		Education
Business & Formal Sciences					
Accounting		English	BSN		Middle Grades
Human Resources		Art	LTCM		Health and PE
Management		Fine Arts	XSCI		Secondary Ed
Marketing		Music	RN-BSN		SPED
Computer Science		Comm & Media	Biology		Early Childhood Ed
IT		History	Chem		BSED - History
Maths		Psychology			BSED - English
		Sociology			BSED - Math
		Political Science			
		Criminal Justice			
		Interdisciplinary/Integrated Studies			

***a) Why move Math to Business and Computing?***

While mathematics is a supporting discipline across campus and would therefore be an asset to any college, considering the placement that best supports mathematics itself narrows the options. The best opportunities for degree support, collaboration, and expansion in Math are likely to come in combination with Computer Science, where they might build programs such as Data Sciences, Analytics, etc.

***b) Why move Biology and Chemistry to Health and Natural Sciences?***

After moving mathematics, Biology and Chemistry/Phys/Geo are the only sciences remaining in Arts & Sciences. The best opportunities for support and expansion of these programs is in combination with Nursing and Health Sciences.

***c) Why an independent Interdisciplinary/Integrated Studies program?***

In many ways, GSW has already embraced the utility in interdisciplinary approaches. In spring 2024 alone, GSW included two subsidized “Book Clubs” in integrative learning approaches (*Leveraging the ePortfolio for Integrative Learning* by Candyce Reynolds and Judith Patton, *Facilitating the Integration of Learning* by James P. Barber). Perhaps most substantially, GSW has recently adopted as its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) a program called “HAIL: High-Impact Approach to Integrative Learning,” at the center of which are multi-course clusters and blocks of an interdisciplinary nature.

Though not limited to them, HAIL is predominantly concerned with core courses. This dovetails well with the incoming CORE-IMPACTS model and working towards getting students to better appreciate the interrelated purposes of a well-rounded and grounded liberal arts education. However, there remains great opportunity for leveraging the HAIL mentality and infrastructure to transform GSW into a more interdisciplinary campus at all levels of instruction. Doing so in a strategic way could give renewed or increased purpose and vitality to all academic programs—perhaps especially those deemed “Low-producing” and struggling to market themselves under current models—which could not only provide students with a more integrative college experience, but also help us preserve the diversity of our courses and program offerings.

Performance data throughout the USG show that Bachelor programs in Interdisciplinary Studies, and related programs, can be very successful. Data gathered from USG QLIK on Georgia State indicate, for example, that the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies currently has 2296 students enrolled where the median program enrollment is 133, making it the second largest program on campus. At the University of North Georgia, the Interdisciplinary Studies BS officially enrolls 1676 students (program median: 158; though feedback from the program coordinator mentioned that these numbers were inflated, including hundreds of students listed as B.I.S. majors by default until successfully passing hurdles for programs like education, nursing, and kinesiology) and is the largest program on campus. The Interdisciplinary Studies BA & BS program at Clayton State enrolls 1055 students (program median: 77). The Interdisciplinary Studies BA at Middle

Georgia enrolls 353 (program median: 104). The Interdisciplinary Studies program at Columbus State enrolls 142 (program median: 77). There is thus, at minimum, strong empirical support for examining the possibility of strategic implementation of interdisciplinary degree programming beyond GSW's current level.

**Our recommendation is for a committee to be formed to consider the strategic implementation of a B.I.S. program that would exist independently of any school, and that would include an independent B.I.S. Chair, Associate Dean, or similar position.**

B.I.S. Leadership and Independence: In discussions with administrators of these programs, several factors became clear. First is that strong, enthusiastic, and effective leadership is necessary—someone with the administrative capability to make sure the paperwork is right and updated, that formal requirements are met, rules are followed, etc.; someone who can successfully coordinate ideas and negotiate egos across departments; and someone who will respond promptly to institutional feedback to initiate and pursue new ideas (or jettison existing ones) as necessary. Having an independent Chair or Associate Dean will enable someone to meet this challenge by devoting themselves fully to the program. Having an independent department Chair also gives the program a neutral face—no single college rules.

How is this Different from the General Studies Program? GSW's current interdisciplinary program, General Studies, was originally designed to be a soft landing for transfer students and students who might have difficulty completing a more traditional program because of unarticulated credits or other barriers. While the program has been successful for this purpose, the Comprehensive Program Review from 2023 suggested several changes that could be made to ensure continued student success. These include developing a 2000 level class and cutting one of the three required minors. The program might be further strengthened by drawing from more successful interdisciplinary programs for models.

Examinations of external examples revealed at least three major themes: 1) The level of flexibility found as commonplace in successful external interdisciplinary-studies styled degrees far outstrips the flexibility currently offered in GSW's General Studies. Many degrees do not require selecting a minor/certificate, but rather selecting/creating one or more concentration areas, the actual content of which is then built by the student and program advisor/coordinator. 2) The B.I.S. models tend to include availability of structured interdisciplinary concentrations, in addition to certificates or minors in a diversity of fields, many of which feature courses from LPPs, and which may or may not be further built into a pre-directed career degree (e.g. Environment Sciences + Sociology = Game Warden). The preceding approaches 1) and 2) need not be exclusive—both can exist within the same program. Finally: 3) The B.I.S. approach, particularly one with many pre-defined interdisciplinary concentrations available, facilitates a more direct and career-oriented marketing approach (“Law and Society,” “Professional Writing,” or “Environmental Studies,” as opposed to “pick two or three”) than General Studies as it exists. This is not to say that the “pick 2 or 3” model must disappear or cannot succeed (see e.g. Interdisciplinary Studies at Georgia Southern; and successful online B.I.S. programs are generally even more wide open), but there is at least evidence from the North Georgia case that a shift from “General Studies” to a more career-

oriented, institutionally supported, and strategically marketed “Interdisciplinary Studies” program can work. Our contacts there indicated that, after making such a move, accompanied by an intense marketing campaign about why employers like this degree approach, the program tripled in size in three years.

In our discussions with other program directors, a few patterns emerged in terms of how programs were marketed successfully to students. Directors of interdisciplinary programs rightly note that in most cases the content of a degree is not directly related to the employability of a graduate. Well-designed programs require or encourage students to take classes in professionalization, as well as courses that help students develop in-demand skills identified by employers such as problem solving and communication. Several directors of USG programs claimed that GPAs went up when students were given additional flexibility to identify a program of study that worked with their interests, and this in turn helped retention.

