



Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment Comprehensive Report 2025-2026



PRESENTED BY:

Dr. Jack DeRochi, *Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Dr. Richard Stevens, *Associate Provost*

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
I. Introduction and Institutional Context	8
University Overview	8
Transformation Rationale and Strategic Objective	8
II. Core Values and Structural Parameters	9
Core Values	9
Structural Parameters	11
III. Overview of Transformation Process	11
Planning and Communication	11
Data Gathering	13
IV. Synthesis of Major Themes and Findings	17
Program Identity and Visibility	17
Role Clarity, Hierarchy, and Consistency Across Units	17
Staffing and Workload Equity	17
Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance	17
Data-Driven Decision-Making and Metrics	18
V. Future Forward: Addressing Thematic Priorities	18
VI. Academic Affairs Revised Organization Structure	21
Divisional Overview	21
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	22
College of Business and Technology	23
College of Science, Health, and Wellness	23
Faculty Affairs	24
Enrollment Management	24
Student Academic Enrichment	24
Institutional Effectiveness	25
Institutional Research	25
Sponsored Programs	25

VII. Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits	25
Stronger Program Identity and Coherence.....	25
More Sustainable Faculty and Administrative Workloads	26
Allocation of Administrative Assistant Resources	26
Market Distinction.....	27
Improved Student Success, Retention, and Graduation Outcomes	28
Clearer Governance and Communication Pathways	29
VIII. Implementation and Change Management Plans	29
Positions, Compensation, Units, Elections, and Appointments.....	29
Implementation, Assessment, and Continuous Refinement	31
IX. Conclusion	31
Table 1. Academic Affairs Organizational Chart	33
Table 2. College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	34
Table 3. College of Business and Technology.....	35
Table 4. College of Science, Health, and Wellness	36
Table 5. Faculty Affairs.....	37
Table 6. Enrollment Management	38
Table 7. Student Academic Enrichment	39
Appendix A - Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment 2025.....	41
Appendix B - Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment 2025 - Updated	46
Appendix C – Survey Sample Questions	52
Appendix E – Focus Group Invitation	55
Appendix F – Workshop 1	56
Appendix G – Workshop 2	58
Appendix H - Academic Affairs Transformation Comprehensive Thematic Analysis	60
Appendix I - Organizational Transformation & Chart Development Theme Summary	66
Appendix J – School Director Job Description.....	68
Appendix K – Department Chair Job Description	71
Appendix L – Undergraduate Program Coordinator Job Description	73

Appendix M – Assessment Coordinator Job Description 75
Appendix N - Faculty Service Role Crosswalk 77
Appendix O - Policy on Academic Units: Departments and Schools..... 80

Executive Summary

The Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment initiative represents a comprehensive review and restructuring of Shepherd University's academic division designed to strengthen program identity, improve administrative equity, and advance student-centered outcomes. As described in the Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment document (Appendix A), the process was guided by a strategic objective to position Academic Affairs to be innovative and future-focused while maintaining a three-college model and exercising fiscal responsibility.

The transformation differed from prior restructurings in that it was not driven by immediate financial pressures. Instead, it was grounded in broad faculty and staff engagement and informed by both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys, a faculty conference, focus groups, leadership workshops, benchmarking research, and institutional data analysis contributed to identifying recurring themes that shaped the final model.

Sections I and II of this report provides the historical context for the current Academic Affairs Transformation and the objectives and principles guiding the entire process. Section III outlines the entire process, describing the core values behind the strategies for information gathering and consultation, and detailing the multiple opportunities faculty and staff had to participate. Section IV synthesizes and defines the themes that evolved consistently from this feedback. Those five essential themes are as follows:

- Program Identity and Visibility
- Role Clarity, Hierarchy, and Consistency across Units
- Staffing and Workload Equity
- Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance
- Data-driven Decision-Making and Metrics

Section V provides a table that details the current and future action plans that have been activated to address those thematic priorities.

The revised organizational structure of Shepherd's academic colleges included in Section VI reflects specific attention to program identity and administrative equity, and leverages program strengths to heighten market distinctiveness to support future innovation.

