



*Texas A&M University*

# **Quick-Look Assessment of the Path Forward Implementation**

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The Path Forward, adopted December 14, 2021, by then-President Banks, cited a statement in the MGT report that the intent of the ambitious realignment of academic programs and units and the restructuring of operational functions was to “achieve TAMU’s goal of becoming a globally recognized, top-tier institution.” The statement further cited the “keys to achieving that goal include greater collaboration, transparency, strong operational accountability, and effective use of TAMU’s wide range of talent, research, and resources.” Based on this quick-look assessment, many within the campus community agree with these sentiments, but suggest that the Path Forward lacked collaboration, transparency, and accountability.

## ***General Observations***

Texas A&M University is and remains a tier 1, AAU, land-grant, public university, and one of the great institutions of higher education in the state, nation, and world with a world-class faculty, excellent staff, and dedicated former students all wanting to contribute to continuing to elevate this institution to respond to the needs, problems, and challenges within the global society.

The campus community has demonstrated dedication and commitment over the last two-years, as well as a passion for the university and a resiliency that is commendable.

While there is a degree of weariness, there is also guarded optimism that the university can recover from the traumatic and negative events of this past summer with evidence of administrative accountability, utilization of established processes, shared governance, and transparency. With time trust can be rebuilt as leaders exhibit the core value of respect.

The speed and scope of changes in structures and systems, as well as the lack of communication and transparency, placed our employees in difficult situations and limited their success, creating numerous occasions where processes were slowed or stopped, and where points of contact were unknown.

Concerns have been expressed about the origins of the MGT report and the value of its recommendations. Nevertheless, changes have been implemented and the university is in a different place than even one year ago. Any steps taken in a different direction must build on where we are today, not where we were.

Communication channels within the university have left deans and department heads disconnected from the strategic decision making of the university, and staff members with no place to go to resolve issues critical to the operation of the university.

Shared governance, a hallmark of any tier 1 research university, has been weakened by some of the changes, and efforts need to be made to restore mechanisms to engage faculty and staff, and rely more on local expertise in strategic areas than consulting firms with less understanding of the organizational culture.

Almost all units have reported challenges with teaching space, faculty and staff offices, and student spaces that have been exacerbated by the academic realignment that moved programs and departments to new units without regard to space needs and proximity to resources. A complete analysis is needed to realign space with needs, including reexamining the Office of the Registrar’s priority assignment for classroom spaces.

Academic program decisions, especially curricular choices, need to return to the faculty with less top-down directed solutions. This includes department and degree names, what programs should be proposed, and how academic units and programs must be structured.

While it may be easy to focus on what has not worked, there are positive outcomes from the Path Forward that have positioned the university to make new strides in the future. There are also adjustments and changes in direction that are needed to fully realize the full impact of this university as we approach our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Below are observations and recommendations on the specific initiatives resulting from the Path Forward plan. This information and assessment reflect feedback collected over a five-week period from over 100 meetings with individuals and groups. Even with the number of meetings, it is recognized that these observations and recommendations are limited, but they do reflect what was conveyed to the working group. In no way are these the only possible solutions and all require further vetting with leadership and the campus community.

- Restructuring the Provost Office and Creation of the Vice President for Faculty Affairs (VPFA)
- Academic Realignment
  - Restructuring of University Libraries
  - Creation of a new College of Arts & Sciences from three legacy colleges
  - Creation of the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts (SPVFA)
  - Reestablishment of the Journalism Program
  - Creation of a Life Sciences Meta-major
  - Centralized Advising
  - Health Programs realigned to the School of Public Health
  - Political Science and International Studies realigned to the Bush School
  - Technology Management degree realigned to College of Engineering
  - B.S. in Biomedical Sciences realigned to the College of Arts & Sciences
  - Designation of College or School
  - Veterinary Medicine Faculty Required to use AgriLife for Grant Proposal Submission
- Division Changes
  - Formation of a Division of Academic & Strategic Collaboration
  - Elevating Remote Locations – McAllen & Oceanography in Galveston
  - Transition of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Student Health Services (SHS) to the Health Science Center
  - Student Organizations Under Student Affairs and Student Organizational Finance Center (SOFC)
  - Creation of a Gifts Oversight Office in the Division of Finance
  - Succession Planning in Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness
- General Observations on Centralization of the Five Functions (Facilities, Finance, HR, IT, MarComm)
  - Centralization of Facilities
  - Centralization of Finance
  - Centralization of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE)
  - Separation of HROE from Finance Reporting Structure
  - Information Technology (IT) Centralization
  - Marketing and Communications (MarComm)
- Capital Construction Projects
- Capital Projects Identified in Review

# Restructuring the Provost Office and Creation of the Vice President for Faculty Affairs (VPFA)

## *Observations:*

- The restructuring of the Provost Office was intended to shift the power structure in the university away from the Provost which has not been received well across campus.
- The loss of power in the Provost as the Chief Academic Officer (with research, faculty, and academics) has translated into a loss of power and significantly less involvement of the deans in strategic decision-making processes of the university.
- The current pod structure doesn't make sense with Provost seemingly reporting to the VPFA, subjugating the academic and research missions to the faculty head.
- Deans, department heads, and faculty have expressed significant confusion over roles and responsibilities even though the Provost and VPFA have repeatedly communicated how those distinctions have been drawn. Many feel as if there are two bosses.
- The Provost is perceived to lack authority to address concerns, particularly financial, and deans resort to separate meetings with the Provost and VPFA to resolve issues.
- There is a significant concern that the power and authority for faculty resources, at the heart of every college and school's concern, is outside the control of the Provost.
- Marketing and Communications has expressed concern regarding a lack of clarity on who has the authority to communicate certain messages and with whom they should collaborate.
- A small minority of individuals have embraced the change and state it is working well for their needs.
- While some have suggested that having the VPFA elevates faculty and increases advocacy for faculty within the university, the majority of faculty feel that the opposite has occurred.
- Faculty Affairs has made significant improvements in processes, creation of templates for standardization, and providing documentation of guidelines and rules, albeit with some concerns from deans and college/school faculty affairs personnel that the frequency of changes is problematic, seemingly reactionary, and causing unproductive work.
- Faculty Affairs has improved international employment processes, proper record keeping across the university on faculty personnel files, and improved engagement with Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) and Office of Risk, Ethics, and Compliance (OREC) on issues.
- Concerns that faculty affairs and/or provost not adequately engaged in issues concerning faculty in select circumstances with faculty-related complaints.
- Some concerns over delays in processes, especially as more oversight and authority in hiring decisions have shifted to VPFA, including approval of every faculty hire.
- TAMU by the Numbers can be a valuable resource but not clear why this is managed in Faculty Affairs. It can also be used to enforce a one-size fits all mindset which is inappropriate for a university of our size and scope.
- The Center for Teaching Excellence's expulsion from the Innovative Learning Classroom Building (ILCB) was a mistake and did a disservice to the teaching support for faculty.
- Faculty Affairs staff are located in two buildings, creating inefficiencies. Similarly, the Provost is separated from his staff.
- Previous Dean of Faculties office was not resourced adequately, and investment has allowed improvements.
- While mandatory new faculty training enabled faculty to begin their career at TAMU with a better understanding of the support structures and the resources available, some aspects are problematic and should be revisited.
- Vice Presidents can be hired without input from the faculty, whereas a dean position requires faculty input. However, the VPFA search did have faculty representation, and the SAP was revised after the original hire to require it for the VPFA position.

- In an effort to redefine the Provost Office, the dissolution of the Academic Innovation Office has caused concerns for faculty that did not appear to have a voice in the decision and have expressed concerns over where to go for assistance with their online class presence. More transparency in decisions regarding services and offices impacting faculty is needed.
- Academic functions previously under the Provost have no discernible relationship to the Provost which is problematic and will become more so over time, including Aggie Honor System Office, Education Abroad, and Transition Academic Programs.
- The move of the Aggie Honor System Office has caused concerns for some faculty members that the strengths of the Aggie Honor System would be weakened through changes that diminish the role of the faculty and student members of the Honor Council to make decisions about responsibility and sanctions in cases of alleged student violations.
- Specific issues around the breakup of an Enrollment Management division have been noted:
  - Enrollment Management as a function was removed from any direct attachment to the Provost and split between Academic & Strategic Collaborations (Recruitment, Visitor Center, Admissions, and International Student Services), the Division of Student Affairs (Career Center), and the Division of Finance (Registrar, Scholarships & Financial Aid, and Aggie One Stop).
  - A weakened enrollment management function has been a disservice to our students, creating challenges for managing the complexity of the institution in enrollment and curricular support processes, and adding inefficiencies in processes and communications to effectively recruit, admit, enroll, and graduate a diverse student population.
  - Enrollment growth is inadequately planned for across campus with numerous space issues for classes, faculty labs, student study spaces, and support services like advising. In addition, the needed hiring of faculty to handle courses comes too late to recruit the most talented and qualified faculty. Enrollment gaps changed without consultation.
  - New admission programs like the opportunity majors have potential even though created in a vacuum without college input, but it is far too rigid for student needs and requires flexibility to address programs that want to grow (like Chemistry), programs trying to maintain accreditation standards (like Landscape Architecture), and programs with higher math requirements and student success concerns (like Biochemistry/Biophysics).
  - Galveston coordination of Enrollment Services has also been negatively impacted by the dissolution of the Enrollment Management unit in College Station.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Elevate the role of the Provost by returning the Chief Academic Officer to the position of Executive Vice President and Provost, clearly demonstrating it is the number two position in the university.
- Return the Vice President for Faculty Affairs (VPFA) to a Dean of Faculties (DOF) position with a modified Provost title, such as DOF and Vice Provost. Retain the focus of the current Faculty Affairs Office with its processing improvements, standardizations, and professional development. Consider how the research function is best integrated with the academic function by examining how peers structure this function.
- Return select academic functions to the Provost due to their strong connection to the academic mission, including the Aggie Honor System Office, Education Abroad, and Transition Academic Programs.
- Recreate an Enrollment Management unit under the Provost, bringing together the offices of Admissions, Recruitment, Visitor Center, International Student Services, Registrar, Scholarships & Financial Aid, Student Business Services, and the Aggie One Stop.
- Form a group to review the new admission programs like opportunity admissions, centralized transfer admissions, and the completion admissions program for immediate changes for Fall 2024 decisions.
- Form a group to conduct a space capacity study to determine an appropriate enrollment strategy, considering all impacted areas by enrollment growth.
- Transition oversight of TAMU By the Numbers to the Academic & Business Performance Analytics unit.