### Recommendation 2: Three-College Model

Business, Computing, & Policy	Humanities & Education	Health & Natural Sciences
Accounting	Middle Grades	BSN
Human Resources	Health and PE	LTCM
Management	Secondary Ed	XSCI
Marketing	SPED	RN-BSN
Computer Science	Early Childhood Ed	Biology
IT	BSED - History	Chem
Maths	BSED - English	Psychology
Political Science	BSED - Math	
Criminal Justice	English	
Comm & Media	Art	
Sociology	Fine Arts	
	Music	
	History	
	Interdisciplinary/Integrated Studies	

*a) Why move Math, Political Science, Criminal Justice, Communication & Media, and Sociology to ‘Business, Computing, & Policy’? What theory is driving this new school?*

Rationale for moving Mathematics is provided in “Recommendation 1; a)” above. In the survey to department chairs, HAPS indicated that Business was the best place for them, noting collegiality between the programs as a major factor, as well as support for online teaching. History

is not included here for other reasons (see below); but in our thorough review of external interdisciplinary architectures, a number of examples of Poli-Sci/Justice/Economics oriented colleges under the umbrella of “Policy” were noted, and this seems to fit the potential synergies of this proposed architecture. Additionally, Communication & Emerging Media also indicated that a move to Business creates the most alignment for their program because a good deal of Comm research draws from Marketing or has methods similar to this subdiscipline of Business.

Although the final vote on this measure was divided, the committee recommends putting Sociology in the School of Business. Although the rising chair for this program objected, saying that sociology fits better with Health and Natural Sciences, by a narrow vote the committee argued that there was a closer methodological fit between the academic study of Business, Communication and Political Science. Furthermore, Criminal Justice bears an even closer connection between these fields and, in the present state of things, it is difficult to imagine moving Sociology away from Criminal Justice.

The committee will happily review this decision as negotiations continue and recommends that data about job placement in Sociology and other programs be provided so that informed decisions can be made.

***b) Why move English, Art, Fine Arts, Music, and History to ‘Humanities and Education’? What theory is driving this new school?***

With the dissolution of A&S, Humanities becomes the largest umbrella discipline remaining. In considering where to place it, the College of Nursing seems to be most easily eliminated; while the humanities are certainly supporting backgrounds for CNHS disciplines, there is little-to-no direct overlap when it comes to learning objectives in upper-level coursework. The same can largely be said for the College of Business. In contrast, the friction that has developed between the current A&S disciplines and the College of Education has arisen precisely because they have significant overlap in their offerings. Four department chairs provided feedback on the movement of humanities programs: English, Arts, HAPS, and Music. English indicated that Education would make the most sense. HAPS indicated that Business would be the preferred location, however keeping History with the rest of the humanities seemed to make the most sense, as students primarily move between these programs rather than to other parts of the university. Arts and Music declined to provide a preferred landing ground.

***c) Why move Biology, Chemistry, and Psychology to ‘Health and Natural Sciences’? What theory is driving this new school?***

In addition to the rationale provided above in “Recommendation 1; b)”, the chairs of these departments were also surveyed for preferred placements in the event that A&S is dissolved. Biology indicated that—if the dissolution of A&S is taken as fait accompli—CNHS made by far the most sense for the program, and the committee saw no reason to question this. Psyc/Soc indicated solid rationales for moving in the direction of any of the remaining colleges—though, it

should be noted that they were not in favor of the department splitting. While the Chemistry chair declined to provide a preferred landing ground, they did note that Education and Nursing would be the least preferred, by which we must infer they prefer the College of Business as the least of all evils. Ultimately, after considering overlaps of the various departments and what the productivity of school and college meetings might look like—as well as the compatibility of evaluations in teaching—the committee landed on these movement recommendations as the most likely to facilitate synergies between programs.

*d) Why an independent Interdisciplinary/Integrated Studies program?*

See answer to (c) in Recommendation 1 above.

**Recommendation 3: No Change**

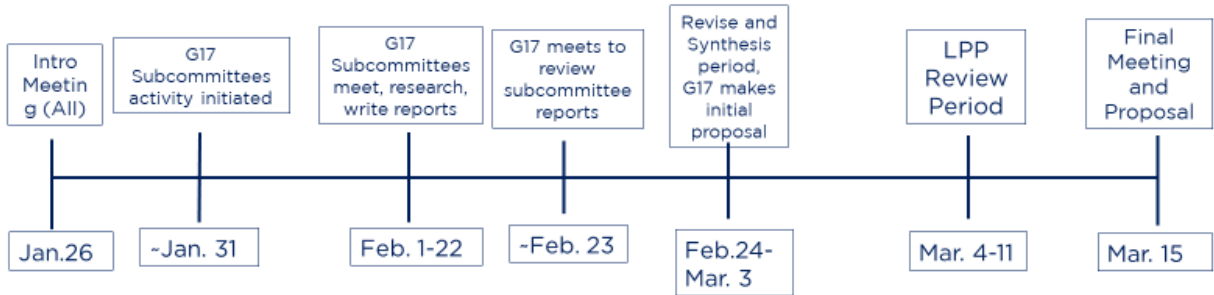
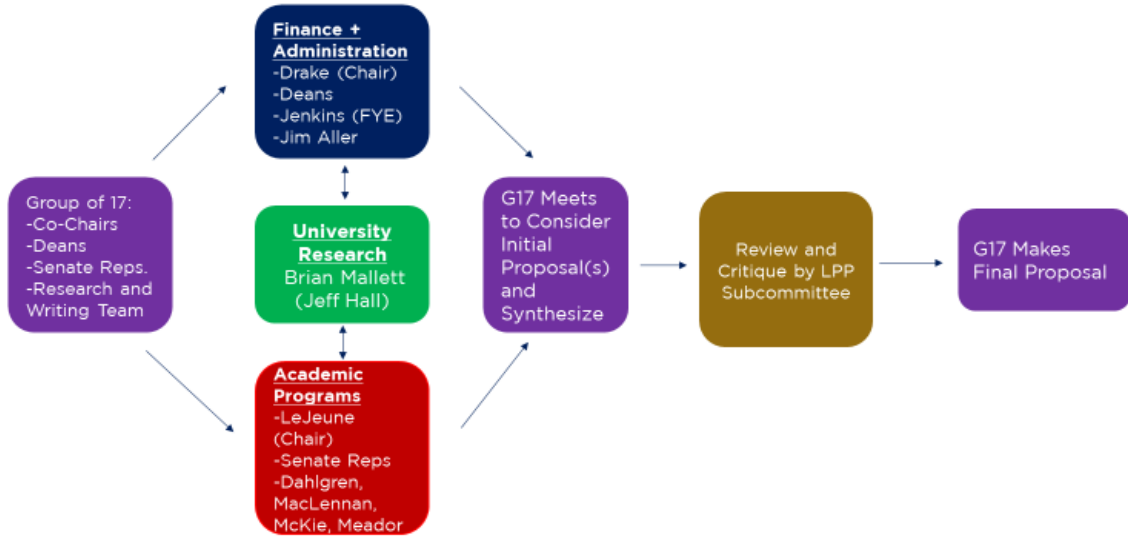
There was a consensus on the committee that the status quo does not seem sustainable, although it is a better option than wanton disruption and experimentation. However, undergoing a major restructuring of a university during a time when a major transition in leadership is underway may be equally unsustainable. Absent a credible theory of how significant restructuring will benefit academic programs, a strategic plan for how to successfully implement that, and leadership committed to successful implementation over a sustained period of time, there is little chance that any reorganization will succeed.