College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	College of Business and Technology	College of Science, Health, and Wellness
Department of English, History, and Modern Languages	Department of Computer Science, Mathematics, and Engineering	Department of Natural and Physical Sciences
<i>16 faculty</i>	<i>8 faculty</i>	<i>17 faculty</i>
Department of Social Sciences	Department of Business and Sport Administration	Department of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling
<i>8 faculty</i>	<i>16 faculty</i>	<i>9 faculty</i>
School of Education		School of Nursing
<i>8 faculty</i>		<i>12 faculty</i>
School of the Arts and Media		
<i>17 faculty</i>		
Interdisciplinary Studies - 6 areas		

In addition, this section outlines the roles and responsibilities for other areas within the division, including Faculty Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Academic Enrichment, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research and Sponsored Programs.

Section VII explains the “Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits” of the Transformation, which includes program identity, the allocation of administrative assistant resources, and clearer governance and communication pathways. A few of the specific market advantages for the revised organizational structure are also defined:

- *College of Business and Technology* – Aligns high-demand, workforce-oriented programs under a unified structure that integrates business, applied technology, and innovation; strategically repositions Computer Science to strengthen market responsiveness while maintaining a strong STEM foundation and industry relevance.
- *College of Science, Health and Wellness* – Reinforces Shepherd’s historic strength in the sciences and nursing while creating a scalable platform for growth in allied health and wellness fields (e.g., mental health counseling, social work, exercise science), aligning academic programming with regional workforce needs and student demand.
- *School of the Arts and Media* – Unifies music, art, theatre, and communication into a mutually supportive creative ecosystem, leveraging existing community

engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration to strengthen recruitment, visibility, and program sustainability.

The Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment report concludes by explaining the many steps required for implementation in Section VIII. Several policies and new job descriptions are under development to be in place by the end of the academic year. President Hendrix formally brings forward the new organizational structure to the Board of Governors by March 15, 2026, providing the necessary 30 days for public comment. Academic units are asked to hold chair/director and senator selections by April 1, 2026. Finally, the report notes that campus surveys will be administered in spring 2027 to assess stakeholder experience with the new organizational structure.

In sum, the outcomes of the Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment process align organizational structure with institutional mission, reinforce program identity, promote administrative equity, help address uneven workload distribution, and better position our distinctive academic programs in the higher education marketplace. The initiative positions Shepherd University to operate with greater clarity, stability, and strategic focus while maintaining its commitment to shared governance and fiscal responsibility.

I. Introduction and Institutional Context

University Overview

Founded in 1871, Shepherd University has a longstanding tradition of innovation, creativity, and responsiveness to the evolving educational and community needs. From its beginnings as a normal school to its status as a comprehensive regional university, Shepherd has consistently focused on the educational needs of its current and prospective students and its regional impact.

Today, Shepherd University offers a diverse portfolio of baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral programs along with minors, certificates, and other educational credentials. Instruction is delivered through high-quality face-to-face, hyflex, and online learning modalities, with courses built around high impact practices such as experiential learning and collaborative undergraduate research. These efforts are led by talented full-time and adjunct faculty who dedicate their crafts to educate our next generation of college graduates and informed citizens.

To that end, Shepherd's current mission and vision highlight this ongoing focus.

Mission Statement: Shepherd University is a premier public university, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, that prepares students for lifelong learning and success in their chosen pursuits and serves as a hub for academic, cultural, and economic opportunity.

Vision Statement: Shepherd University will be a first-choice academic home with high-quality and innovative programs that position our diverse community of students and alumni for success as global citizens and leaders.

Transformation Rationale and Strategic Objective

Over the past decade, Academic Affairs has undergone several reorganizations largely driven by financial concerns and implemented with limited faculty involvement. The most recent restructuring occurred under financial pressure with a fast execution of those decisions that left many faculty and staff feeling removed from the decision-making process. The 2025-2026 Transformation Process differs in both purpose and approach: it seeks to reimagine the organization of the division not to execute significant financial cuts but to improve administrative equity, create academic units of similar scale, and highlight and better align Shepherd's future academic portfolio with regional needs. In addition,

deliberate inclusive participation – a critical component of shared governance – was the underpinning of the overall process.