## ACADEMIC REALIGNMENT

### Restructuring of University Libraries

#### *Observations:*

- For many, the changes to the highly ranked University Libraries, and specifically the elimination of faculty positions within the University Libraries, has been the most divisive and concerning element within the Path Forward changes. Significant questions were raised about the treatment of colleagues being forced to choose between remaining in the Libraries in a staff position or retaining tenure as a faculty member outside the Libraries. An estimated 25% of these faculty members left rather than make this choice.
- Most of the individuals appear to be satisfied with their current position within the university, but it will take more time to recover from the trauma of these changes, both inside and outside the Libraries. A few individuals who moved to another department have subsequently given up tenure to return to the University Libraries in a staff position.
- Tenure and even faculty status for Librarians has not been well understood before or after the Path Forward changes. The teaching, research, and service mission of Libraries faculty looked different than other academic disciplines and thus has not been well understood.
- Faculty status, and tenured faculty status in particular, afforded Librarians the protection of academic freedom for their research as well as their work in the curation of collections that support other faculty's research that may be controversial to some. The university has not articulated appropriate protections for Librarians with the loss of faculty status.
- The leadership within the University Libraries has actively engaged with Libraries staff in reshaping the organizational structure of the Libraries and how it delivers services, seeking to modernize approaches to its work and has presented a plan for the Libraries moving forward. Despite the original top-down directives on Library changes, the leadership has been able to develop the plan largely independently.
- The loss of personnel and the associated budget (\$2.4M) has not been replaced, combined with an expectation for new resources based on the proposed plan (\$1.2M), and a defined need to adjust the salary structure (\$900K) has left the University Libraries uncertain about the support of the new structure. To date, approximately \$1.2M has been provided in new/replacement resources. The University Libraries does have a significant reserve balance.
- Libraries staff acknowledge there has been a decline in services despite the dedication and commitment of the staff. Time to develop a new model, budget concerns, turnover, morale, and slowed hiring processes (in part due to negative national coverage of the mandated restructure) have all contributed to this decline in service.
- Many faculty who moved to new departments still consider themselves to be Librarians, as it is an identity that shapes their work even in their new roles. Further, in some cases, work and services traditionally part of the Libraries moved with them, creating questions about roles and responsibilities around these functions. While service back to the Libraries was planned for in their appointment letter in the first year, the plan and process for subsequent years has been nebulous.
- There is a perception that former Library faculty who moved to other departments are being engaged as embedded librarians given their expertise and proximity to faculty in their new disciplinary area.
- The planned loss of the Medical Sciences Library (MSL) space on the west campus has been another challenge. There is already a small Library presence at the HSC on Highway 47 that the University Libraries would like to expand, but not at the loss of the west campus space. The health-related disciplines (Veterinary Medicine, Public Health, Pharmacy, bio-disciplines) on the west campus far outnumber those on 47 (Medicine, Nursing).
- Students are unaware of the proposed repurposing of the MSL space, and student leaders raised concerns about the impact of the loss of study space on west campus that serves a wide variety of

students beyond those in health-related disciplines, including Business students and residents at White Creek. While Public Health has additional space needs, the current solution will hurt students.

- If the plan for MSL proceeds, the Business Library & Collaboration Commons (BLCC) will be the only library space on the west part of campus and it is already oversubscribed. Further, much like the MSL, the name of the BLCC belies the disciplines of the students being served there.
- Many faculty have offered solutions for the changes in the library and for the faculty status. While well-intentioned, it is not clear that some of these proposed solutions would serve the library staff nor the former library faculty well, opening wounds that are just beginning to heal. In reality, there are no easy solutions given how far and how rapidly changes have been made in the operations of the Libraries.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Commit to funding the University Libraries at a new level to allow them to move forward with their plan.
- Codify academic freedom for librarians in system policy or university rules and leave the question of faculty status alone at this time, perhaps reviewing again in a couple of years.
- University Libraries should reengage faculty and student advisory groups in a more robust way.
- Reconsider the relocation of the Medical Sciences Library.
- Proceed with expanding the library at the HSC on 47, and fund from HSC resources for the expansion/lease costs as already planned.
- Rename both MSL and BLCC on west campus to better reflect their services.

## **Creation of a new College of Arts & Sciences from three legacy colleges**

### ***Observations:***

- The rationale for this merger was not and still has not been clearly articulated, leaving leadership of the new college to develop the rationale from any benefits realized. Across higher education there are moves to smaller, more nimble colleges as much as there are mergers to larger colleges.
- Two major concerns were identified immediately: (1) tenure and promotion policies and research expectations for external funding by faculty in the liberal arts would shift to be more like science, and (2) budget resources needed for the more costly science disciplines and faculty would be eroded in favor of liberal arts.
- The working group explored college structures that envisioned divisions similar to peers with colleges of arts & sciences, but this was rejected from the start, leaving faculty of the new college unable to explore viable options for college governance.
- The scope and scale of the new College of Arts & Sciences places it on par with the College of Engineering for size of enrollment and overall budget.
- A few have suggested the name of the college should be reviewed based on concerns over diminishing liberal arts as well as a recognition that the arts exist in other colleges/schools.
- The merging of these three legacy colleges created unique challenges that have not been met by centralized offices who were also being reorganized at the same time. The needs of Arts & Sciences should have been prioritized.
- The embedding of university-level functions (Transition Academic Programs (TAP), Office of Professional School Advising (OPSA), Interdisciplinary Program oversight) in the College of Arts & Sciences is potentially problematic as the competition for resources will pit these functions against the needs of the college in the long term as well as not serve the students equally across the university. All three of these areas are academic in nature and should be associated more broadly with academic affairs at the university level.
- OPSA staff are concerned with not being directly tied to an academic unit since they have transitioned to the Division of Student Affairs.
- The transfer and subsequent effort to phase out the University Studies program has resulted in some concerns among faculty and deans regarding completion programs for students. In particular, the



University Studies concentrations in Business, Architecture, and Leadership were all very successful in graduating students in degrees that led to employment opportunities for students. The Leadership concentration combined with two minors had an appeal for some members of the Corps of Cadets.

- Given the desire to create a new completion program in Arts & Sciences as well as a “build your own” degree, it is unclear why the University Studies program was eliminated so quickly and without viable alternatives to accomplish student success goals.
- The dean mandating all interdisciplinary degree programs must be housed in a department home has caused concerns regarding the future interdisciplinary nature of those programs and a forced fit to other departmental degrees.
- The loss of the International Studies program to the Bush School stripped a department of its namesake program while leaving others, forcing the need to create a new Department of Global Languages and Culture that is struggling to find its identity.
- Students reported confusion over advising and not knowing where to go after the merger.
- Graduate stipends were increased at the direction of the dean, which was needed, but no resources were provided to offset higher costs, resulting in a reduction of graduate assistants.
- Faculty recruitment and retention have been impacted. Hiring of needed faculty was slowed with a focus on transformative hires. Faculty start-up funding is a significant concern in the sciences with inadequate support either from the university or the college.
- Enrollment growth has added to challenges due to the service load of Arts & Sciences. Concerns have been expressed over the focus of being a service college despite outstanding research contributions by the faculty of the college.
- Skepticism about the ability for all departments to succeed in the new college is high in some places as well as low morale due to academic freedom concerns, centralization impacts, and unclear rationales and goals for the new college.
- Some evidence of increased research collaboration has been noted such as a grant submitted between a philosopher and an oceanographer that they attribute to the new college as well as research dollars expected to show an increase this year.
- Improvements in spousal hires due to the collaboration across a larger set of disciplines in one college.
- There are clearly proponents for splitting the college back out, but there are also proponents for remaining as is. This is a situation where not everyone will be satisfied. Yet, there is widespread agreement improvements in college governance are necessary.
- The hiring of a permanent dean is critical to the success of the college and that individual must be able to navigate the complexities of the college.
- Location of the college leadership in the Academic Building is a strong symbol, but the building needs significant renovations to be consistent with the importance of Arts & Sciences. The renovation is on the capital plan and fully funded.
- Investment of new resources in Arts & Sciences was expected by the college.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Retain the merged college and task the leadership and faculty of the college to review the governance of the college to put in a structure that attempts to mitigate concerns raised and safeguard against inequitable and unequal treatment of unique needs of faculty across the college due to discipline differences. Structure changes should also align with any vision of the new dean to avoid continued instability.
- Relocate Transition Academic Programs (TAP), the Office of Professional School Advising (OPSA), and Interdisciplinary program governance outside the college. TAP should be restored to Undergraduate Studies in the Office of the Provost. OPSA has not transitioned out of the Career Center in the Division of Student Affairs yet and that transition should not occur. Interdisciplinary programs support needs to be referred to the Provost for continued study on how to manage.
- Form a faculty committee to re-examine the phase out of the University Studies curriculum and/or develop a viable completion degree program.



