
Subject: New Academic Affairs Organization

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Emporia State University

April 26, 2023

Dear Colleagues:

In January we announced that we would restructure Emporia State's Division of Academic Affairs. Since that time, we have solicited feedback and suggestions from colleges, departments and individuals. We have had many conversations through focus groups and open forums with faculty, staff and students. Thank you to Amy Sage Webb-Baza and James Ehlers, who led and facilitated the capture of input from across campus. And thank you to all of you who provided feedback — your input was invaluable as we evaluated different possibilities.

Today, I am pleased to announce Emporia State University's new KBOR-approved organizational structure for Academic Affairs, which brings the following benefits:

- **A flattened structure** that eliminates middle management to improve communication between the Office of the Provost and the academic units to allow for faster decision making and organizational efficiency.
- **Strategic program alignment** creating new opportunities for collaboration and innovation.
- **An adaptive organization** that can more quickly respond to the rapidly changing needs of the world/workforce.
- **Increased leadership development and succession planning** opportunities for faculty and staff at all levels of Academic Affairs.
- **Improved space optimization.**
- **The ability to create and implement consistent** policies and procedures across

Academic Affairs.

There will be many moving parts as we implement our new model, including but not limited to, changes to class codes, physical office spaces, policy and procedure, how Associated Student Government and Faculty Senate are organized, and so much more. Please be patient as we move through the process, which will be an ongoing work-in-progress. Our new model begins in August 2023.

In our new model, each school will be led by an interim dean who has already been identified. **These interim deans and I will work with you to continue to develop specific details of the support structure within each school (assistant deans, administrative staff, etc.)** We will continuously assess our structure and adjust accordingly as we learn what works and what does not.

We are pleased to announce the following promotions:

- **Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies:** Assistant Dean for the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies and Senior Diversity Officer **Nyk Robertson**. Includes Interdisciplinary Studies and Ethnic, Gender & Identity Studies. This realignment of academic programs was announced October 26, 2022.
- **School of Applied Health Sciences:** Interim Dean **Jim Persinger**. Includes Psychology, Counseling, Nursing, HPER.
- **School of Humanities & Social Sciences:** Interim Dean **Amy Sage Webb-Baza**. Includes English, Modern Languages, Communication, Social Sciences, Sociology & Criminology and Intensive English Program.
- **School of Science & Mathematics:** Interim Dean **Tim Burnett**. Includes Biological Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Earth Science, Chemistry and Forensic Science.
- **School of Visual & Performing Arts:** Interim Dean **James Ehlers**. Includes Art, Music and Theatre.
- **The Teachers College:** Interim Dean **Sara Schwerdtfeger**. Includes Elementary Education/Early Childhood/Special Education, School Leadership and Middle/Secondary Education and Field Placement & Licensure.

Two existing school have no leadership changes, but have added academic programs:

- **School of Business & Technology:** Dean Ed Bashaw. Includes Accounting and Technology, Business Administration, Economics and MS Informatics.
- **School of Library and Information Management & Library and Archives:** Dean Wooseob Jeong. Adds Instructional Design & Technology to the restructure from fall 2021 that combined SLIM and University Libraries and Archives.

Gaile Stephens, Director of General Education formerly within College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, will continue to serve in that role, but this position will be moved under the umbrella of the Provost's office.

We will continue to solidify this model so these new schools are in place for the 2023-24 academic year. The accreditation needs of departments have been reviewed and considered in this timeline decision.

In the coming weeks, please watch for future communications from your new interim deans about what's ahead and immediate next steps, including but not limited to timelines, naming of assistant deans and administrative staff, etc.

As always, I thank each of you for your work efforts on behalf of Emporia State University and, most importantly, our students. Please join me in welcoming and congratulating our colleagues on their new roles.

With Hornet Pride,



R. Brent Thomas, Ph.D.

Provost + Vice President for Academic Affairs

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