As articulated in the Academic Affairs Transformation Process documents (Appendices A and B), this Process pursued the following strategic objective: “To transform the Division of Academic Affairs organizationally in order to be innovative and future-focused, thus expanding Shepherd University’s impact on our students, community, and region.”

The pursuit of this objective was guided by the following principles:

- Drive the ongoing review and enhancement of Shepherd’s academic portfolio, exploring innovative and market-driven programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Optimize the distribution of resources to support administration of Academic Affairs, including departments and schools.
- Contribute directly to stronger student learning outcomes, improve retention, and graduation rates.
- Optimize current successes and opportunities to scale student enrollment.

Together, the strategic objective and guiding principles provided the framework for feedback and analysis throughout the Transformation process.

II. Core Values and Structural Parameters

Core Values

The Academic Affairs Transformation Process was not solely about reaching outcomes; equally important, it was about pursuing such work through a collaborative process, one that exemplifies shared governance through multiple mechanisms for feedback and consultation.

To that end, five core values have been standard throughout this process.

Shared Governance. While a final decision regarding organizational structure is an administrative one, it is critical that this decision is based on intentional deliberations with faculty and staff across the division. As defined in the original process documents, the Provost and academic leadership sought input from faculty and staff through a variety of channels, including surveys, focus groups, and a faculty-only conference. Chairs and Directors helped academic leadership develop the Transformation process, and Drs. Stephanie Slocum-Shaffer and Court Company (Faculty Conference facilitators) joined

Academic Leadership Council to analyze divisional feedback, identify priorities, and develop potential program groupings.

Consistent Communications. From the outset and throughout the process, academic leadership provided detailed explanations of the process, anticipated timelines, and updates to the division. Frequently, leadership updated colleagues on progress, reminded everyone of opportunities for engagement and deadlines, and changes to timelines due to the presidential search.

Commitment to Inclusive Participation. The transformation process was about the entire division and not solely academic programs. Recognizing and valuing the interests and concerns of academic affairs staff and other units within the division was an important element of the information gathering. Faculty and staff were offered opportunities to participate multiple times in both written and oral platforms.

- Faculty were able to opt in to a survey, faculty conference, focus groups, and provide individual responses to potential new units suggested by the data gathering and ALC workshop outcomes.
- Staff were able to opt in to the same survey and focus groups.
- The Academic Leadership Council (ALC - chairs, directors, and deans) were able to contribute to research on organizational structures at other colleges and universities as well as two mandatory workshops considering program clusters, departmental units, and college alignments.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data-Informed Decision-Making. The final model was informed by data collected during the consultation phase as well as institutional data such as enrollment reports and other academic affairs reports (faculty FTE, credit hour production, etc.). In addition, the process was informed by qualitative data in the form of focus groups, a faculty conference, and individual input on proposed units. The culture of Shepherd University is a crucial aspect to a successful transformation, so both quantitative and qualitative data helped inform the ultimate final model.

Student-Centered Outcomes. Underlying the entire Academic Affairs Transformation process was the value placed on continuing to improve Shepherd's ability to deliver student-centered outcomes. For example, while elevating program identity supports faculty work, pursuing this objective holds even more importance for prospective students. Additionally, the best alignment of administrative units and resources supports student success well beyond the important classroom experiences.

Structural Parameters

Most projects include parameters to keep a focus on the work that needs to be completed within the timeframe set. This Transformation-Realignment process was no different and included four parameters that informed each manner of feedback as well as the Academic Leadership Council workshops. These four parameters were:

- Maintain a three-college, three-dean model.
- Have all instructional units report to one of those three deans.
- Take a cost-neutral approach.
- Focus on program identity and innovation.

The final model accomplishes all four of these initial parameters: it maintains three colleges with an academic dean, identifies areas for improved administrative support (re-conceptualized faculty and administrative roles), addresses program identity, and meets the expectations of cost neutrality.