# Creation of the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts (SPVFA)

## Observations:

- Students expressed excitement for this new school and the new academic offerings that would be available at Texas A&M, as did the faculty and staff of the new school.
- Major investment in new academic programs, faculty, and facilities have been identified by SPVFA leadership with a multi-year plan of projected costs and revenue. However, the university does not have a well-defined business plan for addressing needed resources. Current estimates, which are still being revised, project a shortfall in revenue to cover costs of more than \$60M over the first seven years, and this assumes 100% of revenue generated is used for the school, all enrollment increases in the college are new enrollments to the university, and there is no change in the non-formula exceptional item received from the Legislature. Potential to impact current or future resources available for other colleges was cited by some.
- Original working group recommendations on programs to implement were changed, particularly shifting music toward a more conservatory type program, resulting in a more costly direction for the school and a need for additional faculty.
- The Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music and the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Art & Design were recently pulled from the Faculty Senate agenda for the school and faculty to rework the programs away from more traditional approaches to programs more aligned to digital, technical, and innovative approaches.
- Despite pauses in faculty hiring and shifts in the direction of programs, the School believes it is on track with the original intent of the Path Forward and it will achieve success. That being said, the School believes the timeline for programs, enrollment growth, hiring, and facilities (including the new building) need to be more measured and in greater alignment.
- Space for academic and faculty needs is already problematic with SPVFA feeling they don't have a definitive home, are stretched across campus (Langford to PEAP), are growing and struggling with class scheduling, and no definitive agreements (MOUs) in place with Architecture and Education on shared spaces and resources.
- The School has a different structure than other schools with sections rather than departments. This structure was intentional to allow for new interdisciplinary approaches and innovation across the faculty of the new School.
- The loss of a definitive Department of Visualization is viewed by some as problematic with external organizations and potentially a threat to the continued success of a premier program that was well established.
- There are concerns among the School about the future direction since President Banks clearly championed this School and its planned academic program offerings.
- Performing Arts should be blended with data analytics in new academic offerings and interdisciplinary collaboration should be the focus.
- eSports is an exciting opportunity, but there are concerns with the financial impacts to the university suggesting it should only be pursued when the financial burden can be mitigated.
- Significant impacts to the School of Architecture:
  - Dean's office was relocated out of the Langford Architecture Building to the Coke Building, moving the leadership and advising away from the faculty, students, and classes in Langford. Architecture appears to be scattered across campus with no definitive home.
  - Architecture promised resources for faculty to grow Construction Science, but resources have not materialized even with growth this fall.
  - Architecture had space taken away from them in the new ILSQ building that opened in Spring 2023, which was designed and built for their needs and aligned with future plans.
  - Architecture had a location assigned for a new building next to the ILSQ building with the intention to express a commitment by the University to Architecture to enhance fundraising

capabilities. This space was pulled from them for the planned Aplin facility with no new options provided despite growth.

- While not an impact of SPVFA, the elimination of the Council for Built Environment and its sub-committees had a disproportionate impact on Architecture faculty as their expertise was heavily utilized in the review of major facility projects.
- The School sought a change in the name of the School based on faculty input, but that was rejected.

### ***Recommendations:***

- At this time, resources and space needs for the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts is a significant challenge. SPVFA must have a business plan developed by the university to proceed. The business plan must have a firm commitment of resources to accomplish the academic mission of SPVFA. Absent a feasible plan, it may be necessary to merge with another college or school.

## **Reestablishment of the Journalism Program**

### ***Observations:***

- The reestablishment of the Journalism program, widely viewed as a positive outcome of the Path Forward, unfortunately has been the focus of negative press over the last few months following the failed hiring of the program director, calling into question the commitment to the program.
- The new degree in Journalism was approved this summer, housed in the Department of Communications and Journalism.
- The university needs to repair trust with the public on journalism specifically to recruit faculty and students.
- Students involved with The Battalion expressed strong support for the new degree with continued emphasis on the need for new journalism approaches, focusing on data science in journalism, disciplinary foci in journalism (examples: political science journalism with interdisciplinary ties to the Bush School, business journalism with ties to the Mays Business School), and new media. Data journalists need to be able to code to visualize data.
- A request was shared to explore the possibility of transferring the Department of Communication and Journalism into the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts as part of a two-fold effort to reinvigorate the university's investment in journalism with academic ties to the new school's data visualization as well as allow the creation a larger, more stable school that would have a stronger financial base.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Stay the course with the reestablished Journalism Program in the Department of Communication and Journalism. Any decision regarding a move of the Department of Communication and Journalism would need to be explored by engaging the respective deans, department heads, and faculty in a faculty-led effort to chart the course of the department.

## **Creation of a Life Sciences Meta-major**

### ***Observations:***

- It is not clear that the majority of faculty in the departments with life science majors support the creation of a meta-major for life sciences.
- The benefit to students has not been articulated well to date nor has the complexity of a cross-college meta-major been appropriately considered as it impacts student home, differential tuition revenue collection, and attribution of teaching credit.

- There is a perception that this is a solution in search of an actual problem.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Eliminate the pursuit of a life sciences meta-major and encourage faculty across the life sciences disciplines to consider future possibilities for curricular alignment without a formal meta-major.

## **Centralized Advising**

### ***Observations:***

- Issues around centralized advising were brought up in three different college/school meetings and was likely limited to these specific college/school meetings because all other colleges had already centralized.
- Centralizing advising has been working in most colleges, so the challenges in these newly centralized areas may be solved with more time in the process.
- Centralization revealed significant inequities in advising support in some units, including gaps in quality training, failure to provide for appropriate backup when advisors are out or turnover, lack of standardized process, and differentiation in pay scales dependent upon department resources and how they are allocated to support advising.
- Centralization has helped with rebalancing advisor load as enrollment changes occur.
- In some units, advisors still have duties outside advising in support of departments which has prevented some orphan duties in departments, but the situation is causing challenges as the non-advising support pulls advisors away from primary duties and creates conflicts.
- Advisors in newly centralized units have been rehired in the prior department in newly created program coordinator positions with duties adjacent to academic advisors, subverting centralized efforts.
- Sidelining faculty advisors was heavily criticized, especially for upper division students, as these faculty advisors could better assist students with connecting coursework with future employment prospects and tailoring course choices to career choices.
- One large college commented that centralized advising was “a disaster.”
- Reason for change was not clearly articulated and no metrics were provided.
- Creativity in advising has been lost which could be the result of a perceived understaffing of advisors due to both enrollment growth and challenges in timeliness of hiring processes.
- Centralization seems to have created a middle management layer that did not exist previously. It has resulted in a lack of advisors for students. While it promised to raise the quality of academic advising, it seems to have lowered the quality due to less access.
- Offices are flooded with students and due to centralization, advisors are not available.
- Centralized advising has impacted students and staffing with a loss of good advisors, a loss of institutional knowledge, and a potential eroding of ties to the department and the curriculum. Knowledge of department, degrees, and courses is integral for successful advising.
- The level of care and customer service is low. Turnover is high and hiring is slow. One position has been vacant for 4 months and our most recent hire only stayed for 2 months.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Retain centralized advising at the college level and allow deans, working with Undergraduate Studies, to consider alternative hybrid models to better engage department heads and provide better continuity with curricula in the departments. Any hybrid model should continue the standardization of processes, follow clear expectations on advising from the university, and ensure formal integration of faculty advisors with defined spheres of influence compared with professional staff advisors.
- Address academic advising salaries and professional development opportunities.
- Complete rigorous assessment of academic advising in fall 2024 (including faculty, staff, and students).

## **Health Programs realigned to the School of Public Health**

### ***Observations:***

- Transition of programs has been received well by most faculty, staff, and students of both the School of Public Health and the School of Education and Human Development.
- The move allows for increased faculty collaboration and expands job opportunities for health program graduates.
- The relationship of General Academic Institution (GAI) funding and Health Related Institution (HRI) funding creates some challenges, but the parameters of how these programs operate within these separate formulas has been respected.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Faculty and leadership of the school should be able to recommend changes or retain existing programs even if the school's revenue remains split between GAI and HRI.

