Faculty of Education Restructuring
Consolidated Feedback and Responses
Shared at Education Faculty Council on May 25, 2021

Students, staff and faculty provided extensive feedback on the proposed restructuring vision through four drop-in sessions, a google feedback form, and individual communication. The comments, questions, and concerns were appreciated and tremendously helpful in expanding our understanding of what it means to be non-departmentalized. This document includes the most common categories of questions and concerns that our community raised.

Why a Non-Departmentalized Vision?

The non-departmentalized vision (see Appendix A) takes into consideration the many moving parts that are currently shaping the Faculty and University such as SET, the College, the new Budget Model, Centralized Student Services, and the Graduate Program Review. Yes, it is, in part, a response to the current budget cuts and anticipated budget cuts in the future, but the restructuring vision was born out of a sense of optimism. It is forward looking. It is one that removes internal bureaucracy and obstacles to allow us to be innovative in our programs, rethink how we can best serve our students, and continue to enact our [Strategic Plan](#). It gives us an opportunity to change the faculty's culture to one of collaboration and service to the faculty as a whole, rather than continuing to operate in silos. Yet, it allows us to maintain our strong connection to our programs and the people we work alongside, while opening doors to new synergies. Our vision is to create an environment in which everyone has a place of belonging, and feels a sense of collegiality and pride in our Faculty.

So what are we being asked to vote on exactly?

The motion for May 25th, Faculty Council is as follows:
Motion to endorse, in principle, the non-departmentalized vision for the Faculty of Education.

First, it might be helpful to state what we are not voting on. We are not voting on the specific leadership roles listed on the 'visual' of the vision, as we expect the number of leadership roles and the titles of those roles to potentially change (see the Leadership Working Group below). We are not voting on a list of program areas and how those program areas will be governed (see the Program Areas Working Group below). And we are not voting on how membership might be constituted on each of our committees (see the Governance Working Group below). The vote is whether or not we want to put in the effort into collectively working out the details for leadership, program areas, governance, and administration within a non-departmentalized faculty.

If we vote against the vision, what happens?

Right now, we don't have a Plan B. None of the other options we've considered, including all of the 2-Department configurations, balance all of the moving parts or address the significant feedback received as effectively. So, if we vote against the motion, it is back to the drawing board. But we can't be complacent. As described in the next section, faculty restructuring is under the purview of the Provost, and requires several levels of governance approval. We need a vision with at least some of the details by September.

So, if we do vote in favour, then what?
The governance process for restructuring faculties and departments is set out in Article A10: Academic Reorganization in the [Collective Agreement](). Restructuring is under the purview of the Provost. If we vote in favour of the motion on May 25th, then we need to solicit the Provost's feedback and general support in June. If he is supportive, then we can begin to work on some of the details of a non-departmentalized faculty. The following outlines a timeline for that work:

July - August:
Faculty leadership will compile materials for Discussion Groups on Leadership, Program Areas, Governance, and Administration. These materials will include examples from other non-departmentalized faculties, questions and suggestions from the feedback gathered, possible constraints, and other relevant information.

August 26th: Faculty Retreat
Prior to the Faculty Retreat, Discussion Group materials will be provided to Faculty and Staff. At that time, each person will choose which Discussion Group they'd like to participate in at the Faculty Retreat.

Once at the Faculty Retreat, people will be placed in the discussion group of their choice. (There may be multiple groups on the same topic, and as we gather the material, we may need subgroups or new topics.) Each group will have a chance to begin to envision what their topic of discussion might look like and how it could be implemented. Recommendations from these groups will be shared. Working groups will then be struck to continue the work after the retreat by examining and making recommendations. These working groups may continue for a couple of months or throughout the academic year, depending on the tasks. Although we need to have a sense of how leadership and governance will work in a non-departmentalized faculty, the exact details do not need to be determined to move to the next phase in the process.

September 7th: Faculty Council
In order to go through the multiple levels of governance in time for a July 1, 2022 implementation, an official motion, using the language in Article A10, will be brought forward to Faculty Council:

Motion to recommend that the Faculty of Education become a non-departmentalized faculty.

Article A10 states that an academic reorganization may originate *"from a recommendation from a Faculty Council to the Provost, or from a proposal by the Provost."* As mentioned, our faculty will make a recommendation to become non-departmentalized to the Provost, but he ultimately has the authority to determine how we are structured. U of A for Tomorrow illustrates this further with the objective of "reducing the number of faculties and departments through consolidation to create economies of scale and reduce duplication of similar programs, courses and services." Our work now allows us to be proactive in this regard.

Based on a previous [example of becoming non-departmentalized]() from the School of Public Health, the recommendation includes alignment with University guiding documents (e.g., U of A for Tomorrow), compliance with legislation, policy and procedure, rationale for the change, the consultative process, and proposed details of restructuring. The focus is on the shifting from departmentalized to non-departmentalized, not on the specific details of implementation.