III. Overview of Transformation Process

Planning and Communication

In response to faculty and staff expressing their frustration with the process and outcomes of the previous restructuring, the Provost initiated discussions surrounding the Academic Affairs Transformation Process in late spring 2025. Following consultations with a number of senior faculty, Academic Leadership Council, several staff members, and others across campus, it was determined that the success of this transformation rested on the commitment to offer a variety of ways for colleagues to participate in the process, and that the process should move expeditiously through specific phases, each building upon the work of the preceding phase and leading to the eventual final decision and recommendation to the Board of Governors.

Academic Leadership Council reviewed drafts of the initial process on May 28 and June 18, 2025, reviewing the goals, guiding principles, timelines, and plans for feedback. The June 18 ALC meeting specifically addressed the questions proposed in a survey draft and the idea of inviting some long-term faculty to participate as facilitators. The chairs and directors were crucial to finalizing the survey focus.

Although timelines for submitting surveys and participating in focus groups would be in the fall, it was determined best to announce the Transformation as early as possible, giving

faculty the option to complete surveys during the summer or at the start of the Fall semester. On July 1, 2025, in his weekly email to faculty, Dr. DeRochi included the following excerpt announcing the Transformation of Academic Affairs:

Upcoming Transformation of Academic Affairs

Based on the feedback of so many colleagues (from faculty, staff, and academic administrators), we have decided to facilitate a comprehensive and collaborative process to reimagine the overall organizational structure of Academic Affairs. Many of you have expressed to me your frustrations with the amalgamations of current departments and your desire to be a part of an intentional, collaborative process. Thank you for your patience while I took time to listen and learn from so many of you. Following all these fruitful conversations, it is clear that there is a great deal of enthusiasm for taking time to rethink what our structure might look like to support student success, foster innovation, and set us up organizationally to meet the academic needs of tomorrow's students.

As a result, and now that we have a more stable financial situation, academic leadership (chairs, directors, deans, and the Provost's office) has worked together to develop a plan and timeline to facilitate this important project, starting this summer and moving through the fall semester. All faculty and staff in Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management will be invited to participate in surveys, conferences, workshops, and focus groups to help develop an organizational structure we collectively believe will help us better serve Shepherd's students.

Please be on the lookout for another communication next week which will focus entirely on this collaborative process.

His July 8 message focused solely on this process and highlighted the first opportunity for faculty to participate in the semester-long process. This communication is also included in the Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment 2025 document (Appendix A).

Good morning,

As I mentioned last week, based on the feedback of faculty and staff across all the colleges, we will begin a collaborative and comprehensive exercise to transform the organizational structure of the division of Academic Affairs. To that end, academic leadership worked closely over the last month to develop the overall process and timeline for this project (please see attached), which starts this summer and will move through the fall semester.

I recognize that many faculty are not currently on contract but wanted to provide this information as early as possible to provide timely transparency to the process. We will continue to keep everyone updated as we move through the various phases of this initiative.

At this point, your first opportunity to participate in this process will be an open-ended confidential survey that will be sent to you in a separate email in a few days. Completion of this survey is completely optional, and everyone will have until September 8 to complete it. This survey will help instigate our innovative thinking around programs, departments, and college organizations.

During this same time period, chairs, directors, and deans have begun to review existing models/aspects of models at other institutions to consider for Shepherd, which will help inform our collaborations later in the fall.

Finally, the attached document establishes the Strategic Objective and Underlying Principles for our work as well as the overall process and timeline. I hope you can find time in the coming days and weeks to review it and consider how you might contribute to this important project. Again, an email will follow in a few days that will provide a link to an optional survey.

If you have any questions about this email and/or the subsequent survey email, feel free to contact Richie Stevens or me directly. I am on vacation this week but will be glad to respond to your email or questions when I return.

All the best,

Jack

Multiple emails throughout the semester kept faculty and staff informed of the many ways their input would be welcomed.

Data Gathering

Data were gathered over a 6-month period from surveys, faculty and staff focus groups, one faculty-only conference, academic affairs leadership workshops, and individual faculty emails. The quantitative data were compiled through Anthology Baseline. The qualitative data was collected and presented by faculty and staff trained in managing focus groups and qualitative conversations. Together with Drs. Slocum-Shaffer and Campany, academic leadership analyzed and identified the key themes influencing both the quantitative and qualitative feedback.