Be that as it may, our assessment of the lack of sustainability of the status quo is based in part on signals coming from the USG surrounding the future of low-producing programs (see ASPIRE language in Appendix 4), but also a frank awareness of trends of declining enrollment in many programs that have long raised concerns, and against which venerable attempts to fight back have hitherto proven ineffective. We believe that faculty and students both benefit from a recognition that, at least regarding at-risk programs, the time for half-measures is over. What is needed are data- and person- informed strategic measures that receive full financial and structural support from the university.

Therefore, while we prefer doing nothing to the alternative of spontaneous and ill-informed restructuring experiments that are likely to prove counter-productive, starting from that premise, we would encourage continued, faculty-inclusive attempts to find strategic measures that would support existing programs while also creatively reimagining how they might best serve the needs and pique the interests of students. This effort is especially needed to support and reimagine programs in the College of Arts and Sciences (see “Low Producing Programs” Appendix 3)—what they are, and how they might better synergize their energies. Please see our discussion of Interdisciplinary programs above.

**APPENDIX**

**1. Reorganization Committee Organization, Flow Chart, and Calendar**





## 2. Academic Subcommittee Survey Results

	High	Medium	Low	Total (3-2-1)
New Interdisciplinary Programs	5	4		23
Protect low performing programs	1	8		19
Protect jobs	4	1.5	2.5	17.5
Save money for good uses	0	4	5	13
Support enrollment + marketing	6	3		24
Support retention and academic outcomes	7	2		25
Improve or reimagine programs	9			27
Improve faculty experience	1	3.5	3.5	13.5

## 3. GSW Low Producing Programs

Low-Producing Programs			
<i>Program Name:</i>	FY21 Degrees Awarded	FY22 Degrees Awarded	FY23 Degrees Awarded
Bachelor of Arts with Major in Psychology	0	0	0
Bachelor of Science with Major in Mathematics	3	2	2
Bachelor of Arts with Major in Art/Art Studies, General	0	2	2
Bachelor of Science with Major in Chemistry	2	3	1
Bachelor of Science with Major in Geology	3	2	0
Bachelor of Science in Education with Major in Health and Physical Education	2	4	5
Bachelor of Fine Arts	4	4	3
Bachelor of Arts with Major in Music	4	8	2
Bachelor of Science with Major in Political Science	6	3	3
Bachelor of Science in Education with Major in Special Education	4	5	6
Bachelor of Science with Major in Biology	6	5	4
Bachelor of Arts with Major in English	4	8	2
Bachelor of Science in Education with Major in Middle Grades Education	5	6	5

Bachelor of Arts with Major in History	6	7	10
Bachelor of Science with Major in Information Technology	6	9	6
Bachelor of Science with Major in Computer Science	7	7	4
Master of Education with Major in Middle Grades Mathematics	3	4	11
=Art & Sciences			

**Source:** “GSW Low Producing Programs – based on degrees awarded” on Teams

#### 4. Aspire Language

The following language is from the “ASPIRE: Academic Strategies and Programs for Institutional Relevance and Excellence” document recently circulated to USG Provosts, and subsequently distributed to department chairs and faculty in the Arts and Sciences, if not elsewhere:

#### Low Enrolled/Producing Programs (10 minutes):

Addressing low enrolled and low producing programs is critically important work to ensure the most effective use of financial and human capital resources. Institutions are expected to continually monitor the enrollment and production of programs as well as evaluate how the portfolio of programs contribute to the strategic missions of the University System of Georgia (USG) and the institution.

**Very low** minimum thresholds have already been established.

Level	Enrollment 3-Yr Average	Award 3-Yr Average
Associates	5	5
Bachelors	10	10
Masters	5	5
Education Specialist	3	3
Doctorates	3	3

You will be provided with a list of programs that have not exceeded these minimum thresholds prior to the meeting (programs started in the last 5 years exempted), along with a list of programs that exceed the threshold but may be at risk of falling below the minimums. Immediate triage is expected for any program that does not exceed the minimum thresholds, especially if that program has failed to meet thresholds for two consecutive years.

#### Repeated Unsatisfactory Performance

- If a program’s three-year rolling average has been below thresholds for two consecutive years, it is assumed that you are deactivating the program, given the above policies that are in place. If

despite such repeated unsatisfactory performance, there is reluctance to deactivate a given program, then a separate meeting should be scheduled with Drs. Monga and Nichols to discuss the rationale supporting the exception.

### **Unsatisfactory Performance**

- If a program's three-year rolling average is now below thresholds but has not been for two consecutive years, provide a **brief outline** of the immediate triage plan or timeline for deactivation.
- Triage plans must have the expectation of exceeding minimum thresholds by the following year.