## **Political Science and International Studies realigned to the Bush School**

### ***Observations:***

- The move of these programs has been received well by most faculty, staff, and students and have strengthened the standing of the Bush School of Government and Public Service, adding undergraduate and doctoral programs to the school.
- Transition of the Department of Political Science went better than anticipated.
- The addition of the International Studies undergraduate program to the previously graduate only Department of International Affairs has created some challenges that the school will need to review regarding resource support.
- Some loss of scholarship opportunities for students occurred as endowed gifts for the legacy College of Liberal Arts transitioned to the College of Arts & Sciences rather than consider former Liberal Arts degrees that migrated to Bush or Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts. Similarly, endowed positions for faculty were treated in much the same way.
- Central college support in the legacy college was not apportioned to the Bush School with the loss of support for high-achieving students that was in place at the college level. This is particularly noteworthy given the Bush School had no undergraduate programs previously.

### ***Recommendations:***

- No formal university actions are necessary. Any additional funding needs would be part of future budget processes and assessed against all university priorities.

## **Technology Management degree realigned to College of Engineering**

### ***Observations:***

- The College of Engineering pursued a teach out of the existing B.S. in Technology Management degree and established a new B.A. in Information Technology Services Management, shifting the program to a broader audience with less focus on education.
- The School of Education and Human Development expressed concern regarding the loss of this program and the shift away from an education sector focus.
- The change to a new degree program limits any ability to move this program back should that be desired.

- Space allocated for the Technology Management degree in Harrington Tower was reassigned to the College of Engineering, but this places an Engineering program in an Education facility, creating the potential for unnecessary conflict between two units.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Keep the new B.A. in Information Technology Services Management in the College of Engineering.
- Allow the School of Education and Human Development to evaluate if they want to stop the phase out of the previous B.S. in Technology Management degree and have it returned to the school with the caveat that the name of the degree be evaluated for appropriateness compared with the curriculum. A new degree in the School of Education and Human Development could also be created if the faculty in the school want to pursue it. However, funding of the degree needs to be considered.
- Space allocation of half of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor within Harrington to the College of Engineering should be reconsidered as part of a university-wide space assessment.

## **B.S. in Biomedical Sciences realigned to the College of Arts & Sciences**

### ***Observations:***

- The move of this program from the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences remains controversial. There is a stated desire to work with each other, yet the move has engendered disagreements that will likely continue to erode collaboration over time.
- Questions over potential mismanagement in advising and course availability for the number of majors, particularly impacted coming out of COVID, have been significant.
- The university has invested additional resources in Arts & Sciences to address bottlenecks in anatomy and physiology courses and writing courses. An additional \$1.7M in base budget has been requested by Biology to meet this demand/need.
- Student concerns remain over the loss of connection to the Veterinary School, which made the program unique in its ability to recruit students.
- The College of Arts & Sciences has not settled on a home for the BIMS program.
- The MGT report suggested the potential for an engagement of Medicine faculty with the BIMS program, but that has not been acted upon at this time.
- The largest portion of the major coursework has continued to be taught by faculty in the Veterinary School while the program administration is now under Arts & Sciences, raising potential accreditation issues of faculty governance of the curriculum.
- Accreditors expressed some concerns about BIMS move out of Veterinary Medicine and potential impact on student pipeline and research opportunities, though they acknowledged the impact is unknown at this time.
- Finally, the loss of undergraduate students in the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences has weakened the financial position of the school and underutilized space in the new building.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Return the program to the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences with stipulations on advising, appropriate enrollment caps, course availability to meet demand, and consider how we might resource an expansion of collaboration with the School of Medicine. Address resource needs for bottlenecks in Veterinary Medicine.

## **Designation of College or School**

### ***Observations:***

- The renaming of colleges to schools was not received well and the decision to rename some of them were made with little input or rationale for the renaming.
- The faculty have questioned if the intent was to “demote” some colleges to schools.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Allow the college or school’s faculty and leadership to determine the most appropriate name and designation for their unit. This same standard should also be applied to naming of departments and degree programs.

## **Veterinary Medicine Faculty Required to use AgriLife for Grant Proposal Submission**

### ***Observations:***

- Providing 20% of IDC to AgriLife with no return for start-up packages is not sustainable for Veterinary Medicine departments. Sponsored Research Services (SRS) provided support when they were allowed to choose them for our grants. With AgriLife, the college loses matching support for hiring and equipment needs.
- This change makes sense, but it does not make sense to have different applications of spending rules for AgriLife (06) versus (02). These differences need to be reconciled and homogenized for this to be successful.
- As a result of the reorganization, it seems that most people have very little knowledge about how things should be done for Veterinary Medicine, causing some to suggest it has become so cumbersome to do research that they are reconsidering their position.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Return the choice to the faculty of Veterinary Medicine to use SRS or AgriLife for grants.



## **DIVISION CHANGES**

### **Formation of a Division of Academic & Strategic Collaboration**

#### ***Observations:***

- This division seems to have become a “catch-all” for a variety of disparate functions with both internal processing units and external outreach units, making the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the division divided by a structure that needs greater clarity.
- The newly developed programs around youth development, continuing education, and the Brazos Valley Partnership Program are working well and have significant potential for growth. In addition, the integration of four units previously in the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) – OPAS, the Children’s Centers, University Art Galleries, and the University Center & Special Events unit – are working, and the staff are pleased to be a part of this division, believing it serves them and their customers well.
- As noted previously, academic functions like recruitment and admissions, study abroad, and international student services are disconnected from both the Provost and any enrollment services unit resulting in less academic oversight and poorer coordination of enrollment management. This is a strong example of structure not serving the university well. Other examples are the Public Policy Internship Program, the Private Enterprise Research Center, and the Texas Real Estate Center.
- The separation of admissions and recruitment has resulted in lower yields.
- The Division of Student Affairs expressed significant concern over the loss of the University Center & Special Events (UCEN) to this division due to the number of student service departments housed in the UCEN spaces and the large number of student events in these facilities.
- Not having the Memorial Student Center under the auspices of the DSA is a particular concern and suggests a decentralization could be a solution. However, the centralized services of the UCEN are managed extremely well for all customers now and any change potentially threatens that service. Others have suggested that UCEN should be expanded to also manage the Bush Presidential Conference Center and any other similar venues in the Bryan/College Station campus community.
- UCEN serves a very broad community of constituents, with students at the center, but their support programs extend well beyond the Division of Student Affairs to both the campus community and the larger Brazos Valley community.
- The relationship of this division to the Division of Marketing & Communications is an important tie, but it is clear the VP for Marketing & Communications should report directly to the President for greater effectiveness.

#### ***Recommendations:***

- Refocus this division toward external affairs, removing internal processing units, with a focus on campus and community collaborations, legislative affairs, and presidential engagements, and retaining the four major areas from DSA.
- The Vice President for Marketing & Communications should report directly to the President.

## **Elevating Remote Locations – McAllen & Oceanography in Galveston**

Elevating Remote Locations is intended to be addressed more comprehensively in a separate review of how the university is serving and integrating these locations. In addition, there are further reviews planned for this fall of the TAMU Galveston MGT report and the changes on the TAMU Qatar campus. However, select issues were noted in the review of other areas that are included here.

### ***Observations:***

- McAllen High Education Center (MHEC)
  - The elevation of the MHEC has not yet been achieved. While a new Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the MHEC has been hired, the budget for MHEC is not yet at an appropriate level to support the operations as identified by the COO.
  - Some progress has been made on ensuring MHEC is better served by Vice Presidents and Divisions in College Station, particularly Student Affairs and Operations.
  - Faculty hired in McAllen are deemed to be a part of the academic department here in College Station, not as an independent department at the MHEC. As a result, the faculty at the MHEC are evaluated by Department Heads in College Station, not by MHEC personnel, and the faculty are included in departmental governance processes in College Station. The effectiveness of this approach is questionable, particularly with departments teaching service courses that do not have an academic program at the MHEC.
  - The university has yet to solve the recruitment and enrollment challenges due to competing efforts to enroll students in both locations, nor has a clear vision of the MHEC been created to differentiate it for the benefit of the Rio Grande Valley and the communities of South Texas.
  - The addition of new degree programs is pushing the facility needs, but it was not clear that the second building, led by the Health Science Center with the primary focus on the School of Nursing expansion, adequately addressed other academic programmatic needs.
- Galveston & Oceanography
  - The plans to relocate faculty to Galveston from the Department of Oceanography or even to hire some faculty lines in Galveston for Oceanography are opposed by the faculty in Oceanography. Faculty have not been adequately engaged on the goals or value of such a transition.
  - The selling of the GERG building and the moving of the equipment and personnel is fraught with concerns from the faculty regarding the significant disruption of their research and the potential negative ramifications if equipment fails to reinitiate after the move.
  - The financial plans for the move have identified \$1.5M in renovations of the O&M building, but the expected revenue from the sale of the GERG building is likely dwarfed by any new facility needs, leased or permanent, needed in Galveston. The sale appears to be proceeding too quickly without adequate plans in place from the beginning to the end of the project.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Invest in the MHEC to bring their operational budget to a sustainable level.
- Develop a comprehensive plan, including financials, for the MHEC and ensure it is both feasible and sustainable.
- Stop the sale of the GERG facility. Any change should be planned by the faculty and subject to future budget processes.