Survey. A 14-question survey was sent to all full-time faculty, all full-time staff, and selected long-term adjuncts. Staff include all employees under the responsibility of the Provost including larger units such as Enrollment Management, the Library, and Student Academic Enrichment. The survey was sent out during the summer and extended through the beginning of the fall semester (July 9 – September 8, 2025) to provide a duration that would meet all faculty and staff needs tied to timing. (See Appendix C.)

Forty-five faculty (31), staff (11), and adjuncts (3) opted to complete this survey. Faculty response rate was 27.9% and staff response rate was 20.1%. The survey was confidential but not anonymous. Beyond identifying their status at Shepherd University, no other identifiable information was collected. All other questions were open-ended for qualitative research purposes. All questions were optional except for the Shepherd status questions

as this was necessary to understand how some concerns might be a priority for staff and different ones for faculty.

Research on Peer Institutional Models. Beginning July 8, 2025, ALC members were invited to update an Excel spreadsheet with units (departments, colleges, etc.) that they found unique for any reason to provide ideas for others in ALC to consider as data were collected. This process was not about just stating what other campuses were doing but rather why, as leadership, a particular organizational model or specific aspect of a model underscored their interest and might work at Shepherd.

Faculty Conference. The faculty conference, held on September 22, 2025, provided an opportunity for faculty only to discuss issues pertaining to the transformation of Academic Affairs. Drs. Stephanie Slocum-Schaffer, Professor of Political Science, and Court Campany, Associate Professor of Biology, served as facilitators and collaborated with Drs. DeRochi and Stevens to assess the survey data, its generated themes, and the prioritization of questions for the Faculty Conference. The Faculty Conference allowed faculty to speak directly with other faculty colleagues without academic leadership present. This exclusion included all chairs, directors, deans, or administrative staff even if they held faculty rank. The conference lasted approximately 1.5 hours. Dr. Geri Crawley-Woods, Professor Emerita and former Ombuds, agreed to transcribe and take notes during the conference. The initial email was sent to faculty in early September.

Dear Colleagues,

We write today to urge you to attend and participate in the upcoming faculty conference on the transformation of academic affairs: Monday, September 22, 3:30-5:00 pm in the Byrd CHE Auditorium.

First, please be assured that this discussion is meant for faculty only; no administrators – including chairs and directors – will be present. Indeed, we have agreed to facilitate this conference because we believe that faculty should have a strong voice in shaping the structure of academic affairs, and this is an important opportunity for you to do that. Please come and be heard!

The plan is identify some themes from the survey results to organize our conversation, but there will also be plenty of opportunity to move beyond that starting point to your creative ideas for improvements. Please be aware that we will not be making final decisions at this meeting; instead, we will be focusing on identifying what is working, what is not working, and creative suggestions for addressing issues in the current structure. The goal is to inform a set of priorities that can be further explored in the focus groups that are to follow (September 23-October 17).

If you have questions in advance, please do not hesitate to reach out to one or both of us. We look forward to seeing you on the 22nd!

Sincerely,

Courtney Campany and Stephanie Slocum-Schaffer

Approximately 40 faculty members opted to attend this conference. Themes that evolved from the conference included the importance of academic program identity, the need for consistent and well-defined administrative roles and compensation, and the importance of transparency and shared governance.

Faculty and Staff Focus Groups. Faculty and staff focus groups were initially scheduled for September 22–October 17, 2025. The timeline was adjusted to October 15–24, 2025, to allow additional time to review survey themes and faculty conference information that informed the focus group topics. Microsoft Forms was used by Dr. Stevens to collect participant interest. (See Appendices D and E.) Planning related to group size, location, composition, and discussion topics was conducted by Drs. DeRochi, Stevens, Slocum-Schaffer, and Campany. Dr. Craig Cline, Associate Professor of Social Work, and Pippa McCullough, Assistant Professor of Social Work, joined the planning discussions and contributed their professional expertise. Dr. Stevens, Dr. Cline, and Prof. McCullough facilitated the focus groups.