### **At-Risk Performance**

- For all programs identified as at-risk, provide a **brief overview** of the steps the institution will take to address this risk. You do not need to provide a line-by-line accounting for each program. Instead, discuss overall strategies, contingencies, and considerations for these programs. How do these programs contribute to the overall portfolio? What types of changes or improvements might be needed to ensure that the investments in these programs are contributing the USG and institutional missions and visions? In what ways are you keeping these programs "on the radar?"

# **COLLEGE REORGANIZATION FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE FINDING**



**GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

# CHARGE

**What are the implications to realigning our academic colleges from 4 to 3 to allow for moving the academic priorities needle?**

*The following must be achieved in the process:*

- Ensure academic quality;
- Protect and grow low producing programs; and,
- Drive undergraduate and graduate enrollment growth.
- Begin addressing consistent feedback on academic needs.

# ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR ENSURING ACADEMIC QUALITY

1. The Associate Dean for A & S should transition to the new college that houses the greatest number of new programs
  - a) The leadership team in any new college would not have the expertise or bandwidth to provide effective leadership over a large number of new programs.
2. Chair positions will transition to new college
  - a) It is not recommended that existing leadership teams in new colleges take on the roles and responsibilities of chairs in Arts and Sciences initially as they are many and differ from the responsibilities of current leadership teams.
    - a. The chair position and existing personnel will be reevaluated after one year.
3. Program coordination will remain the same

# FINACIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ENSURING ACADEMIC QUALITY

1. Administrative staffing will remain the same.
2. The number of student workers will be maintained.
3. Operating budgets will be maintained and transferred with programs.
4. Professional development budgets need to be increased in the three remaining colleges.
  - a) Funds allocated for travel vary considerably across Arts & Sciences departments
  - b) Currently, the smaller colleges have more travel funds per faculty member
5. The reorganized structure will be more costly to GSW than the current structure, exact amount of increase will vary by college.

# ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS THAT PROTECT AND GROW LOW PRODUCING PROGRAMS

1. An Associate Dean familiar with A & S programs will remain in place in one of the reorganized colleges.
2. The remaining Associate and Assistance Deans will be asked to provide leadership over programs with which they are unfamiliar.
3. Accreditation and other professional standards of practice will be *appropriately* applied to the programs in the reorganized colleges.
4. The reorganization structure will provide increased opportunities for faculty interactions/collaboration which can lead to new or expanded programming.
  - a) Interdisciplinary faculty experiences
    1. T &P Committees
    2. Search Committees
    3. College-wide professional development
    4. College-wide community service
    5. College-wide social events
    6. Teaching graduate or undergraduate courses for other disciplinary areas
  - b) Interdisciplinary scholarship opportunities
    1. SOTL research based on co-teaching experiences
    2. Presentations and papers based on common research interests
    3. Presentations and papers based on greater adoption of the QEP
    4. Sponsored operations based on disciplinary alignments



# FINACIAL IMPLICATIONS THAT PROTECT AND GROW LOW PRODUCING PROGRAMS

1. Marketing budgets will be merged, potentially providing access to larger campaigns and better exposure.
2. Foundation budgets will merged, potentially providing greater access to supplemental funds and scholarships.
3. Operating budgets will be maintained and transferred with programs.
4. Professional development budgets will need to increase in the three remaining colleges.
  - a) Funds allocated for travel vary considerably across Arts & Sciences departments
  - b) Currently, the smaller colleges have more travel funds per faculty member
5. There is a risk that new donors may not identify with the reorganized colleges.

# ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS THAT COULD DRIVE ENROLLMENT

1. The reorganization structure will provide more opportunities to create to new or expanded programming at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.
2. The merged colleges have the opportunity to develop a strong marketing and branding strategy that highlights the benefits and unique opportunities offered by the reorganized colleges.
3. The existing personnel, structures, and relationship in place to support professional internships/clinicals could enhanced internship opportunities for students being relocated to the reorganized colleges.
4. Administrative processes could be streamlined to improve efficiency and resource allocation.

# FINACIAL IMPLICATIONS THAT PROTECT AND GROW LOW PRODUCING PROGRAMS

1. Marketing budgets will be merged, providing access to larger campaigns and better exposure.
2. Foundation budgets will merged, providing greater access to supplemental funds and potentially scholarships.
3. Operating budgets will be maintained and relocated with programs.
4. Professional development budgets will need to increase in the three remaining colleges.
  - a) Funds allocated for travel vary considerably across A & S departments
  - b) Currently, the smaller colleges have more travel funds/per faculty member
5. There is a risk that new donors may not identify with the reorganized colleges.
6. The reorganized structure will be more costly to GSW than the current structure, exact amount of increase will vary by college.

# OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

1. The remaining three deans will experience a 50% - 150% increase in supervisory responsibilities.
2. Personnel time and cost will be expended on determining the reorganized colleges' strategic plans, missions and visions.
3. Personnel time and cost will be expended on determining the new brand and marketing campaign for the reorganized colleges.
4. A new Director of Graduate Studies will be created, regardless of whether the colleges reorganize or not.
5. Building a new professional community will require time and financial resources.
6. Leadership at the university level could be expanded by utilizing the dissolved Arts & Sciences Dean position.

# OTHER FINACIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Deans will need pay increases in line with increased supervisory expectations.
2. Reconfiguring our internal systems (SB9, DegreeWorks, Dynamic Forms, etc.) will incur substantial labor costs.
3. The reorganization could result in a higher-than-normal turnover rates, leading to increased personnel expenses due to compressed salaries and search costs.
4. The cost of rebranding will be extensive and include: badges, stationery, business cards marketing collateral, signage, websites, promotional materials and more.(\$100,000+)
  - a) Graphic design and branding fees
  - b) Costs associated with printing new stationery, badges, and marketing materials
  - c) A significant redesign of the websites is part of the rebranding effort, the cost will include website development, design, and potentially content migration.
  - d) Training and communication efforts

# QUESTIONS



## LPP comments Reorganization Committee

The LPP subcommittee met on Monday March 11 at 9:00 on Teams to quickly review our thoughts on reorganization. Present were:

Elizabeth Gurnack (Chair?)

Sondra Smith

Chadwick Gugg

Julie Megginson

Susan Bragg

Michael Moir

Sai Kran Mukkavilli

Keaton Wynn

Thelma Sexton

Ian Brown (later)

I am sending you some prepared comments that the LPP subcommittee organized in response to the proposals sent to us from the Committee. Several Departments wrote up their comments (all are attached) and we met online on Monday, March 11 very briefly to confer. I present a summary of thoughts expressed at the meeting. Following this are the individual documents from: Math, History and Political Science, Visual Arts, English and Modern Languages.