# Transition of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Student Health Services (SHS) to the Health Science Center

## ***Observations:***

- The HSC has rebranded these units as University Health Services (UHS) and has received a significant investment of resources to expand mental health services, including the embedding counselors in schools and provide services in other locations.
- There is evidence that the expansion of services is reaching more students, but this is just as likely the result of additional investment in resources as opposed to a benefit of the transition to HSC.
- The separation of CAPS, in particular, from the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) is an anomaly in higher education and causes concern. DSA has continued to include leadership of UHS in their leadership meetings, but the potential loss of connection to student services remains a concern. No specific negative impacts to students were identified to date.
- The approach for CAPS services differs when it is viewed through a clinical lens versus a student services lens. A student service approach focuses less on a medical diagnosis and more on helping the student through challenges. A student may feel more comfortable seeking services when it is embedded in Student Affairs than with the HSC. The goal is not long-term care, but helping students while they are students.
- Further study of the location of CAPS and SHS may be warranted and at a minimum should be evaluated again within the next two years.
- The shift has resulted in a more clinical approach for CAPS rather than a more student service-oriented approach. Regardless, the goal of serving students and meeting the increasing needs for mental health services remains.
- Financial controls in CAPS are a concern as there is not a direct relationship to revenue for this service and revenue collected primarily through the main campus and then paid through an invoice to HSC.

## ***Recommendations:***

- Retain University Health Services in the HSC and formalize the relationship to DSA given DSA's mission. However, given that this is an anomaly in higher education, a formal review should be conducted in spring 2025 to examine any unintended consequences or deterioration of services to students.

## **Student Organizations Under Student Affairs and Student Organizational Finance Center (SOFC)**

### ***Observations:***

- All student organizations now register through the Division of Student Affairs to ensure university policies are followed and to provide access to limited student organization funding.
- Student organization funding was expanded significantly, initially by \$250,000 in FY23 and now \$1,000,000 in FY24. It is not clear this level of funding is needed or desirable and the mechanisms used for distribution of these funds needs further review.
- The biggest issue with the centralization of the management of student organizations is around SOFC accounts. Given the dispersion of student groups across the state, access to personnel that can assist student groups at remote locations is presenting a problem. DSA and the School of Dentistry have been working on a local solution that may solve these challenges and place management within the school.
- Resources to support student services and student organizations has not kept pace with enrollment growth, an issue that existed prior to the Path Forward and has not been resolved.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Stay the course with Student Affairs management of student organizations with an expansion for local management of SOFC finances in schools/colleges.

## **Creation of a Gifts Oversight Office in the Division of Finance**

### ***Observations:***

- The office currently consists of a single individual who is collaborating with the Texas A&M Foundation, Faculty Affairs, and the college/school finance lead, building better central oversight, tracking of endowed and non-endowed gifts, and improved financial reporting.
- Although initially viewed as a duplication of functions with the external fundraising groups and the respective division, school, or college, the current implementation has sought to resolve this issue.
- There have been some challenges between the gift oversight office functions and Faculty Affairs, but those have largely been resolved through collaborative efforts to work together. Faculty Affairs has suggested direct oversight of this office would be preferable to them rather than continuing to house it in Finance.
- At the direction of the President, the office worked with Faculty Affairs, colleges/schools, and the Texas A&M Foundation to impose a \$100,000 cap on the annual distribution to chair holders and work with donors to develop additional endowed chairs and/or professorships when annual distributions exceeded the cap. A small portion of these have already been implemented but not all.
- Faculty holding endowed chairs that were impacted by the cap did not support the change, but the university reported the creation of 44 new endowed chairs. Deans were required to honor the original uncapped payout to the faculty member from other college resources.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Retain the Gift Oversight function within the Division of Finance.
- Form a committee that includes endowed chair holders to review and make changes to the endowed faculty policy.

# Succession Planning in Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness

## ***Observations:***

- Augmenting employee professional development is a much needed and beneficial program, especially for staff.
- It is taking time to completely build out the organizational development function, but the Progressive Leadership Development program is a great start combined with the Thriving plan in different career paths, and the new Aggie Way Engagement program.
- Only three concerns were shared on this program: (1) program rollout is too slow; (2) program ROI is uncertain, especially with a current investment of \$5.33M annually and an expansion of resources to \$9.48M in the next two years; and (3) inflexibility of the program when a session is missed. On this last point, an employee stated they are 18 months into a 6-month program because when you miss a session you are required to pause 6 months.

## ***Recommendations:***

- Continue the rollout and address any barriers to employee success in these programs. Hold future investments and evaluate the return on the current investment given total university budgetary needs.

## **General Observations on Centralization of the Five Functions (Facilities, Finance, HR, IT, MarComm)**

The centralization of these five areas was not well coordinated and the operational structures differ significantly, making coordination across the centralized areas more difficult to navigate. The implementation plan shifted personnel, then budget, followed by trying to define roles and responsibilities. The reverse approach should have been followed, which would have limited issues.

All five areas have pointed to the professionalization of their respective job family as a benefit by having each employee dedicated to their specific function to the exclusion of other duties. Some employees have enjoyed this professionalization while others have lamented the loss of responsibilities that made their job more engaging and their ability to serve their customers more difficult.

All five areas cite improvements in services and changes in processes.

The most positive experiences across campus regarding any of the centralized areas has been when the respective staff that were centralized have remained the same – the same people, in the same location, with the same access. As changes were made that pulled people out or move them around, colleges and schools were much more likely to report issues.

The most detrimental impacts of centralization cited by deans and department heads has been: (1) the erosion of dedication and knowledge of departmental needs by the centralized staff, (2) the inability to bring issues to a cross-functional team for problem solving and resolution, and (3) the additional layers of bureaucracy that have been created due to the disempowerment of local staff, (4) the functional silos that have increased inefficiencies and decreased accountability, (5) the hiring of additional personnel to address orphan duties, and (6) the increased workload of faculty, not the promised reduction.

There have been some suggestions that the centralization efforts have resulted in \$8M in savings, but the university community is highly skeptical of this assertion given their own experience at the unit level. In addition, additional resources have been invested in all five centralized areas to varying degrees, resulting in more positions and increased budgets for these functions prior to the Path Forward implementation, and this does not count resources colleges have dedicated to new positions for orphan duties.

The \$8M in savings is the anticipated salary savings from vacant positions. It is the reinstatement of a policy that was eliminated in the year prior to the Path Forward. The salary savings sweep is expected to create a hole in the financial needs for at least IT and MarComm as salary savings are used to cover operational costs.

Centralized areas focused on their needs during the Path Forward area which limited their ability to serve the university community undergoing the academic realignment. This was most challenging in the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts.

Deans and department heads expressed frustration that there was no real opportunity to provide feedback on evaluations, provide input into merit decisions, or award one-time merit for those that serve them. The question why they are the dotted line since they do or should direct the work.

Communications to college personnel are often excluding some or all centralized personnel. Deans and Vice Presidents want to be inclusive but it is difficult to get accurate information on who is supporting the respective college or division.



## Centralization of Facilities

### Observations:

- Improvements in facilities management was certainly needed, particularly in the area of SSC oversight, ensuring completed work is timely and to the satisfaction of the department, billing is accurate, and costs are controlled. In addition, space inventory needed modernization and university leadership needed more involvement in college/school major capital renovation and construction projects.
- Three major projects have been in development and will improve services. The new Aggie Works system launched in July. The new space management system, Archibus, has launched. The new Avigilon camera system launched September 1.
- Facilities leadership feels that centralization is progressing well and doing what is needed despite happening too quickly. Leadership cited the new work order system, more effective mapping, more efficient facilities management and the creation of a better structure. Colleges, schools and divisions provided a different view of what is transpiring in the area of facilities.
- There have been long delays in response to urgent situations with impacts to teaching and research that are particularly concerning, some of which are still unresolved. Some areas cited were recent issues while others have been ongoing from prior to centralization.
  - Veterinary Medicine - freezer went out and all specimens melted – teaching impacted
  - Veterinary Hospital MRI down – machine became “hot”; equipment could have been destroyed due to lack of responsiveness
  - Trigon – 24 hours to fix HVAC issue
  - Poultry Farm – HVAC issues - classes taught in 105 degrees; animal health at risk
  - OD Butler auditorium – HVAC out for 9 months
  - Potato breeding program clone bank (\$1M in royalties) - HVAC issue for over 1.5 years
  - Bush – damaged window not replaced for 10 months
  - Bush grounds – hazard and safety issues unresolved
  - Public Health - ADA doors broken for over 8 months
  - Dwight Look Civil Engineering Building (DLEB) elevators fail to operate every semester
  - Passenger elevator in JEB Chemical Engineering Building out for almost 2 years
- Communication has been poor after requests are entered into the work order system as customers cannot see status updates, emails and phone messages are not returned, and work orders are closed without customer awareness. Several people indicated that there has been specific direction from Facility administrators prohibiting communication with certain individuals.
- Open repair/facilities requests for weeks or months with no communication or movement – Veterinary Medicine reported 91 open and unresolved requests with no understanding of the current status.
- Facility coordinators lack an understanding of some of the units they serve which has worsened over time. Facility coordinators lack empowerment at local levels to quickly resolve issues. For example, it took more than four hours to get someone who could flip a breaker following a loss of power in a lab.
- Facility coordinators appear to be stretched too thin, being responsible for more buildings than previously and rely on fewer people. For example, the Libraries facility group previously consisted of five people handling six buildings. This group is now working across 11-12 buildings with three people.
- Facility coordinators previously had a broad set of duties specific to the areas in which they served. The perception now is they have been reduced to submitting work orders, attempting to get resources for work orders, and closing out work orders. It is perceived other duties have been removed.
- Multiple colleges have reported having to hire additional staff to address laboratory facilities for health and safety, with the agreement of university leadership, because facilities did not understand nor accept these responsibilities despite it being performed by facilities staff in colleges/departments previously.
- In addition to lab safety, new positions have been created in at least six colleges and Residence Life to address orphan duties like event support, turnover of dorm rooms, and space and property inventory.