The planning team identified six discussion themes and agreed that six to ten participants per session would provide an effective group size. The themes were:

- Advising and Student-Facing Functions
- Program Identity and Leadership
- Shared Governance, Trust, and Communication
- Re-Imagining the College Structure
- Faculty, Staff, and Student Support
- Department Structures and Collaborations

The original plan called for separate faculty-only and staff-only sessions organized around these topics. Thirty-one individuals expressed interest, resulting in four mixed faculty and staff groups. Focus groups were conducted between October 17–24, 2025.

Participation distribution across themes required consolidation to maintain viable group sizes. Two groups addressed Faculty, Staff, and Student Support, one addressed Program Identity and Leadership, and one addressed Advising and Student-Facing Functions. Interest levels of one to three participants prevented sessions from being held on the remaining three topics.

Administrative Workshops. Administrative Workshops were conducted with the Academic Leadership Council (ALC) on November 5 and 12, 2025. During the first session on November 5, participants examined unit structures with particular attention to program identity, agency, and organizational structure (Appendix F). The second workshop, held on November 12, focused more specifically on potential unit configurations and their placement within college structures (Appendix G).

Individual Faculty Feedback – Department Alignment. Potential unit structures and groupings generated through the ALC workshops, institutional data, and input from Deans were compiled into multiple options for faculty consideration. Dr. Stevens distributed targeted emails to faculty within each existing program, inviting them to rank proposed alignments and suggest alternatives. A broader message was also sent to all faculty outlining larger grouping concepts and soliciting feedback. Sample email:

Music Faculty - **Program identity and agency** was a central piece to many aspects of the data collection this summer and fall (survey, faculty conference, focus groups, and workshops with deans, chairs, directors and the Provost office). This email, and ones like it for each program, is the final data collection point for faculty as the Academic Leadership Team and Provost develop a final Academic Affairs transformation model including colleges and units within each college.

To that end, I invite each of you to review suggestions that were already submitted by chairs, directors, deans, and the Provost office through their workshops and discussions. In addition, I ask that you submit your own suggestion, should you have one, and then rank yours (if you add another) with the ones listed. We have included existing departments for consideration as well. We will need all responses by noon, Wednesday, **December 3, 2025**. This activity is completely voluntary but your voice is very important as a model is finalized. A final model will be on the February 2026 BoG agenda. Thanks, Richie

Music

- a. Music/Art/Theater
- b. Music/Art/Theater/Communication
- c. Music (existing)

As a context here are some larger groupings that have been suggested and are under review.

Visual and Performing Arts (Music, Art, Theater, Communication)

Visual and Performing Arts (Music, Art, Theater)

Business and Technology (Business Administration, Accounting, Economics, CIS, Communication, Recreation)

Human Services (Education, SW, Exercise Science/Nutrition, Mental Health Counseling)

Human Services (Education, Social Work, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling)

Wellness (Nursing, RSES, Social Work, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling)

Wellness (Social Work, Psychology, Mental Health Counseling)

IV. Synthesis of Major Themes and Findings

Drs. Slocum-Shaffer and Company continued to work closely with academic leadership to analyze and identify the primary themes generated from the faculty/staff survey, faculty conference, and faculty/staff focus groups (Appendices H and I). The five themes listed below were consistent throughout the various data collection points. While recognizing some themes were more relevant to some members of Academic Affairs (i.e., program identity and faculty), all were emphasized by a significant number of constituency groups.

Program Identity and Visibility

- Reinststate or formalize Program Director roles with compensation and authority.
- Tie program visibility and structure to institutional mission and branding.
- One size does not fit all in terms of organizational units.

Role Clarity, Hierarchy, and Consistency Across Units

- Develop a standardized framework for academic and administrative roles with defined responsibilities, compensation, and reporting lines.
- Create organizational charts at college, school, and department levels to illustrate hierarchy and accountability.
- Formalize leadership progression tracks (e.g., Program Coordinator → Director/Chair → Dean).
- Differentiate graduate, undergraduate, and accredited program roles to reflect unique compliance needs.

