



Memorandum

To: Faculty and Staff, College of Arts and Sciences
From: Ralph C. Wilcox, Provost and Senior Vice President
Subject: College Realignments
Date: June 12, 2008

As I have shared with you earlier, during the coming months and years it is my expectation that the College of Arts and Sciences will further cement its position as the academic and scholarly foundation of the University of South Florida. The liberal arts and sciences are at the heart of our core mission in higher education and must embody our institutional values of disciplinary excellence and rigor, the pursuit of new knowledge and critical thinking, academic freedom and the exchange of ideas, as well as the synthesis and application of creative, scholarly and research findings. To this end, and following extensive and deliberative consultation (both at USF and across the broader academic community), the College of Arts and Sciences will assume a new administrative structure beginning July 1, 2008. Organized around Schools of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Humanities, and Sciences (all within the College of Arts and Sciences), other selected professional-oriented programs will be administratively realigned with the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, including the Schools of Aging Studies and Social Work, and the Departments of Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling, and Criminology. Together these units will constitute an emergent college unit, the name of which will be recommended by the collective faculty. I fully expect that this exciting new academic unit will rapidly position itself within the highest national echelons of colleges in its field of allied study, further advancing USF's strategic progress. The Dean of FMHI will assume leadership of the newly configured college. At the same time, the Department of Economics, the Institute on Black Life, and the Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean will transition into the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences in CAS. This structural streamlining will not require additional administrative resources as associate deans, in CAS, will facilitate and coordinate collaborative leadership of an assigned School while continuing to fulfill their college-wide roles and responsibilities. A brief summary of, and partial rationale for, these structural realignments can be found on the Provost's website at <http://www.acad.usf.edu/News/2007-07-03-Update-On-Issues/>

As you know, many conversations surrounding the optimal academic structure at USF have been conducted across campus over the past few months. Prompted by both present (and emerging) economic realities, a commitment to securing our academic strength, and improving our organizational position for future strategic progress, these important discussions have led to a broad array of faculty-generated recommendations. Presented by both individuals and groups they have ranged from advocating for the merger of existing colleges, to the creation of new colleges, and maintaining the status quo. Indeed, I continue to receive interesting suggestions, some as recent as earlier today. While I am not yet convinced of the advantages promised by some of the more broad-sweeping changes proposed, particularly in this difficult budget time, I strongly support the continuation of these discussions and I, along with our college deans, remain

open to considering innovative organizational shifts that promise even greater institutional gains. Of one thing we can be certain – that institutional progress, in the face of a more than ten percent reduction in our state budget (with even more cuts on the horizon), will demand changes in both institutional structure and behavior. For now, I fully expect that the multidisciplinary alignments reflected by establishing the Schools of Behavioral and Social Sciences, Humanities, and Sciences will encourage the development of additional areas of shared interest, create a critical mass of scholars and/or scientists, along with nurturing scholarly communities that focus on interdisciplinary collaboration.

While I recognize that these organizational changes will create some challenges and issues for faculty members, staff and students, university and college leaders remain committed to ensuring that this transition proceeds in a positive and constructive manner. Indeed, I have every confidence that, with careful thought and deliberation, reasonable people will develop reasonable solutions to the challenges we face. We fully understand that some matters may require continuing, collegial conversations leading to changes in policies and practices.

Finally, as you might imagine, I am eager to proceed with initiating a national search for a permanent Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at USF. To this end, I plan to meet with department chairs and faculty leaders in the coming weeks to determine priorities, processes and a position description for what promises to be one of the most important academic leadership searches at the University. I would very much like to hear your suggestions on how we might most productively proceed. Please send me your thoughts at <http://www.acad.usf.edu/Office/Provost/send-note-provost.htm>

cc. Dean John Skvoretz, College of Arts and Sciences
Interim Dean–Elect Eric Eisenberg, College of Arts and Sciences
Dean Robert Forsythe, College of Business
Dean Junius Gonzales, Florida Mental Health Institute
Dean Maria Crummett, International Affairs
Dean Delcie Durham, The Graduate School
Dear Bob Sullins, Undergraduate Studies