### **a) Your own ranking of the alternatives presented in the attached documents, with explanation and critique of each alternative.**

Our preferences:

#1

OPTION 3 (for now):

Although the committee recognizes the probability of a reorganization and is not opposed to the idea, we all agree that the process is happening too quickly and should wait until a new administration is in place and when we see what programs and/or departments are left to reorganize. The committee is particularly worried about the speed at which these proceedings are going without really having time to carefully consider what effects such large changes to our institution and culture will have. We see no evidence for, nor any comment on, the necessity of having these processes take place so immediately. That being said, we are not opposed to such a reorganization in the future. And History and Political Science (HAPS) supports option 1 (4 college reorganization) as its first choice, but mostly because they do not feel as though option 3 is a real choice for us; that reorganization will happen no matter what. Mathematics; English and Modern Languages (EML) and Chemistry, Geology, and Physics (CGP); all agree that option 3 is the best choice *for now*.

#2

#### OPTION 1

Again, all of the programs would opt for option 1 over option 2. In the three-college model, we feel that our programs would be “submerged” into the other college. In particular, a student would believe that the only thing one could do with a degree in history, English, art, music, etc. is teach. That is far from the truth and is contradictory to what we want to project: degrees in these areas can be used in many ways, in many careers. Also, it would not be clear to anyone that you *could* get a degree in art, history, etc. *except* as part of an education degree. Regarding Biology and Chemistry going to a College of Health and Natural Sciences, I am rather sure we will have no choice. However, there is no synergy between chemistry and the Nursing programs. Having looked over every course taught in the college, there is very little there that the chemistry department could interact with. Some chemistry programs might find a comfortable place in a College of nursing if they had medicinal chemists, pharmacologists, etc. We were not built that way, however over time we could develop the department to be more suited for a College of Health and Natural Sciences.

#3

#### OPTION 2

Option 2 is the most radical disruption of our current state. It would be most expensive to implement and, as stated above, would be subordinated to Education.

We also agree that there is no reason to think that ANY of these reorganizational structures will address the problem of low performing programs (LPP). None of these reorganizations will increase our graduates to 10 per year immediately. Since *our* main concern is to support LPP, we see little advantage to a reorganization at all, if it is supposed to be a means for nurturing our LPP. If the main goal is *not* to support LPP, then we need to know what the main goal is in order to be certain of which is the best option.

**b) Please identify and discuss what you believe to be the most viable paths for GSW's LPPs to grow and thrive, and how this relates (or not) to the alternatives presented.**

We all liked the Integrated Studies idea and feel it would help our disciplines (though of course, not our programs) to increase productivity. It could also be a lot of fun to work out such completely integrated curricula for students.

**c) Taking into account the support services currently available to LPPs, and those which might be available in alternative arrangements, please discuss the specific support that individual LPPs need in order to grow and thrive at GSW, and how this might be facilitated (or not) in the alternatives presented.**

The programs in Arts and Sciences have been seriously under supported in all ways. All of our leadership (Chairs), advising, online course development, outreach and marketing, assessment, etc. come from our core of teaching faculty, who are all still teaching full loads. We have very little administrative assistance, technical assistance, etc. Comparing the support that the entire



College of Arts and Sciences has to other colleges is shocking. We have laboratories, studios, instruments, etc. that need to be organized, stocked, maintained, etc. with no additional help. Again, this is all on the backs of the teaching faculty. We need help with recruitment. It would be nice to have a someone other than business majors recruiting for the University so they could speak about the other disciplines. We need a strong marketing and publicity campaign and support.

For the Visual Arts, Music, Biology, and CGP, we would have to have much more lab/practice/studio space and faculty to support the number of majors needed to graduate 10 majors per year. It seems unlikely that those kinds of capital changes would ever happen.

We would like serious scholarships for students coming into these programs. Math and CGP advocate having large scholarships for incoming freshmen, and continuing those scholarships to students who successfully progress through the program.

**d) Which ideas or arrangements presented in these proposals are most conducive to developing pathways to professions in LPP fields? What professional pathways do you envision?**

We are all interested in the Integrated/Interdisciplinary studies degree. See individual documents for suggested “professional pathways.”

Responses to John's questions:

- 1) My preferences are, in order, Option 3, Option 1, and Option 2. I put Option 3 not because I'm necessarily opposed to a reorganization of the university (rather, I can see some definite advantages to doing so), but because I don't think we should make such a major change to the entire structure of the organization in so short a time. I also worry about the cost of making enormous changes, especially if they don't stick – we have no way of knowing what the new president's priorities will be, whether said individual will honor any agreements we make with Dr. Weaver, or whether this person's priorities and Dr. Weaver's will be even remotely similar. So if we decide we *are* going to make changes, Option 1 is much less disruptive, probably much less expensive, and will likely set us up to make bigger changes in the future if we decide that we want to. The focus on interdisciplinary programs might also help some low-performing programs continue to offer upper-division classes.
- 2) I can only speak for the English program, but I think that what we need in order to thrive is strong marketing and publicity support. Most of our faculty are very active scholars – more attention drawn to faculty accomplishments might help us. In addition, we need to build up a stronger presence in the community. We need to attend high school college and career fairs and community and campus events and make our presence known. We need to produce and distribute high-quality materials that show students possible career paths for English degree holders. And we need to rethink our curriculum, since our current model is geared primarily towards training teachers and graduate students. We are in the process of redesigning our curriculum, starting with a new definition of the kind of graduate we want to produce – a well-informed citizen with strong written and oral communication skills and a flexible toolbox that will allow them to thrive in just about any career. I think we also need to get a crack at incoming students earlier. I know that the USG is heavily invested in 'Momentum Year,' but I also think that 'Momentum Year' and its focus areas make it difficult for programs that don't sound like they translate to a specific job to recruit. I recognize that this isn't going away, so we need to find a way around it.
- 3) In English, we could use financial support to design new classes on location-based writing, take students on field trips to interesting literary/cultural locations in Georgia and adjacent states, and invite creative writers and academic guest speakers to campus. I think that all of these things would help us to increase our visibility on campus and in the community (and I've been talking to Hunter Peak at the GSW Foundation about potential fundraising opportunities). We are also trying to develop interdisciplinary classes that give students a professional experience of some kind (designing a gaming module, putting on a production of a play), and we could use some funding to make that happen.
- 4) I think that Option 1, with its emphasis on interdisciplinary programs, has a solid chance of keeping some of our programs viable, and might even help with recruiting students for LPP majors when we are able to reactivate them after the mandatory deactivation period (and to be clear, if English is deactivated, we are going to fight like hell to be reactivated as soon as possible).