- Multiple leaders across the university have been frustrated by added layers of bureaucracy and challenges of getting concerns addressed. There were several reports of micromanagement regarding furniture moves and refusals to remove unneeded cubicles and desks.
- Facility coordinators no longer work for the benefit of the departments and their needs. They lack training and knowledge of specialized equipment which was lost with turnover and personnel shifts and reassignment of Facilities Coordinators. There is concern that rebuilding the expertise is not valued since there is no sense of ownership or investment in the departments. Advocacy for the department or researchers is perceived to be lacking in their dealings with SSC.
- Camera systems and controls have been established to better address safety, but access for units has not been appropriately addressed. Veterinary Medicine is unable to access cameras installed to monitor the transaction of drugs in the hospital automated dispensing machines nor are they able to access the Cubex system.
- The elimination of the Council on Built Environment (CBE) was replaced by the Executive Facilities Committee, while the CBE subcommittees were replaced with a new office of Campus Planning, Design, and Construction (CPDC). This change has resulted in new expenditures, duplication of services, elimination of engaging faculty expertise, a loss of shared governance, a diminishing of the role of the University Architect, and a loss of continuity with TAMU standards for building design.
- The Classroom Improvement Committee (CIC), another CBE subcommittee, was suspended in FY23. CIC has been a highly successful committee that renovated and modernized classroom spaces across campus using a \$3M annual allocation. Momentum has been stalled.
- The campus master plan that was created with considerable stakeholder input has largely been ignored. Placement of new facilities and standards for building renovations should adhere to this plan but has been ignored and led to questionable decisions.
- There is no discernible design process as reviews/approvals are no longer clearly defined. Colleges have cited increased costs in renovation projects due to unnecessary work being required.
- The top-down, non-collaborative management of facilities and its ineffectiveness have been cited as contributors to the loss of faculty, increased project costs, and threats to laboratory safety.
- Some indicated that they are unable to get estimates on renovations for new faculty hires for faculty start-up decisions.
- Overall space management on campus was cited as an issue in every college that has been made worse by Path Forward changes. Rather than dealing with complex moves in the academic realignment, the university stood up a new unit that has failed to address major concerns of colleges and schools: (1) lack of cohesion of college and schools in locations, (2) insufficient collaboration space for students within the college/school, (3) lack of office space, and (4) insufficient teaching space.
- GIS services, including AggieMaps and bus routes, rarely went offline before the reorganization, now the servers break down regularly, and data is no longer being updated. There have been multiple instances where these services have been disrupted due to a lack of prioritization and lack of leadership within Facilities or collaboration with Marketing and Communications.
- There is a growing number of off-campus lease space arrangements, but no one knows the overall plan and strategy for movement of personnel. There is no transparency.
- The current top-level facilities leadership structure makes no sense.
- There is support for a facilities management organization on campus, but its success is predicated on a different service model that seeks to understand customer needs. Several people have indicated that the right approach can yield benefits for campus.

## ***Recommendations***

- Retain the Facilities Management group with a focus on SSC contract oversight and improve management of work order processes and relationships between customers and SSC.
- Eliminate CPDC and return to a shared governance model that relies on faculty and university expertise.
- Utilize the existing campus master plan and return the campus planning role to the Office of the University Architect.

- The University Architect should serve as a university representative on all major renovation and construction projects within the university to ensure university priorities, including college/school/division projects.
- Reexamine the facility coordinator model and its reporting structure in relation to deans and department heads to improve services, maximize resources, and cover a broader scope of duties consistent with pre-centralization.
- Return control to departments to manage furniture, and ensure access is available for cards, keys and cameras.
- Form a group to conduct a review of space allocation on campus to address current issues and develop a long range plan.

## Centralization of Finance

### **Observations:**

- The centralization of Finance received several positive comments with the caveat that things did not change dramatically. In most cases the same people from before centralization are still embedded with the same level of service they provided before.
- No efficiencies were noted by the centralization and many still believe that it would be more effective if the reporting lines were flipped with solid lines to the Deans, Vice Presidents and Department Heads.
- The zones in Arts & Sciences have resulted in inequitable departmental support since zone leads have remain embedded with certain departments even though servicing others.
- Contracts administration delays and inefficiencies was a common criticism and has not been improved or resolved before or after centralization.
- The continuous improvement group formed by the Division of Finance has not produced any new projects for revamping financial processes. Slow to change. Technology Services can provide improved support, but not being engaged enough.
- The lack of a budget process this past year has been detrimental to colleges and schools without a clear mechanism to request and obtain needed resources. Budget requests for FY24 have been submitted at different times through different mechanisms with some being acted upon and others left with unanswered requests as the new fiscal year begins. Additionally, allocation of resources has occurred without a comprehensive review of strategic priorities within the university.
- The promised rollout of a new budget model has repeatedly been delayed, leaving colleges and schools uncertain about priorities and without an ability to plan for needed resources.
- One department head said the most positive impact from changes in the Path Forward implementation was the changing of the delegated purchasing authority to \$25,000 from \$10,000 even though this really isn't about centralization.

### **Recommendations:**

- Keep Finance personnel embedded in their current units and flip the reporting lines back to the deans and department heads.
- Communicate a decision on the planned budget model rollout.
- Establish a Strategic Budget Council with broad stakeholder representatives (not just Vice Presidents), develop and rollout this fall a formal budget process for FY25 budgets, and require all Vice Presidents and Deans to adhere to it.

## Centralization of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE)

### *Observations:*

- Human Resources lacked sufficient resources to provide the level of service needed for the campus community prior to centralization. A stronger HR was needed. Issues existed in multiple areas with challenges around benefits, retirement, and FMLA support. All of which have seen improvements.
- The new market analysis function in Class and Comp has been received well and has led to improvements in pay in areas that have been able to take advantage of it.
- Central HR functions existing in other administrative divisions have been consolidated in HROE, including research positions, the student employment office, and graduate student hiring.
- The creation of the Continuous Improvement and Service Quality (CISQ) unit was highlighted as a positive commitment to evaluate and improve processes that could be improved by engaging more of the campus community for feedback.
- HROE developed a service catalog that defined HR functions that would be performed in the centralized unit. The service catalog has been praised and criticized. Defining roles and responsibilities in the service catalog is a valuable tool. However, the service catalog was developed without stakeholder input, leaving duties previously managed by decentralized staff orphaned. More flexibility on HROE duties would benefit everyone.
- Arts & Sciences reported onboarding of TAs took an entire day and I-9 paperwork was still not completed for some. This was all formally handled in the department previously. Further, HR appeared to be unaware of orientation scheduling and scheduled onboarding of grad students during the annual orientation time, forcing the department to change the orientation date.
- Delays in approval of hires were cited repeatedly, including an example of taking 75 days for approvals after everything else was completed. While there could be numerous reasons for the delay, some outside HR control, the perception is the process doesn't work.
- Some expressed that the new standardized processes are not bad but the rollout and execution of them have been poor. There is no accountability, too many layers of processes, and HROE does not ask for feedback.
- HROE and Faculty Affairs need to work better together, particularly when many front line HROE employees lack training and knowledge of hiring differences for faculty and the complexities of appointment terms and funding implications due to grants. HROE has tried engaging with Faculty Affairs to make improvements.
- With the HR personnel no longer reporting directly to the colleges, divisions and departments, there is a perception that centralization took away the ability of HROE to serve their stakeholders effectively and it hurt their customer service. Mistakes are being made, specifically in the payroll process.
- Centralized HR services are not working well for high profile research grants with HR needs like IODP, Sea Grant, and Cyclotron.
- Common hire dates were designed for the benefit of HROE staffing, not based on the needs of departments. Forcing all personnel changes to adhere to the common hire date provides no benefit for internal staff transfers and student workers. Graduate assistants need to be processed and onboarded in a timely manner to meet immediate academic needs.
- The onboarding process is good in concept but lacks flexibility, focuses on HROE needs, and lacks a comprehensive approach. Some units, like University Libraries, had well-planned onboarding processes that have subsequently been broken by centralization.
- Hubs based on division/college rather than location is creating service challenges for remote, centralized staff who cannot access HROE services locally and are forced to deal with unknown, remote staff with no knowledge of them.

- Deans and Department Heads that met with the working group were unanimous in stating that the current reporting lines are confusing and detrimental to good service. They also expressed frustration on numerous occasions with the inconsistencies across the university.
- HROE has had conflicts with deans over space for their employees and resistance on the rollout of Laserfiche processes intended to improve hiring.
- HROE leadership feels that centralization has elevated HR at the university. HR is now being handled by HR professionals who have only one focus and no other duties. HUBs have enhanced focus which was not possible before. Service catalogs have been created which are consistent across all six HUBs. The Centers for Expertise received generally positive feedback.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Reporting lines for HR managers and generalists should be flipped with direct reporting lines to colleges, schools, and divisions with a dotted line to HUB directors. Units would be given autonomy on hiring of HR professionals and their job descriptions.
- Common hire dates and onboarding processes need to be reevaluated.

