



**College of  
Agricultural & Life Sciences**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

CALS Organizational Redesign Committee

# **Final Recommendations**

December 2017

## **Introduction**

CALS is a global leader in agriculture, life sciences, food, and the environment. The success of our college hinges upon our recognized excellence in research, a base from which we affect Wisconsin and the world through sharing new knowledge and innovations in teaching, extension, outreach, and engagement with students, partners, and communities. Though we have been challenged as a campus and college over the last decade, we retain world-renowned faculty, committed staff, exceptional students, and a strong reputation among our peer universities and stakeholders.

Despite our recognized strengths and vibrant intellectual communities, we face challenges. In some cases, these reflect the broader context such as deductions in general purpose revenue (GPR) support for higher education, increased scrutiny of campus culture and policy (e.g., tenure and faculty governance), additional regulatory and administrative compliance, and uncertainty in the future of federal research funding. Other challenges are the result of a changing campus and higher education environment. For example, UW–Madison’s move toward greater reliance on research and teaching metrics in budgeting will force programmatic shifts. In addition, our campus and peer-institutions have substantively increased efforts to cultivate revenue through competitive federal funding and from non-traditional sources such as summer teaching, professional certificates and programs, and philanthropy.

The recommendations found in this report are the culmination of a yearlong process by the CALS Organizational Redesign Committee charged by Dean Kathryn VandenBosch to:

- Evaluate local and global trends, UW–Madison metrics, and activities of peer institutions, that demonstrate factors affecting the college’s vitality now and into the future;
- Analyze key functions in which to invest because of comparative advantage and strength;
- Prioritize what needs to be divested, cut, and rearranged in the future to meet the desired state;
- Based on these findings, propose for CALS one or more structures, composed of robust departments and programs of appropriate critical mass;
- Determine benefits and implications (including revenue generation and cost implications) of the recommended changes; and
- Outline a blueprint for implementing the recommended changes, including mechanisms for resource allocation that support and incentivize strategic focus to maximize the strength of the college and its component units.

## Design Principles

Key to the committee's work were nine evaluative design principles that formed the basis for assessing potential models. These principles were informed by the mission, vision, and guiding principles of the CALS Strategic Framework<sup>1</sup>, the committee's deliberations, feedback from CALS administration, department chairs, and governance committees.

1. Respect the importance and implications of shared governance to any new CALS structure. Faculty Policies and Procedures (FP&P) chapter five outlines the central role of departments to our community. Notably, section 5.02 deals specifically with department restructuring, while 5.14 addresses changing a faculty member's department home and 5.20 addresses department-like bodies. Achieving any future structure will require adherence to FP&P.
2. Advance vibrant units that pursue excellence in research, teaching, extension, and outreach while addressing future knowledge and problem-solving needs. While we cannot forego our existing strengths, we must be open to future directions and foster a collaborative, adaptable environment.
3. Honor the identity of disciplines, while recognizing that disciplines and the college all evolve. Our excellence as a college and campus is grounded in our intellectual and disciplinary depth. Diluting our disciplinary strength can make us less adaptable when research directions change. We want faculty and scientists who evolve with the disciplines. Departments should be similarly adaptable and forward-looking.
4. Increase budgetary authority and accountability at the unit<sup>2</sup> level to foster flexible, locally relevant, and responsible decision-making. A chief complaint of chairs and departments is the inability to adequately plan and address critical needs. Retaining some portion of faculty retirements, for example, would allow units greater discretion. However, with such

## CALS Guiding Principles

Innovative and relevant research is the basis of CALS activities and provides the foundation for excellence in our teaching and outreach. We strive to:

1. Invest in research, teaching, and outreach activities in scholarly domains in which the college has acknowledged strengths, or demonstrable potential;
2. Create opportunities and respond to 21st century challenges by drawing on our strategic advantages in basic and applied sciences;
3. Reciprocate the trust placed in us by our stakeholders, in Wisconsin and around the world, through a commitment to excellence and relevance in all activities;
4. Honor and engage the ideas, enthusiasm, and commitment of our students through excellence in teaching and learning experiences;
5. Foster diversity and equity through a climate of respect and inclusion;
6. Seek new sources of revenue with which to maintain and improve the quality of our programs, faculty, staff, and facilities;
7. Encourage and reward innovation and activities that leverage synergies across units within CALS or the UW–Madison campus; and
8. Communicate CALS' mission and value with internal and external partners to foster mutual understanding and support.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, visit: <https://cals.wisc.edu/about-cals/strategic-planning-a-progress-report/strategic-framework-documents/>

<sup>2</sup> Depending on future collegiate structure, unit might be a department or a "division" comprised of departments.

autonomy would come a greater expectation to manage retentions and budget reductions locally with decreased reliance on the college. Resources retained at the college level could be used to facilitate new initiatives (e.g., cluster hires) and fix inequities beyond the capacity of an individual unit.

