March 23, 2026

To: Dr. Doug Koch, Interim Provost

From: Academic Council

Per the faculty handbook restructuring process, Academic Council has met regarding the proposed major academic restructuring and is providing this report either endorsing or rejecting the overall proposal. Because of the complexity and many subcomponents of the proposal, the council is also providing comments on each of those subcomponents.

Overall Major Academic Restructuring Proposal RecommendationThe proposal is **rejected** by a clear majority.

Endorsement Summary

- Broad agreement that academic restructuring is necessary due to declining enrollments.
- Recognition that faculty workload will largely remain stable, with increased burden primarily on chairs/directors and administrative staff.
- General support for moving forward, though not all individual components are endorsed.

Rejection Summary

- The proposal is viewed as premature and insufficiently developed, with:
    - Too many unresolved concerns, alternatives, and unanswered questions
    - Lack of clarity on leadership structures, particularly for "schools"
- Concerns that restructuring:
    - Increases administrative workload without clear cost savings
    - May add complexity (schools/centers) rather than reduce it
- Belief that college-level restructuring should occur first, before departmental mergers
- Significant concern about loss of departmental identity and oversized units and administrative capacity
- Perception that communication about financial necessity and rationale has been insufficient

Consideration 1: Formation of the School of Health Professions

The proposal is **endorsed** by a strong majority.

Endorsement Summary

- Strong support for a School of Health Professions to improve collaboration, alignment, and visibility
- Backed by faculty and college leadership
- Concerns (accreditation, structure, workload) seen as manageable during implementation
- Interest in including all relevant health disciplines (Nutrition, Respiratory Therapy, Counseling) and maintaining program autonomy/support
- Expected to improve coordination, but not generate significant cost savings

Rejection Summary

- Lack of clarity on leadership, costs, and overall structure
- Uncertainty about scope and inclusion of other programs that are also health professions
- Concern about added administrative layers and premature implementation

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Consideration 2: Formation of the School of Education

The proposal is **endorsed** by an overwhelming majority.

Endorsement Summary

- Strong consensus that forming a School of Education improves alignment, consistency, and communication across closely related programs.
- Broad support from faculty and college leadership, with recognition of regional workforce importance.
- Considered a logical consolidation, though:
  - Attention is needed for Educator Preparation integration, logistics, and student teaching compliance
  - Administrative structure can be refined during implementation

Rejection Summary

- Concerns about unclear leadership structure and role expectations, particularly workload at the director level
- Risk of added administrative layers and responsibilities without sufficient planning

- Perception that more detail and stakeholder input are needed before implementation
- Acknowledgment that the model will likely not produce significant cost savings

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Consideration 3: Department of Mass Media, Art & Design

The proposal is **rejected** by a clear majority.

Endorsement Summary

- Accreditation and compliance is manageable and work can be shared across program faculty, with the chair serving in a support/oversight role

Rejection Summary

- Poor disciplinary alignment between Mass Media and Art & Design
- Strong stakeholder opposition from affected units
- Logistical challenges due to separate geographic locations
- Preference for alternative model (Art & Design + Crisp Museum; reconsider Mass Media)
- Viewed as less viable than college-level alternatives and not well aligned with program realities

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Consideration 4: Department of English & Communications

The proposal is **endorsed** by an overwhelming majority.

Endorsement Summary

- Aligned disciplines with overlap that can drive efficiencies and new program development, particularly workforce-oriented offerings
- Strengthens the humanities amid declining enrollments
- Responds to market shifting away from traditional humanities with consolidation
- Concerns about space and administrative logistics are viewed as manageable and already addressed in similar departments
- Requires workload adjustments (chair/admin compensation & support)

Rejection Summary

- High complexity due to large service load (~10,000 SCH)
- Limited savings with continued need for multiple staff
- Logistical challenges with separate department locations

- Interest in alternative models
- Need for faculty input on naming/structure

Consideration 5: Department of Anthropology, History& Political Science

The proposal is narrowly **endorsed**.

Endorsement Summary

- Logical humanities consolidation amid declining enrollments
- Opportunity for new programs and streamlined curriculum
- Improves workload balance (heavy gen ed reliance)
- Aligns with broader restructuring efforts

Abstention Summary

- Uncertainty about the overall structure, purpose, and academic fit of the combined unit
- Interest in exploring other potential combinations (e.g., Political Science with Criminal Justice)
- Hesitation driven by lack of detailed rationale and clarity

Rejection Summary

- Impacted units present compelling arguments against the merger, particularly regarding student and faculty outcomes
- Preference for discipline-specific restructuring (e.g., within PSPR) rather than broad consolidation
- Concern that a single chair would oversee a large, diverse, and fragmented unit, reducing effectiveness
- Units have already undergone restructuring, and further consolidation risks creating a disjointed "hodgepodge" department
- Programs spread across multiple buildings with a large number of majors, complicating administration and advising

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Consideration 6: Department of Natural Sciences & Mathematics

The proposal is very narrowly **endorsed**.

Endorsement Summary

- Perception that chemistry, physics, and mathematics are interconnected, supporting a unified structure
- These disciplines share a large general education/service load with relatively fewer majors, making consolidation operationally reasonable
- Combined unit would create a chair workload consistent with other large departments
- Recognition that the proposed department name may not accurately reflect disciplines and should be revised

Abstention Summary

- Insufficient Information

Rejection Summary

- Strong concern that lab sciences and mathematics have fundamentally different needs, particularly regarding labs, safety, and infrastructure
- Significant support for more natural alignments, such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics (lab sciences together) and Mathematics with Computer Science
- Widespread disagreement across departments indicates the proposal is not sufficiently developed or supported
- Combined unit would be large and complex (~10,000 SCH) with:
    - Lab management, safety, and equipment oversight challenges
    - Potential mismatch between chair expertise and departmental needs
- Proposal seen as less effective than alternatives developed by colleges/departments
- Raises broader questions about college-level restructuring and cross-college alignment
- "Natural Sciences" viewed as misleading (typically includes biology); alternative naming preferred

Consideration 7: Creation of the Center of Aviation Studies

The proposal is **endorsed** by an overwhelming majority.

Endorsement Summary

- Creates a centralized, visible structure that improves student navigation and program clarity
- Bringing aviation-related programs together is seen as intuitive and coherent
- Notably minimal opposition, with general agreement that the proposal "makes sense"
- The center model is familiar and already in use, reducing implementation uncertainty
- Enhances coordination, branding, and accessibility of aviation programs

Rejection Summary

- Lack of clarity on costs associated with creating the center and whether additional leadership roles would be required
- Since programs are already housed within the same department, questions arise about the added value vs. duplication of structure

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Consideration 8: Technology Management

The proposal is conditionally **endorsed**.

Endorsement Summary

- Some recognition that aligning related technology programs could create stronger academic pathways and synergies
- Viewed by some as a chance to better integrate overlapping technology disciplines across units
- General acknowledgment that the proposal has potential advantages, prompting continued discussion despite concerns

Rejection Summary

- Proposal is viewed as unclear and inconsistently articulated, with confusion about:
    - Program scope (networking, cybersecurity, construction, etc.)
    - Student outcomes and curriculum direction
- Little evidence of resource planning (labs, equipment, infrastructure) and impact analysis on faculty, programs, and students
- Concern that the proposal lacks collaboration between affected colleges (HCBC and STEM)
- Programs in Engineering & Technology and Computer Science are seen as having distinct missions and approaches (applied vs. theoretical)
- Moving a small number of faculty/program elements is seen as insufficient to achieve meaningful collaboration or transformation