

Reorganization of the School of Arts and Communication

BACKGROUND

Proposed Effective Date

Fall 2021

Proposal Summary

The College of Liberal Arts seeks to separate the current School of Arts & Communication (SAC) into two distinct schools: a School of Communication (SoC) and a School of Visual, Performing, & Design Arts (SVPDA). Currently, the SAC is made up of six distinct disciplines: Art, Communication, Graphic Design, Music, New Media Communications, and Theatre. Besides being somewhat bifurcated disciplinarily the current configuration has proven itself oversized and unwieldy to administer effectively (the six disciplines inelegantly occupy space in seven buildings across the Corvallis campus). The current structure also presents challenges by way of visibility and focus; the SAC is simply too diffuse as an academic entity. Recent investments in arts facilities are anticipated to add even more complexity, which would be better supported by the proposed new structure.

Specific changes include:

- Creating the School of Communication and the School of Visual, Performing, & Design Arts (SVPDA) from the existing School of Arts and Communication.
- Adding administrative support for the new school structure (one director and one assistant to the director).
- Recreating the current Theatre Arts option under Speech Communication as a standalone Theatre Arts major, and thus elevating the Communication option to the single degree/major available under the existing BA/BS (the Theatre Arts curriculum proposal is currently at the Faculty Senate Executive Committee stage of review and the Communication review has been completed).

Proposal Justification

The current School of Arts and Communication (SAC) is the largest and most complex within the College of Liberal Arts. The size, budget complexities, lack of connection among disciplines, and other factors have limited the ability of SAC to function effectively in its current configuration. Moreover, the impending expansion/renovation of arts facilities and the eventual programming related to it, present additional administrative complexities. Two separate schools will allow more focused support of individual academic programs on both sides and a more efficient leadership structure.

Separating SAC into two more overtly thematic schools will strengthen disciplinary identities and the individual programs existing within the schools. Instead of using energy and resources to try and unite disparate elements, the new schools will be able to streamline and target energy and resources more effectively. In the larger SAC model, resources and priorities were occasionally points of conflict between differing approaches to scholarship and performance. For example, separating the social science disciplines of Speech Communication and New Media Communications from the Design/Arts/Performing Arts disciplines will better allow the crucial academic distinctions of the different areas to seeking and receiving targeted support and resources.

Both faculty and students have expressed strong support for the change. Students more closely identify with their specific majors, which will be more readily visible and acknowledged in the separated schools. On the faculty side, the initial proposal was entirely faculty-driven, with subsequent conversations in both 2018 and 2020 (both initiated by Dean Rodgers) that communicated a clear message of wanting more disciplinary autonomy and administrative support via the split of SAC.

There are also current building and remodeling projects that support the school split. The Arts and Education Complex will serve as a hub for SVPDA; renovations of Fairbanks Hall will enhance Art and Graphic Design capacity. Visually, these buildings will represent SVPDA more vividly than if part of a larger, more tenuous SAC.

Overall, the change allows for 1) stronger disciplinary growth in terms of research and curricular development, 2) more effective and efficient administrative capacity, and 3) alignment with student, faculty, and administrative desires about how to best move the programs forward.

Proposal Financials

The current SAC has a place for one director and one school assistant (though currently SAC is being served by an interim director from the CLA dean's office). This proposal would require the addition of one new director position and one new school assistant position. Interim school leadership is currently in place for both proposed schools, and thus more permanent leadership will need to be installed in both schools in the first one to two years following the reorganization. The current school assistant to the director would move to one of the schools, so there would also be a need for a second school assistant to be hired in the next two years following the reorganization. The five existing office specialist positions would remain connected to the academic unit that they serve. All academic programs currently have adequate faculty and resources to serve the students.

The budget impact of the proposal is summarized in Table 1 and includes one full-time (1.0 FTE) school director (salary + OPE = roughly \$200K), one full-time (1.0 FTE) assistant to the school director (salary + OPE = roughly \$100K), and some minor costs associated with services and supplies (this includes possible new computers for new personnel, marketing materials, and library materials, coming out to roughly \$15K).

To cover these costs, the new schools will use a combination of E&G funds and Ecampus revenue. The new personnel would be placed in the School of Communication, and these expenses have been included in the FY2022 projections for the school, with the school still projecting as being on budget for the fiscal year.

Table 1. Personnel Costs from Proposal Reorganization

	Fiscal Yr 1	Fiscal Yr 2	Fiscal Yr 3	Fiscal Yr 4
SCHOOL DIRECTOR				
Annual Salary	140,000	144,200	148,526	152,982
OPE	61,530	62,834	64,176	65,561
FTE	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

ASST TO SCHOOL DIRECTOR				
Annual Salary	62,000	63,860	65,776	67,649
OPE	37,311	37,888	38,483	39,096
FTE	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

RECOMMENDATION

All appropriate university committees and the OSU Faculty Senate have positively reviewed the proposed reorganization. The Provost recommends that the Board approve the reorganization of the School of Arts and Communication into two separate schools – the School of Communication and the School of Visual, Performing, and Design Arts.