5. Align teaching and student support with student needs and interest. Our goal should be to best prepare students for a future less dependent on disciplinary expertise and more reliant on strong thinking, research, and application mindsets. CALS is well positioned to guide student learning and development through teaching, advising, and mentoring. However, we will be expected to train such students effectively and use our resources wisely to maximize impact and public benefit. Small class sizes, small majors, and individual experiences are important, but they must be balanced with other activities and programs that grow the college's teaching portfolio.
6. Be mindful of those who support and benefit from the college's activities. The college has a diverse funding base that depends on federal, state, private, and philanthropic support for short-term (e.g., grants) and long-term (e.g., buildings) investments. Our ability to grow in the future depends on our ability to cultivate and compete for resources. At the same time, the college and its faculty have a responsibility to pursue diverse and sometimes critical perspectives.
7. Retain our special partnership with Cooperative Extension to benefit Wisconsin. Our partnership has improved practices, fostered innovation, and made life better. As CALS and Cooperative Extension change and evolve, we must adapt to leverage our relationship and continue to serve the state and benefit clients, learners, and communities.
8. Maintain a home and a future in CALS for those in CALS. The diverse nature of the college can create strains and competing interests. However, our breadth of intellectual endeavors is a signature strength. CALS should emerge from restructuring as an exciting, collaborative, and rewarding home for current and future faculty, staff, and students.
9. Match administrative and leadership needs to any new resource allocation and structural model. Compared to similar colleges, CALS is administratively lean, as is the campus. However, changes in how resources are allocated or units are structured may necessitate new administrative, leadership, or governance arrangements. Such arrangements should be designed to foster success in the future.

## **Recommendations**

Based on our work, feedback at various points from the CALS community<sup>3</sup>, and input from the dean and her staff, the committee unanimously endorses the following reorganizational strategies for the college.

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<sup>3</sup> The committee engaged with the CALS community via the committee website ([orgredesign.cals.wisc.edu](http://orgredesign.cals.wisc.edu)); nine eCALS posts which included videos and requests for input; two all-college meetings; presentations at CALS APC, CALS Communicators, CASI, and department chairs meetings; and a college-wide survey.

### *Overarching*

1. The committee recommends changes in (1) collegiate structure (i.e., mergers and divisions) and (2) resource allocation (e.g., return of faculty salary, budget model) with a reliance on (3) performance metrics to assess efficacy of structure and allocation. These changes represent an integrative solution, as the future of the college depends on all three.
2. Central to the committee's recommendation is that future growth will depend on new revenues sources that align with the campus revenue generation strategies (i.e., expand summer semester, grow programs for professionals, set market-based tuition, explore student mix and numbers, grow alumni support, grow research funds). While it is desirable to grow our share of the campus GPR pool, the college, departments, and other units will continue to decline if we fail to grow non-GPR sources.

### **Divisions — A summary**

Divisions are a grouping of departments that share some degree of scholarly overlap. Within a division, departments remain autonomous and coordinate various activities with divisional partners. For example, two departments might share a modeling need that a coordinated hire (each using part of their retained salary) could meet. Divisional partners might also work together on shared priorities such as academic programs, research instrumentation, and facilities. The department chairs or a small committee representing divisional partners would handle most of the regular business of a division. Divisional collaboration should not preclude partnership with other departments in CALS or elsewhere on campus. More on how divisions might work can be found in the committee's August 2017 report (Appendix IV), particularly the section on "thematic divisions."

### *Collegiate Structure*

3. The committee proposes that the college implement a hybrid of the merger and thematic divisional models that were outlined in the committee's August 29, 2017 report (see Appendix IV). This hybrid approach advocates that the majority of departments pursue mergers or divisional partners, but acknowledges that a small number of departments should remain as stand-alone units because of their large size or lack of synergistic partners. Merger/divisional alignments will be determined by July 1, 2018, recognizing that governance processes might extend implementation into 2019.
4. The goal of divisional partnering and merging by departments is to achieve sufficient organizational capacity and scholarly communities to effectively meet and advance department and college missions.
5. Department characteristics that provide the basis for promising mergers or divisional partnership include:
  - 5.1. Overlapping research domains where faculty expertise might be shared;
  - 5.2. Potential to collaborate on academic programs (traditional or revenue-generating), particularly where existing programs lack economies of scale; and
  - 5.3. Potential to share facilities, outreach/extension foci, support services, and other initiatives (e.g., advancement [philanthropy] goals, international engagement).
6. The extent to which the factors above are multiple and synergistic will be indicative of situations that might favor merging over partnering in divisions. (See merger model in

Appendix IV for rationale and suggested partnerships.) The dean should indicate a preference for merger when a strong case is evident.

