

## College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Collaborative

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### Management of Collaboratives

A collaborative unit in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is comprised of at least two departments working together while maintaining some departmental autonomy. By forming a collaborative, departments will share some resources, jointly perform some functions, and have greater critical mass to advance common priorities. A successful collaborative will increase impact and efficiencies and, while not necessarily permanent, would be stable over time. Collaborating on a single activity does not necessitate forming a collaborative.

Departments in a collaborative will maintain their own governance and executive committees ([FP&P 5.02](#)), but will have a “steering committee” for the collaborative. The chair of the steering committee will be a rotating position held by a current chair of one of the collaborative’s participating departments (terms and other specifics should be determined by each collaborative). At a minimum, the steering committee must consist of the chairs of the departments, but can include other faculty and staff as long as there is equal representation for each department. The steering committee will meet on a regular basis (i.e. monthly), and all faculty and staff in the collaborative should have joint department meetings once per semester. Collaboratives are free to develop their own process for the structure of collaborative meetings, collaborative and department decision-making policies, governance and voting. As part of the annual department reviews, the dean will also meet with the steering committee for discussion and evaluation of the collaborative.

The Dean’s Office encourages departments in the collaborative to work together to make decisions on faculty and/or staff hiring and retentions that bolster common priorities. The collaborative steering committee should also consider common priorities when making resource requests. Together, the departments in the collaborative should develop a joint-mentoring plan for joint faculty. If a faculty member is hired jointly, they should be reviewed jointly. For policy on faculty appointments, see [FP&P 1](#) and [FP&P 7](#).

If the collaborative will partner on course or academic program offerings, the collaborative must establish guidelines to identify appropriate committees for review of course and/or academic program proposals, and procedures for approval of changes. For instance, if the chairs of each department currently delegate authority to departmental curriculum committees for such decisions, a joint meeting of the committees at least once per semester is recommended. Alternatively, if a faculty vote is required for some decisions, votes could be done independently in each department, could be done in joint faculty meetings (again recommended to occur once per semester), or by some other mechanism defined within a collaborative agreement. All academic programs must comply with APIR and UAPC (see the [course proposal process](#) and the [academic planning process](#)).

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is required for all departments in the collaborative (see MOU template). Departments in a collaborative are encouraged to share resources (e.g., facilities, administrative functions), especially those that support the joint activity. Shared activities such as advising should be outlined in the MOU. All MOUs will be kept as a record in the Dean's Office. Any disputes about MOUs should be resolved with the assistance of the Dean's Office.

Additionally, as part of the five-year planning process, departments in a collaborative should convene to establish strategies and actions for shared goals and priorities.

**Examples of effective collaborative activities could include the following:**

- Shared academic program or curriculum
- Joint revenue-generating instructional programs
- Community of shared research interests and shared infrastructure
- Partnering on hiring and mentoring of faculty
- Shared administrative structure
- Shared intellectual community (e.g. seminar series)