## **Separation of HROE from Finance Reporting Structure**

### ***Observations:***

- The general consensus in colleges and departments was that the separation of HROE and Finance has been difficult, created inefficiency, overly compartmentalized duties, and pushed duties and workload from these individuals to other staff and faculty. Payroll was a common point of concern.
- HROE and Finance attempted to automate the summer add job and cost allocation process, but department heads felt they were having to provide information to both HROE and Finance separately with similar information. Multiple colleges reported incorrect paychecks to faculty members over several months as payroll reports are not adequately reviewed.
- Departmental personnel who lost HROE and Finance to centralization no longer have individuals able to access basic information in Workday like UIN, staff lists, information for J1 visa processing, and emergency contact information.
- Finance personnel expressed that they were doing more HR than they have ever done before, and HR leadership expressed that Finance needs to release more duties to them.
- For both divisions it was expressed that the splitting of the two in the reporting structure created numerous orphan duties that in many cases are yet to be resolved.
- HR and Finance are two sides of the same coin. They must co-exist and work together, not be siloed organizations. Every new hire, salary adjustment, or termination has an impact on budget.

### ***Recommendations:***

- HROE should report to the Chief Financial Officer as it was before centralization.
- Convert the finance and HR generalists and HR managers supporting the colleges, schools, and divisions into business positions or business teams that retain the professionalized roles, with the solid line oversight provided by the VPs, deans and department heads. Reframe the Academic Business Officers Council (ABOC) as a joint advisory group to both Finance and HROE with rotating chairs from the colleges, schools, or divisions.

## Information Technology (IT) Centralization

### Observations:

- IT management, in conjunction with HROE, has placed every IT person in a career path and developed career plans for employees. Realignment has gone well.
- Centralized software development model has allowed the opportunity to bring more resources to bear on a project and accelerate completion, leveraging talents and expertise of employees. A recent example in Student Affairs was a project that would have taken three years under the old structure was completed in six months due to the ability to flex resources.
- IT is able to focus on big projects and enterprise level problems due to increased centralization that brought talent across campus. These efforts have been focused on the \$68M planned upgrades to the network, standardized storage and backup processes, and engaging with the complexities and opportunities with artificial intelligence solutions.
- IT worked with the campus community to identify hot spots and cell phones that were no longer utilized, resulting in thousands of dollars in savings across campus and improved security by turning off access to unused devices.
- Remote location support is marginally better.
- Centralization of IT has worked well from some areas of campus. Some colleges have reported their IT support has improved while others have not.
- A few have suggested there has been no real vision on how centralized IT would benefit university or college/school.
- Some areas have indicated that centralized IT is not working. Suggest solid and dotted line be reversed. Difficult to execute mission that involves IT at the college or school level without having decision-making authority.
- So many colleges and schools have different IT needs (graphic design, programming, different platforms, medical/dental records, various software, Linux, etc.). Changes, upgrades, and registration are unnecessarily time consuming. Centralized IT is often unaware of downloading requirements. University-wide updates have resulted in loss of key programs.
- Given the level of technology in research and other equipment, the distinction between what needs to be IT managed versus locally managed is blurred. For example, the digital library services are a unique area that is best managed through a Librarian with technical expertise.
- Colleges and schools can see the benefit of centralized IT, but there are concerns about the lack of localized and empowered IT managers that can quickly respond to needs.
- Work with the Canvas LMS has been especially challenging (resetting courses, TA privileges, etc.).
- Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) needs to better engage stakeholders in changes being implemented. The Howdy portal redesign could be improved by engaging with Marketing and Communications in the process.
- Time to resolve tickets and issues is too lengthy. Many tickets issued for items that were easily handled prior to centralization. Less efficient than prior to centralization. Depending on location equipment must be packed and transported across campus, which wastes valuable time.
- Seeing some improvements but concerned about charge for service model.
- Management of local machines centrally is illogical. Equipment less maintained than prior to centralization.
- Central IT often lack skills needed to properly address problems. This sometimes results in attempting to resolve computer issues locally or using personal computing equipment.
- Research IT support is not working yet, but management is aware of the challenges and actively engaging the Division of Research and constituents to solve.
- Centralized IT has negatively impacted research expertise due to inability to resolve IT issues.
- IT staff appear to be stretched thin. Apple support is lacking. HelpDesk is not helpful.
- Centralized IT has still has not resolved login issues required for TAMU students and units located within HSC.



- The promised Tech Store for purchasing computers is still not operational across campus.
- Challenges hiring IT student workers for multiple reasons including lack of control on funding (not moved in base budget from colleges/schools) and location of IT functions off campus.
- Concerns with practice of dropping vacant positions to lowest level when hiring replacement.
- Concerns about the affordability of large scale IT initiatives was raised along with challenges created by colleges/schools retaining funding that may have been utilized for IT purposes.
- Less problematic than most centralized services. Needs continue to be met.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Retain the centralized IT structure and empower local IT managers to solve issues and build better relationships in colleges and departments. Solve the research IT issues. A governance process needs to be put in place for deans and VPs to provide input into the strategic direction of IT.
- A review needs to be conducted on the additional IT budget resources for IT operations and student worker wages that should be moved from college/school/division budgets and/or allocated centrally to IT.
- Central IT continues to oversee major projects related to enhancing computer infrastructure on campus, improving Wi-Fi, negotiating bulk purchase of IT, addressing IT issues within the HSC, and continued cybersecurity issues.

## **Marketing and Communications**

### ***Observations:***

- Marketing and Communications lacked the resources centrally prior to centralization and were ill-prepared to handle the university marketing and communication needs in a new service model. Marketing and Communications has had to build out guidelines, functional teams, and a new market research function. Team leads in MarComm have never managed their own budgets before centralization.
- Marketing and Communications has reduced the number of project management systems in use for marketing projects, invested in new social media tools, focused on market research, and segmented messaging on digital signage.
- One school noted that centralization has helped to provide needed resources that has resulted in a budget for resources. Marketing and Communication staff better respected in school now.
- Centralized Marketing and Communication is not working. Efficiency and opportunity lost. Especially problematic for donor and alumni relations. Compounded with the HSC infrastructure.
- Service seems to be getting worse with time. Lack tools and staff needed to do the work. Staff too spread out over too many units. Staff report they don't feel like they can be successful in their jobs and struggle understanding who they work for.
- Efficiency is worse and process for requesting Marketing and Communications assistance has gotten more complicated. Central decisions take too long, meaning critical time and stories lost.
- Colleges reported stories on faculty awards being released two months after peers. Stories on gifts to the college taking more than six months to be released.
- Serious misgivings about Marketing and Communications structure, operation, and effectiveness. College and division marketing teams are being decimated by the movement of expertise to central teams, including videographers, photographers, and soon graphic designers. It is not clear how these services will be accessed in the future.
- Marketing and Communications leadership has not taken the time to engage leaders of units in understanding their business needs and how to provide services to meet unit goals.
- The basic construct is flawed, resulting in missing opportunities to tell stories externally. Need a nimble, quick response team, instead slow and bureaucratic.

- Engineering and Agriculture which have dotted lines to central Marketing and Communications report that the structure is working for them.
- Website management is a disaster. Simple updates take weeks to get approved. New websites for new units don't work properly, revert back to old structures, and don't meet the needs.
- Websites are a significant tool used in the recruitment of faculty and have been designed to support both student needs but also as a means of encouraging faculty recruitment. Prospective faculty seek out information about the department from websites, including internal policies and procedures of the department, so that they can understand the department they are investigating. Guidance to hide, remove, or avoid placing certain documents on the website is counterproductive.
- Significant concerns have been expressed about the long-term goal of having every update to a website routed to central MarComm for approval before posting online. This level of bureaucracy is unnecessary and highly inefficient.
- Marketing and Communications has fallen to deans and their designees. None of these individuals have the time or expertise in marketing and communications.
- Seem to be very understaffed, although all positions have been swept from local units. Do not fill vacancies in a timely manner. Do not meet basic needs of the school. There have been no efficiencies and no new services.
- One college noted they were forced to close their local print center, and thus lost equipment and valuable people. Further, they indicated they are now unable to be nimble and get stories or collateral out in a timely manner. Much less efficient than previously. Lost creativity.
- Must now contract with commercial resources for things that were done locally previously.
- The School of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts lacks needed support. The school lacks resources materials, website support, struggles to get the word out on the exciting changes in progress, and has no social media presence.
- MarComm is too tied to its brand guideline and templates and lacks creativity and innovation.
- Events are planned and sometimes executed before MarComm can allocate resources or approve communications around these events.
- The critical telling of the research story has been lost.
- Intentional slow down and scheduling of communications have not been adequately communicated and are not understood by deans and department heads. The loss of Distribution A for communication has negatively impacted faculty researchers seeking participants in their research studies. HROE has seen a 50% decline in participation in many of its wellness activities designed to support employees as communications are ineffective now.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Reverse the solid and dotted line structures and return control to local entities, especially in colleges, schools, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, and the Corps of Cadets. Centralized Marketing and Communications for administrative units should remain.
- Identification of strong Vice President will be helpful to re-establish functional model that can provide coordination, with control in the respective colleges/schools.