## HAPS Response to Academic Reorganization Plans

Susan Bragg

Based on conversations with faculty colleagues in the HAPS program, there is frustration with what seems like a rush to re-organize without a more focused response to specific issues that might influence under-enrollment at GSW. For example, we recognize that many programs in Arts and Sciences are officially on the Low Performing Program list, but we also feel that there has been limited campus supports for these programs historically and point out that the growth of new degree programs in the College of Education recently has had a negative impact on our student numbers. To sum up: we believe that a more contextualized and targeted approach to thinking about organization and growth is important. We also don't see evidence offered to argue that larger-scale reorganization offers any benefits.

### **First: Our ranking of proposed re-organization plans is as follows:**

1) A four-college re-organization with a focus on Humanities and Social Sciences is our pragmatic first choice.

A four-college re-organization would maintain greater visibility of diverse degree options at GSW while also encouraging new commitment to coherent integration through the HAIL program and in an interdisciplinary studies program.

2) No re-organization. In truth, most faculty feel that that re-organization is not necessary and prefer targeted responses (as noted above). But we also feel that there is tremendous pressure for some change coming from some corners of campus. In many ways, the 'no re-organization' option seems to be offered only grudgingly, with the assumption that those in favor of maintaining the College of Arts & Sciences are 'refusing change.'

HAPS faculty emphasize that real change can come in other areas: working with USG initiatives to shape student enrollment patterns, developing more effective publicity programs that GSW recruiters can actively share as important options, and addressing what often feels like a systematic devaluation of our programs outside of the College of A & S. Based on our own efforts to recruit and sustain HAPS students (something we see recognized in Dr. Dahlgren's statistics about student major shifts), we feel we are already pro-active in addressing the LPP status and willing to expand our work in partnership with others on this campus.

3) We are strenuously opposed to re-organizing on a three-college model, with HAPS and other humanities/social sciences included in 'Humanities & Education.' We believe that this would submerge our fields within the existing structure of the College of Education. As noted in other reports, many of our fields have felt vulnerable to the COE's reform visions and left with little

voice—and fewer students. We do not see how this would be a truly integrated program, based on existing experiences.

More significantly, many of our students expressly choose HAPS degrees as non-teaching options for professional opportunities. Hiding us in the Education program (or conflating all our programs as teacher tracks) would discourage students from identifying other vital and important career pathways. Currently, there are more history and political science majors in the HAPS program than there are on education tracks in the current College of Education. We are concerned that this potential change both ignores the current vitality of the HAPS program (for a small college) and will limit both the visibility and administrative support for non-education career development, further discouraging potential HAPS students from attending GSW.

Finally: all leadership comments on re-thinking academic re-organization at GSW have stressed that participants must use evidence to support arguments, not qualitative arguments about the importance of the Arts & Sciences generally. Yet I have seen no evidence to show that a three-college plan would be effective and valuable. Perhaps there are arguments to be made but we do not see this in the current information and assessment plans offered.

## **Second: Supporting LPP Growth**

HAPS faculty members have consistently worked to expand and support our current majors in a variety of ways. This includes personal outreach in our classes, campus events such as the Humanities Symposium, and building support for HAPS internships. We believe that continuing this effort along with more focused support from university recruiters and administrators is critical. Our concern is that our programs are de-prioritized in university promotional materials as not ‘career-focused,’ despite significant evidence to the contrary. We also feel that factors shaping declines have not been fully acknowledged and that our energies might be better put to thinking about how to promote LPPS, rather than a rush to judgment in closing a program.

We also want to maintain a visible program to potential HAPS majors from around the region, as some of our peer universities have more mixed BA/BS programs with fewer opportunities for specialized studies in HAPS fields.

## **Third: Specific Supports for LPP Growth**

Campus recognition of Arts & Sciences is important but often feels lacking. I can attest that it has been a struggle to gain support from administrative staff and campus leaders in organizing events like the Humanities Symposium, despite high student turn out. Many of us have also experienced issues with staff or administrators advising students to take easier/online/‘career’ tracks, discouraging students from exploring HAPS options. Greater campus support for our diverse programs would support student interest and ability to follow their own pathways, rather than pushing them into stereotyped ‘boxes.’

#### **Fourth: Developing Career Pathways**

For HAPS, a greater commitment to promoting both our current activities and expanding regional recognition of specialized career opportunities would help grow our program. For example, we have a strong track record of student success in prestigious POLS internships and in law school acceptance rates. In History, we have the unique opportunity of having two NPS sites in Sumter County, allowing our students valuable internship opportunities. We have expanding numbers of students completing internships and constructive community relations to support our students from class to career development.

These opportunities could be promoted during ‘momentum year’ efforts to really highlight what makes GSW HAPS students successful. There are many other examples here, but the larger point is that in recent years, HAPS faculty have worked to promote career-ready skills and want to continue to do so—campus recognition of our existing strengths will sustain our own departmental efforts.

Department of Mathematics

Chadwick Gugg

March 10, 2024

1. Present your rankings of the Alternatives Presented in the Reorganization Committee Documents, along with an explanation and critique of each alternative.

**First Choice: Option 3: No Change.**

Rationale: GSW is undergoing substantive and disruptive organizational change internally, as our senior leadership changes, as well as changes, such as the likely simultaneous deactivation of multiple programs, imposed on our structure externally by the USG. New leadership typically wishes to establish to its own footprint and direction, and it is unclear how the new GSW leadership will want to support, shape, or even re-shape the changes suggested by Options 2 and 3.