### *Planning*

7. All departments will develop five-year plans with identified annual milestones for future trajectory, performance, staffing, and impact in general and as they relate to whatever performance metrics the dean ultimately adopts. The first part of this planning process will include a decision by the department and dean about how each department will fit within a restructured college (per #3 above) by July 1, 2018. For those in divisions, combined divisional goals and expectation will be outlined and agreed upon and may include shared performance goals (e.g., number of undergraduates in the majors). Plan development, implementation, and ongoing performance on divisional outcomes will be the prime determinant of successful implementation.
  - 7.1. Departments, particularly those involved in merger/divisional partnerships, will be expected to act in good faith. Failure to do so will result in reduced autonomy and resource decision-making and/or resource allocation.

### *Resource Allocation*

8. The college should adopt a new resource allocation model that moves toward greater weight on performance along desired metrics and providing autonomy to departments and divisions to meet their goals, and the goals of the broader college. In essence, the college should foster our continued excellence in serving the Land Grant mission while rewarding development of innovative methods to expand and advance the mission of departments and the college.
  - 8.1. Departments would keep at least 50 percent of the budget associated with vacancies of their 101-funded faculty positions. The baseline faculty salary budget for a department should be established based on the beginning of the 2017-18 fiscal year. Faculty departures that occurred just prior to this time, which would fail to be credited to a departments' budget, may be considered by the Dean's Office as special cases and addressed as needed based on the dean's discretion. Though departments in good standing (i.e., good faith partner, exceeding/sufficient progress on performance metrics) would have discretion to hire faculty (assuming they can find the additional dollars), they would also play a more significant role in retention and other salary exercises.
  - 8.2. The dean's retention of no more than 50 percent noted above shall be used at the dean's discretion. Preference should be given to faculty hiring and retention that aligns with department or divisional priorities or advances new scholarly areas.
  - 8.3. CALS administration will be consistent in language and application with the campus budget model (i.e., money flowing from the campus to the colleges) for returning instructional and indirect costs resources to departments. This would encourage departments to mirror the priorities of the campus.
  - 8.4. All departments would need to submit budgets and plans for continued use of the non-faculty 101 funds they receive. Departments and divisions would indicate their

preference for the use of these funds and the dean, with consideration of performance metrics, would evaluate their requests. As resources become available, through either departures or new revenues, they may be directed in new ways. Plans for the use of these resources would be part of the five-year plan (#7 above).

- 8.5. The committee does not recommend workforce reductions as part of the college redesign.
- 8.6. The committee recommends the new resource allocation model (defined in 8.1) pertaining to faculty vacancies begin in the 2018-19 fiscal year. The remaining features of the resource allocation model will be adopted as part of the dean's implementation plan.
- 8.7. As departments develop new and enhance existing revenue streams, they should be permitted to use them to fund new initiatives, academic staff, and portions of faculty lines. This is consistent with the signals from the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. These revenue streams should not be excessively taxed by CALS. Considering the recent emphasis on revenue-generating activities, the committee is concerned about current CALS taxation practices that may disincentivize those activities. The committee recommends CALS leadership address these concerns in the implementation process.

#### *Performance Metrics*

9. The college should create metrics for, and track department performance related to, teaching, research, and extension/outreach.
  - 9.1. Research is the basis for our teaching, extension, and outreach excellence, and is core to our scholarly identities. Research funding is a critical determinant, but CALS has a diverse research portfolio making strict comparison across departments difficult. For example, funding is important, but so is the impact of research to myriad stakeholders. As such, the committee recommends that the dean develop metrics that assess multiple aspects of research performance.
    - 9.1.1. The dean's assessment of research quality and quantity might include some mix of research outputs, impacts of research on society and toward its benefit, and recognitions. Disciplines can vary widely in defining excellence; hence, some degree of external comparison will be essential.
    - 9.1.2. Research funding and facilities and administrative cost generation, following the campus budget model, should also be among the research metrics. Funding is a critical component of research and one that bears close monitoring.
    - 9.1.3. The dean should develop ways to evaluate the impacts of research on society and toward its benefit. These can be difficult to quantify, but they will be essential in communicating our value to the campus and state.
  - 9.2. Teaching – the overall goal of all units should be to maintain and grow a balanced teaching portfolio that includes high enrollment classes and high-impact practices. The committee recognizes the importance of these components to the college and its future.