# Capital Construction Projects

## **Observations:**

- There are numerous capital construction and renovation projects in formal planning, design and construction, as well as many others in a concept planning phase. There does not appear to be a current strategy with stakeholder input on priorities that engages anyone outside select members of leadership.
- There are three major projects that are on the capital plan, all of which have legitimate questions about the scope of the project and adequate funding support. However, all three of these projects do have planned sources of funding with moderate risks for gift funding.
- The Aplin Center is an estimated \$250M project funded privately for which the university will lease the facility at an estimated cost of \$20M per year. There is now alignment between the academic programs and the facility, and the facility will create additional teaching/educational spaces. This project has the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration between the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the Mays Business School and the creation of a showcase space for new and existing agricultural academic offerings. The business plan for the facility operations needs to be developed.
- The Clinical Veterinary Teaching and Research Complex, a partial replacement of the current Small Animal Clinic, is currently budgeted at \$175M on the capital plan. This project started at a scale that was well beyond any feasible way to fund, but the current programming scope is now within the defined budget. There is a definite need to modernize our veterinary teaching hospital and garner more space, but it is not possible to fully replace the current clinic. The recent change in site moves the project in the right direction for future planning of veterinary clinical services as well. The university has received CCAP funding from the Texas Legislature, so the project needs to move beyond planning in the near future. Gift funding is reasonable in the project and may be able to be increased.
- The new Center for Learning Arts Innovation (CLAI) Building is currently on the capital plan as a \$295M project with a heavy reliance on gift funding as well as the use of a significant portion of our current available DT Capital funding. The original scope was also well beyond any feasible funding level, and the current scope is now broken into a two-phase project. The first phase is for the academic needs of the School of Performance, Visualization, and Fine Arts, although the current academic programs are changing in scope and design, so the building needs rescoping. The second phase is for performance venues that was stated as a replacement of Rudder performance venues. This second phase has no currently defined budget or financial plan.
- In addition to a reliance on gifts, the CLAI's major source of funding is our DT Capital funding. Based on our current DT Capital funding availability, this project will utilize all but approximately \$9M in capital project funding for the next 20 years. Even with modest growth in tuition and fees and enrollment over the next few years, the project is estimated to leave approximately \$45M available for the next 10 years. The university needs to either increase DT Capital investment or recognize this as our highest priority project for some time. The reliance on enrollment growth for funding is a concern.
- Not factored into any of these costs are concerns over increased operating costs associated with the new facilities, including increases in utilities, custodial, maintenance, and landscape.
- Other major capital projects, like the Corps of Cadets March to 3000 Expansion, the Leadership Retreat Center, the Museum/Library complex and the Agronomy Road project, are in concept or the development of a Program of Requirements (POR) and have no funding plan.
- Finally, there are plans for selling current facilities off campus and build or lease replacement facilities, specifically selling the University Services Building (USB), the GERG Building, and the Telecom building. The rationale for selling these facilities and the subsequent costs for replacements is not strong. The departments and faculty who use these facilities do not support the plan.

## **Recommendations:**

- Bring together relevant stakeholders (Academic Affairs, Colleges and Schools, Facilities, Finance, philanthropy) to guide major capital projects.

- The Aplin Center may be able to proceed with the development of a business plan for funding the operations of the facility.
- Rescope and proceed with the Clinical Veterinary Teaching and Research Complex. Consider expanding the budget by another \$25M if additional gift funds are possible.
- Pause the Center for Learning Arts Innovation project and review in the context of the plan for the school and the growth of those programs.
- Develop a more robust planning process for university wide facility needs and develop longer range plans for addressing priorities.
- Do not sell the USB, GERG, or Telecom. Retain and use as currently.

## Capital Projects Identified in Review

Building	Capital Plan	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources
Academic Building Renovation	Y	35,000,000	\$26M AUF Cash; \$9M PUF (swap for local DM cash)
Agronomy Road - Ag Facilities Relocation			\$40M - \$60M or more
Aplin Center		250,000,000	P3- operating lease?
Bush Library Expansion		35,000,000	Funded by Gifts to the GBBF
Business Education Complex	Y	84,197,309	\$19M PUF; \$16.6M UAF; \$28.8M Gifts; \$19.8M reserves.
Campus Network Replacement - Phase I & II	Y	68,000,000	\$36M cash and \$28M RFS.
Climate Controlled Warehouse/Repository			Maybe federal funds- Geoscience cores
Clinical Veterinary Teaching & Research Complex	Y	175,000,000	\$56M CCAP; \$70M PUF; \$15M AUF; \$34M Gifts
Collections Storage Warehouse #1	Y	10,000,000	Cash; Conversations with Ag raised possibility of 5 additional warehouses @ 10,000 sq ft each
Community Emergency Operations Center			
Corps - March to 3000 Capital Needs:			
Corps Dorm (Band)		75,000,000	Res Life. 400 beds.
Duncan Dining Hall - Razed and Reconstructed			
Trigon - Office of the Commandant			
Doherty Building Renovation	Y	38,000,000	\$23.5M TAMU (DT and UAF Cash); \$14.5M TEES
Entrepreneurship Building	Y	65,000,000	Gifts
Esports Mall Project		TBD	Seeking private partnership for funding
Fish Camp Relocation		66,000,000	
Insurance Inst. for Construction Safety & Research		120,000,000	Gifts
KAMU Demolition and Relocation		5,100,000	\$3M from EBBS/KAMU Cash; \$2.1M from central reserves cash
Law School Building		140,000,000	Per Law School Dean \$40M Bldg 1; \$50M Bldg 2; \$50M Bldg 3 - Gift Funds; Remaining funding thru System and Ft Worth
Leach Teaching Gardens - Phase II		40,000,000	Gifts. Also need an endowment for garden maintenance
Medical Sciences Library Space - Hwy 47		TBD	Lease funded through HSC.
Medical Sciences Library Buildout for Public Health		TBD	
Museum of Natural History/West Campus Library		150,000,000	\$50M gifts/\$50M cities (?).
Old Heep Laboratory Building Renovation		8,900,000	
O&M Building		1,500,000	Associated with sale of GERG
Reed McDonald Renovation			Move Chemistry faculty due to renovations of Chemistry Building
Rosenthal Meat Sciences Building (RELLIS)		125,000,000	\$25M AUF Cash, \$25M System, \$75M Agriculture; Demo costs for old facility not included
Rudder Tower Complex Renovation			
Space Collaboration Facility (Houston)	Y	200,000,000	State General Revenue
Visualization, Fine and Performing Arts Building - Ph I	Y	295,000,000	Classrooms and Labs \$128M DT cap; \$50M gifts + 117M (sale of property; dining contract bonus; AUF)
Visualization, Fine and Performing Arts Building - Ph II		100,000,000	Public Facing Performance and Exhibition Spaces
Visualization, Fine and Performing Arts Building - Parking Garage			Assume funded from Parking Revenue
White Creek Apartments Purchase			Funded by RFS Debt backed by Residence Life- May
White Creek - Residence Halls/Apartments			Funded by RFS Debt backed by Residence Life
<b>Facilities to Sell?</b>			
Dominik Dr./Telecom Building			
GERG			
University Services Building (USB)			

Building	Capital Plan	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources
<b>Athletics</b>			
Bright Area Development/Indoor Track	Y	237,735,550	RFS Debt funded from Ath Ops, seat licenses, south end zone suite sales, and gifts; Cash gifts, Ath Ops and Inv Earnings
Covered Pavilion		10,000,000	
West Campus Player Development Ctr & Ellis Field Renovation	Y	25,000,000	RFS Debt funded from Athletics Operations
Indoor Tennis Facility		30,000,000	Project w/ City of Bryan - Annual lease payment from Athletics Operations
Olsen Field at Blue Bell Park Renovation	Y	60,000,000	Gifts and Ticket Sales
Outdoor Competition Throws and Warmup Track	Y	9,250,000	
Reed Arena Renovation (Basketball & Volleyball)		125,000,000	
Wahlberg Golf Learning Ctr Renovation		8,000,000	
<b>Galveston</b>			
Dock Improvements		45,000,000	GR Special Item
Engineering Building		51,000,000	\$33.7M TRB; \$11.3M TAMU (AUF); Add'l TAMU AUF \$3M; Galv \$3M
Pelican Island Bridge		9,200,000	1/3 System; 1/3 TAMUG; 1/3 TAMU (Investment earnings)
Sea Turtle Hospital		11,500,000	Gifts & Grants. FY25
<b>HSC</b>			
Dentistry Main Building Renovation		22,400,000	\$7.89M PUF; \$2.451M gifts and \$12M Cash balances. Reversion of funds from project
McAllen Nursing Building and Small Animal Hospital		50,000,000	\$30M CCAP; \$5M gifts; \$15M TAMU AUF
McAllen Classroom & Research Building		50,000,000	\$25M CCAP, Need Additional Funding
Student Health Center			P3?
TMC3		100,000,000	\$70M TRB; \$30M PUF or Univ of Houston?