September to January: University Governance Approvals
If the Faculty votes in favour of the motion at September Faculty Council, approvals and/or reviews are needed at subcommittees and committees of the Academic Planning Committee, GFC, and the Board of Governors. At each phase in the process the committee may return the recommendation to the Provost, approve the recommendation (possibly with changes), or reject the recommendation. Once again, communication is through the Provost.

January to June, 2022
If the recommendation is approved at each step of the governance process, then we will have six months to begin the transition to a new leadership, governance, and administrative structure. Yet, we recognize that it will take time and adjustments over the months, and possibly the first few years, to begin working in a new structure.

What are the details?
In the feedback received, people asked many questions, and gave suggestions for what we should and should not do. The areas below were mentioned repeatedly. In the spirit of the Cree concept of *mâmawohkamâtowin,* we would like to work cooperatively to create answers and solutions in the best interest of our students, and for our community as a faculty. Please note that these are the areas we have identified at this moment. There may be others, and these groups may need further subdivision to create more manageable tasks. At the same time, we know that all of these parts do not exist in isolation, and so the recommendations need to fit together.

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities
Task: Review and redefine all leadership roles and responsibilities including Vice Dean, Associate Deans, Chairs, and Associate Chairs.
- *What areas of responsibilities do we need to fulfill?*
- *What gaps do we have (e.g., EDI, Wellness, Mentorship)?*
- *How many leadership roles do we need?*
- *What selection processes should be in place to choose the faculty's leaders?*
- *What titles should we use?*
- *How will the chairs share or split responsibilities? How can we ensure the chair roles are engaging and connected to the work of the faculty? (see Note below)*

The responsibilities of the faculty's leadership positions will necessarily need to change given the introduction of the College, initiatives through SET, and our faculty's shift to Centralized Student Services. This leadership review allows us to examine what leadership roles will be required or needed to support us as a faculty.

Note: Many people asked questions specifically about the Chairs. The role of the Chair in the proposed vision will include the responsibilities as outlined in the Collective Agreement including assigning teaching (A2.02.1), possibly assigning service (A2.04), reviewing the annual report (A2.05), sabbatical applications (A4.02.1), recommending tenure and promotion (Article A5), recommending merit increments (A6.091), and all other duties specified in the Agreement. Also, selection of a Chair follows very specific UAPPOL Procedures that would be maintained and require input from faculty members. Although the vision used the label of "chair" to signal these responsibilities, the title of the position can be changed, and they may have new responsibilities that allow them to contribute meaningfully to the faculty.

Program Area Groupings

Task: Create a description of program areas, describe how they will operate, how coordinators will be determined, and how faculty members are attached to program areas, and how they will contribute to program-related decision making at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- *What program areas do we currently have?*
- *How might we outline program areas so that faculty members can see where they belong?*
- *How can we ensure permeability between program areas, rather than having them work as silos?*
- *How can we identify coordinators at the undergraduate and graduate levels?*
- *How many coordinators do we need?*
- *How are they selected?*
- *How can we strengthen collaboration across our programs?*
- *How can the coordinators work effectively together?*

The term "Program Areas" was intended to reflect how most faculty, instructors, and students are currently organized based on graduate and undergraduate programs, and specializations or subject areas.

Other non-departmentalized Faculties of Education across Canada and around the world organize faculty members to help create governance structures that support their programs and initiatives. For example, Werklund (92 faculty members) identifies seven "Specializations & Academic Expertise;" Western (45 faculty members) uses three "Academic and Research Clusters"; University of Regina (48 faculty members) uses "Program Areas" with "Subject Areas" within each group; University of Ottawa (60 faculty members) is organized around programs (B.Ed. Anglophone, B.Ed. Francophone, Graduate Studies) with faculty level program committees; and Monash University (180 faculty members) uses five "Academic Communities." The intention with the proposed vision is that our Program Areas (however they become defined) are permeable, allowing faculty members to make choices about where they belong.

Governance:

Task: Review the current committee structure, terms of reference and redefine membership.

- *What committees do we currently have?*
- *Are they addressing the governance needs of the faculty?*
- *How can we create appropriate representation on our committees?*

Two key intentions of the non-departmentalized vision are to remove a layer of bureaucracy between program-related decisions and approval, particularly at UAAC and GAAC, and to improve collaboration across our undergraduate and graduate programs. The feedback we received asked us to do more than simply revise membership, but to look more closely at the committees we currently have in place, and whether they reflect the concept of *mâmawohkamâtowin* – working together. A clear and thoughtful review of our committees, their terms of reference, and memberships to ensure a diversity of perspectives is needed to fulfill the vision.