- 9.2.1. Undergraduate majors or certificate programs that have graduated fewer than an average of 15 students on an annual basis over the most recent four-year period should be phased out.
- 9.2.2. The dean should establish minimum credit-follows-instructor (CFI) thresholds for departments and divisions that would be evaluated on a four-year average.
- 9.2.3. Graduate programs are essential to our excellence as a college, but are not seen as an immediate focus in the college redesign effort. They should be more carefully considered in subsequent years and may naturally (or through incentives) evolve from mergers and divisions. The committee noted the existence of some low-enrollment graduate majors in CALS that should be addressed in departments' five-year plans.
- 9.2.4. The dean should develop performance metrics related to the high-impact practices that reflect the breadth of those experiences in the college. These are signature experiences within CALS and should be maintained as part of a balanced teaching portfolio.
- 9.3. Extension and outreach are core to the CALS mission. They are consistent with our commitment to the Wisconsin Idea, our long partnership with Cooperative Extension, and our research mission. As such, all units should be expected to engage in activities and programs that advance society.
  - 9.3.1. Units that partner with Cooperative Extension on faculty and staff positions should align extension activities with Cooperative Extension priorities and should report on key metrics used by that institution.
  - 9.3.2. The impacts of outreach are often evident in stakeholder engagement and support, both of which can have positive returns across mission areas. The dean should consider whether metrics are needed to assess these impacts.
  - 9.3.3. Similar to 9.1.3, the dean should determine ways to evaluate the impacts that outreach and engagement have on society and toward its benefit. These can be difficult to quantify, but they will be essential in communicating our value to the campus and state.
- 9.4. Service – the dean may choose to develop metrics related to college and university service, as well as other forms of service. However, the committee has no specific recommendation in this area.
- 9.5. Diversity and Climate – departments and divisions should demonstrate a commitment to enhance and improve climate and diversity that will be evaluated by the dean and considered when allocating resources.

### **Phased Implementation Plan**

To ensure implementation of the recommendations outlined above, the committee suggests the following steps. They are listed in a recommended order but do not necessarily need to follow sequentially. For the most part, specific dates are not included, though a date for collegiate structure change is identified.



### *Decisions on Recommendations*

- The committee recommendations are shared with the Dean's Office and, at the dean's discretion, others in the college.
- The Dean's Office reviews committee recommendations and decides which to advance. These decisions will inform a more detailed implementation blueprint.
- Details not contained in the recommendations by the committee or decisions by the Dean's Office should be outlined and assigned to the implementation process.

### *Communication of Decisions*

- A communications plan should be developed to ensure that all stakeholders are reached using the most effective medium at the appropriate time.
- The Dean's Office should share decisions made with stakeholders: students, staff, faculty, and constituents via a variety of platforms and venues.

### *Reorganization and Development of Five-Year Plans*

- First, departments, in concert with the dean, will determine where they fit in a reorganized CALS (i.e. stand-alone, merged department, or division) by July 1, 2018.
- Next, each department and division will develop a five-year plan with milestones for achieving plan elements on a year-by-year basis (per #7 above).
- Plans should be approved by the departments and shared with the Dean's Office.

### *Review of Plans*

- Dean's Office reviews each plan and meets with department chairs to discuss how the plans will be supported, monitored, and evaluated according to specific criteria including metrics (per #9 above).

### *Support of Structural Redesigns*

- At the request of departments or decision of the dean based on the submitted five-year plan, support should be provided to assist departments in their redesign and transition to newly formed units. This can include providing services such as organizational consulting, training, change management, and communications.

### *Ongoing Evaluation of Implementation*

- On a regular (at least monthly) basis, the status of implementation should be monitored, tracked and evaluated to ensure that units are moving ahead with their plans, the Dean's Office is fulfilling commitments for leadership and support, and measures of progress are demonstrated.

## **Appendices**

Appendix I — [Chairs' Letter](#)

Appendix II — [Project Charter](#)

Appendix III — November 2017 All-College Meeting [Presentation](#) and [video](#)

Appendix IV — [August 2017 Committee Report](#)