**We note here that 'No Change' need not be a permanent mode.**

Rationale: The Reorganization Committee has presented us their March 3, 2024 Preliminary Report: On University Restructuring. This study can inform a revisit to reorganization by the new Administration, once in place. This has the dual advantage of (i) *Buy-in from the new Administration*, who would be able to align such a reorganization with their own vision for GSW, and hence likely be fully supportive of “their” joint vision with us about GSW, and (ii) provide additional time to align such a plan with programs at GSW as re-shaped by USG policy, namely the *Aspire* document. Currently, we operate with many unknowns, and the LPP Subcommittee has only a week to respond to the Reorganization Committee Recommendations.

**Second Choice: Option 1: Altered Four-College Model.**

Rationale: This option proposes less comprehensive changes than Option 2, and so aligns more closely to the rationale of our support for Option 3 than does Option 2. Regarding Math, there is a natural kinship with the Computer Science and IT Department, currently housed in the College of Business and Computing. The former School of Computing and Mathematics comprised precisely the departments of Mathematics and Computer Science. It is therefore reasonable in any reorganization that the two programs again be housed alongside one another. This might support the possible creation of a Data Analytics option within the Math Major. A downside in this option is that Math would not be housed with Chemistry, Biology, and Physics, which, like Math, are STEM disciplines. Additionally, there is no guarantee that relocation of the Mathematics Department within the university will of itself buoy a LPP.

### **Third Choice: Option 2: Three College Model**

Rationale: Option 2 ostensibly presents the greatest disruption to the current GSW organization. It is unclear, however, that data so far presented or considered supports a likely positive outcome for Low Producing Programs, beyond speculation. Administrative reorganizations are also costly in time, cash outflow, and in potential turn-over due to the disruption. Persuasive data is lacking for Return on Investment in Option 2.

2. Please identify and discuss what you believe to be the most viable paths for GSW's LPP's to grow and thrive, and how this relates (or not) to the alternatives presented.

Some of our so-named low producing programs are actually quite consistent, even competitive, with USG graduation rates when considered by ratio of graduates in major to total number of undergraduate degrees awarded or graduates per Faculty member in a unit. For GSW to achieve 10 graduates per year in some programs requires GSW to exceed, even substantially exceed, rates common – and appropriate -- in USG schools and in schools in other states. Not all programs need to graduate 10 majors per year to meet state needs in a particular area. If the metric for the program is not appropriate, it is difficult to imagine meeting it.

Nonetheless, some ideas:

- Investment – Some LPP's struggle to attract or maintain Faculty due to low salaries, high workloads, and little time or facilities for scholarship. Students see or intuit when their Faculty are overworked. Graduates from programs such as Mathematics or Geology, for example, have six-figure potential. I do not feel I live a six-figure salary life or work in a six-figure facility. How much more our students intuit the same! The promise on paper of a median industry salary cannot match the *feel*, and *reality*, of their surroundings at GSW. I have had students express, in one form or another, sentiments along these lines! Departments, facilities, and lines must be invested in. GSW as an institution must be invested in, and not held repeatedly to austerity or contraction. Will reorganization increase *departmental budgets, lines, salaries, and GSW-wide recruitment efforts*?
- Increase scholarships for students – Substantive (\$5,000/semester or more) that students would aspire towards in LPP fields.
- If 10 graduates per year are truly needed, is it possible to partner with a university, such as Zhou Kou Normal University or a university in another country such as India or Nepal, in which a joint program could be wrought and the numbers of the partner institution leveraged?

- Community outreach, marketing, and recruitment efforts from GSW must include representatives from LPP areas or graduates from these areas.
3. Taking into account the support services currently available to LPP's, and those which might be available in alternative arrangements, please discuss specific support that individual LLP's need in order to grow and thrive at GSW, and how this might be facilitated, or not, in the alternatives presented.

If 10 graduates a year is the mark, for some programs this would be anomalous and quite above the state and national norms for an institution of our size. If reorganization were a clear or viable answer to that, one imagines there would be data in support of that from other such institutions pursuing a similar approach. Programs close to the mark may benefit from some of the ideas in the answer to #2. Otherwise, merging GSW with a larger institution or partnering with a foreign university to count their numbers may be a path to realistically achieve 10 graduates per year in certain majors.

4. Which ideas or arrangements presented in these proposals are most conducive to developing pathways to professions in LPP fields? What professional pathways do you envision?

For Math, we have fielded various options within the major over the years, e. g. Mathematics, Mathematics with Option in Financial Mathematics, Mathematics with Option in Actuarial Science, Mathematics with Option in Computational Science and Engineering, and Mathematics with Teacher Certification. In future, Math will likely field Mathematics with Option in Data Science, as this is an active and growing field with mid-career median salaries in the six figures.

Regardless of college, a true Data Science program must be supported with a line in the field, or a related field such as Statistics, and a salary strong enough to recruit and retain such Faculty. This returns to an item in #2 – Investment. Whether it is Arts and Sciences, or Computing and Mathematics, or Business and Computing, the **department** must be supported, and the university must respect the department's value. Merely changing the direct report lines on a chart, or the name of the college in which one is housed, is insufficient to the task.



## Department of Visual Art:

Prepared for the Department by Keaton Wynn

- A) **Our first choice is Recommendation #3 No Change.** We do not believe it is prudent to rush into major changes in a process offering only a 6 day window for LPP's to respond. This does not allow for meaningful communication or thought. We will now have a change in administration which will disrupt any process and implementation of proposed changes. Most importantly these changes do nothing for our department to secure our growth and to raise us above the LPP status. (The BIS degree could be developed under our current structure making organizational changes unnecessary.) I believe I am quoting Dr. Weaver, "We have a chance to do something". For our department this is not a reasoned motivation for changing the university structure. To make changes for the sake of "doing something" is not a rationale. Again, it does not address the issue of LPP's in a substantive way.

**Our second choice is Recommendation #1 Altered Four-College Model.** This most closely aligns with what was suggested above. No change with the addition of the BIS degree. We are supportive of the BIS degree as an attempt to preserve class offerings. But this can be done without any structural change.

**Our third choice is Recommendation # 2 Three College Model.** This does nothing to help the LPP issue, would implement drastic changes without any guarantee of improvement and cost the university to implement.

- B) We acknowledge that we will not be able to maintain a three-year graduation rate of 10 per year. We do not have the physical space or facilities to handle the enrollment level necessary to ensure that rate. (To achieve these numbers, we would need additional instructional space and more faculty.) In looking at programs around the state for comparison our graduation rate adjusting for size of university and program would be considered extremely productive. If this kind of accommodation is not offered, we suggest this alternate approach to reposition our program for success.