Administration and Communication:
Task: Determine what responsibilities and tasks are currently occurring at the department level, and recommend how to operationalize those responsibilities to support the faculty as a whole.
- *How can we continue to best implement our [Faculty Communication Plan](#)? It is scheduled for review in 2022*
- *What does our Faculty Communication Plan say about the flow of communication?*
- *How do we continue to support instructors and staff?*
- *Who do they go to when they need help?*
- *Who signs my forms?*

As part of Centralizing Student Services, all staff whose primary responsibility is supporting students will become part of this unit. Work is already underway for administration in this unit and several consultations have occurred with individuals who provide direct service to undergraduate and graduate students. However, we have many other staff members and administrators who support instructional needs, provide administrative support, support mail distribution, distribute office equipment and supplies, and so on. Determining how we can continue to operate administratively as a faculty is essential to operationalizing the vision.

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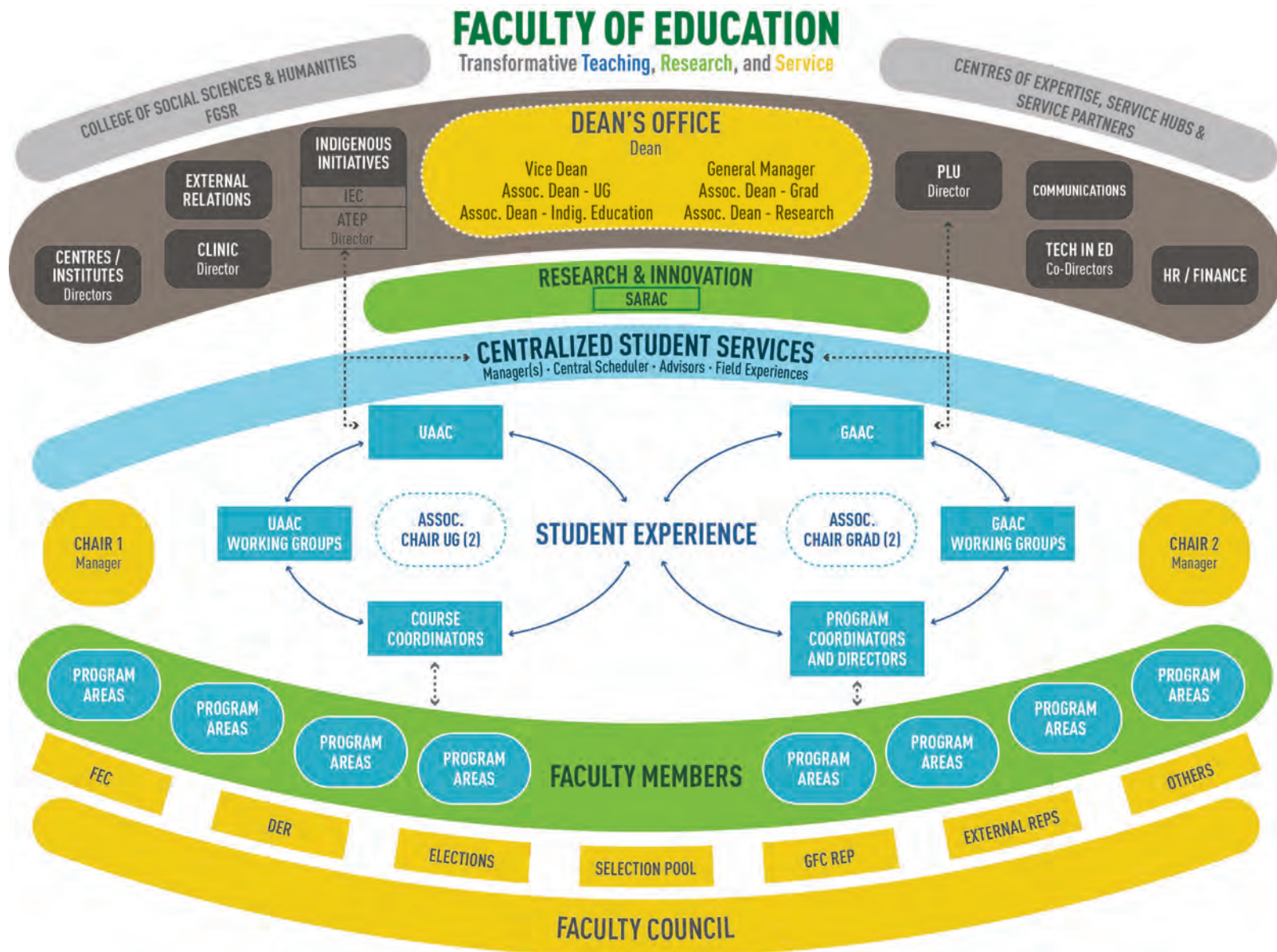
Note: There are three minor revisions to this vision. First, Student Services was re-labelled Centralized Student Services to align it with other Faculty documents. Second, Field Experiences was added to Centralized Student Services. Third, our Collaborator Partners (grey) is shown as another nested layer. Other faculty members also creating concentric circles, and changing labels. If the motion passes, we will continue to revise this image so that it best reflects our vision of a non-departmentalized faculty.