**Integrative Studies Tracks:** BA/BFA/BS proposed approach from Laurel Robinson. (attached)

Additionally, there must be a cultural change within the institution where the quality and value of what the Liberal Arts offers is recognized and integrated into publicity and marketing.

- C) Keeping the current structure of colleges with the addition of the BIS degree may create the best opportunity to turn our college into an institution for job training. The possible pathways are probably closely aligned (for our department) with the pathways that already exist.

## **Integrative Studies Tracks for A&S degree programs: A very preliminary proposal**

Submitted by Laurel Robinson, Chair Department of Visual Arts, February 9, 2024

*“Georgia Southwestern's High-impact Approach to Integrative Learning (HAIL) aims for all GSW students to be able to make connections among their curricular and co-curricular experiences. These connections may be introduced through projects that require students to draw on their knowledge from outside the classroom, integrative mindset activities that encourage students to examine their values, goals, and potential paths to success, or single course ePortfolios that allow students to practice the construction process. By providing students the knowledge to recognize interdisciplinary ideas and studies, we hope to guide our students to success both during and after their studies at Georgia Southwestern.*

*In so doing, students develop complex, transferable, and employable skills including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and a life-long learning mindset. Engaging in integrative learning helps students develop a sense of purpose and belonging by further helping them understand why the skills they are developing (in and out of the classroom) and the content that they are studying is important.” (QEP webpage, GSW)*

As GSW begins the SACS cycle with a new QEP, this is preliminary proposal to create options to enhance existing degree programs and to present innovative career paths that could aid in recruitment, retention and eventually graduation rates.

This idea does not require any BOR approval for new degree programs, as these tracks are options for degree programs currently offered in Arts and Sciences (BA, BS, and BFA). Each of these degrees will have a tract called “Integrative Studies” (eg: BA in Art/Integrative Studies or BS in Mathematics/Integrative Studies etc.) that will allow students to build their own curriculum recognizing that their QEP focused interdisciplinary experiences during their Gen Ed courses can smoothly transition into an existent degree program. These degree program tracks could then directly tie to post-graduate planning whether graduate school or careers.

After initial conversations and brainstorming with L. Robinson, E. Gurnack, S. Harvey and C. Gugg, we all agreed that creating extra blocks of at least 15 cr hours would be possible in all our degree programs. For example, the BA in Art would maintain an 21 hour Major Elective area; a 15-18 cr hr block that was the minor and one extra 15 hour block. Possibilities could include a studio concentration of Glassblowing; a block with Chemistry/Physics and a block in Marketing or Entrepreneurship for students interested in building their own studio business after graduation or perhaps a studio concentration in Drawing or Digital Arts; a block in English creative writing/technical writing and a block in Marketing that could be interesting to a student who wants to create graphic novels. Just as easily, a student could major in English, do blocks in creative writing, digital art or drawing and History (etc). The Department of Chemistry had ideas including art, computer science, and Biology. Math had ideas to include computer science, biostatistics/biology etc. Biology saw interesting connections to art with drawing/scientific illustration. We even shared some fun ideas to include Board Game Design, Data Science, and other connections to explore 3-d printing, laser cutting, and other new technologies.

It is important at this juncture to reiterate that the only way we can begin more serious discussions to implement these tracks is to assure that all existing degree programs are available.

At this point, there is no time before the February 13 BOR meeting to seek further assistance from other departments. This should just be seen as a very preliminary concept. Depending on what happens with our existing degree programs and College of Arts and Sciences, this concept could be honed and considered by each department and then presented for approval through the Committee on Academic Affairs.

LPP Subcommittee Response from Dr. Thelma Sexton – College of Education

- a. The COE is in support of recommendation, in order of option 2; then 1; and finally, 3. Option 2 allows the integration of numerous departments in a support move. The concern is will a new administrator accept these changes, but if the changes are in place when they are hired, wouldn't they support the changes?
  
- b. As a program, the COE has addressed the LPP of the Bachelor of Science in Education with a Major in Middle grades Education and the Bachelor of Science in Education with a Major in Health and Physical Education by making these programs online to attract students from all across the State of Georgia. In support of other LPP programs, continued recruitment and connecting with high school students.
  
- c. COE supports the integrative studies track.

## **Amendment to the College of Education Report – Submitted by Michele McKie on behalf of the BSED in Special Education program**

The purpose of this amendment is to add the information for the Special Education program which was accidentally left off from the report submitted by Dr. Sexton.

*d) Which ideas or arrangements presented in these proposals are most conducive to developing pathways to professions in LPP fields? What professional pathways do you envision?*

The BSED Special Education program at Georgia Southwestern is on the list of low-producing programs, in addition to the BSED with a major in Middle Grades Education and BSED Health and Physical Education. In addition to the work being completed by those programs, the special education program has worked to develop an online pathway for the BSED in Special Education to attract students from across Georgia. We recently underwent major curriculum changes to update and revise our standards and meet the needs of completers. We have seen a trend based on the post-bac in Special Education program where we are attracting individuals with bachelor's degrees who are working as special education teachers but lack certification. Our post-bac candidates are being referred to GSW by their current employers.

In our post-bac program for special education certification, we have 12 candidates working to complete the program by Spring 2026. Unfortunately, the post-bac programs do not count as program completers because they are non-degree seeking candidates. We believe we can help attract candidates to the BSEd Special Education program if offered online. We anticipate attracting special education paraprofessionals who want to move into teaching positions. We may also attract some of the post-bac candidates who want a second bachelor's degree option rather than the current route used for gaining certification although we are uncertain if they will choose this route.

Our online pathway for the BSEd Special Education Program will begin in Fall 2024. We will start recruiting for this program summer 2024. With our significant curriculum change in the program, we have embedded an autism endorsement where candidates will complete their degree with both certification in Special Education General Curriculum and the Autism endorsement, which will make the program more attractive to school districts who use endorsements as a consideration in hiring. This new change could potentially encourage our partners to enable candidates to attend our program because of the value they see in the Autism endorsement. We recently discussed the revised program with our partners after the Teacher Career Fair in February 2024, and they were encouraged by this change/update.

Respectfully submitted by Dr. Michele A. McKie, March 15, 2024