Staffing and Workload Equity

- Conduct a workload audit across units to align staffing levels with program size and complexity.
- Expand administrative and advising support to relieve faculty of clerical burdens.
- Develop a faculty/staff retention plan including workload redistribution, recognition, and development pathways.

Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance

- Establish centralized communication systems (shared portals, consistent announcements).
- Develop a clear decision-making protocol (who decides, who's informed, who's consulted).

- Communicate success stories and institutional improvements to build morale and trust.

Data-Driven Decision-Making and Metrics

- Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) for roles (e.g., enrollment, faculty headcount, program complexity).
- Use data dashboards for workload distribution and organizational planning.
- Tie budget allocations and role justifications to measurable institutional outcomes.

V. Future Forward: Addressing Thematic Priorities

Once identified, the themes above provided the focus for ongoing deliberations with Academic Leadership Council and Provost’s Council to determine the best steps forward for addressing the concerns of faculty and staff across the division. A re-organization of colleges and academic units is only one aspect of all the action items for moving the division of Academic Affairs forward.

Below is an itemization of the current actions underway as well as future actions to be taken to address the major themes listed in Section IV that evolved from this Transformation process.

Theme	Current Actions	Future Tactics
<p>Program Identity and Visibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganize colleges into programmatic groupings that enhance market distinctiveness. • Develop new formal administrative role of Program Coordinator to enable specific program advocacy and oversight. • Formalize responsibilities for Department Chairs and School Directors. • Initiate program-focused web redesign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch refreshed program-centered web architecture. • Enhance and support program-specific recruitment and retention activities. • Provide professional development for chairs, directors, and program coordinators. • Support interdisciplinary program incubation.

<p>Role Clarity, Hierarchy, and Consistency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize responsibilities for Department Chairs, School Directors, Program Coordinators, and Assessment Coordinators. • Establish definitions and policy language for academic schools and departments. • Implement data-informed compensation framework (stipends and/or course reassignments) for administrative roles. • Revise organizational charts and leadership councils. • Improve administrative equity for clearer communication and resource allocations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop leadership pipeline and training modules. • Standardize academic leader onboarding. • Implement formal succession planning. • Formalize college and academic unit communication planning. • Implement formal and consistent annual evaluations for academic leaders.
<p>Staffing and Workload Equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate stipends and course releases to support academic unit administration based on transparent metrics. • Identify additional administrative assistant positions to improve operations that will support administrators across all academics. • Initiate <i>ad hoc</i> workgroup to codify university 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop college-level workload policies in alignment with University principles for faculty workload. • Develop workload equity dashboard that demonstrates the diverse contributions of faculty across the division. • Expand staff support in high-growth and/or

	<p>policies around contact hours.</p>	<p>administratively complex units.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop formal faculty and staff retention strategy.
<p>Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new college and academic unit structure, new policies, and administrative job descriptions through collaboration and shared governance. • Continue provost weekly updates and campus “pop-ups” to provide formal and informal communication channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Academic Affairs digital portal for improving access to academic policies, timelines, and strategic objectives. • Publish annual State of Academic Affairs report. • Implement biennial governance climate surveys. • Provide access to training calendar for staff and faculty.
<p>Data-Driven Decision-Making and Metrics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data surrounding number of majors, credit hour production, and number of faculty to drive revised org. structure. • Create metrics-based compensation allocation that recognizes the complexities of different academic units. • Integrate qualitative and quantitative analysis to inform transformation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate transparent program metrics to drive resource allocations. • Develop Academic Affairs KPI dashboard of entire academic portfolio. • Make visible college-level metrics and financial contributions to drive budget planning and future strategies. • 3-year post-transformation evaluation report.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned post-implementation campus survey.
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VI. Academic Affairs Revised Organization Structure

Divisional Overview

The Academic Affairs Division includes three academic colleges as well as centralized administrative units supporting enrollment, faculty, students, research, and institutional effectiveness. During the transformation process, all Academic Affairs units were reviewed, with primary attention given to the academic colleges, faculty structure, and associated administrative support.

Academic Affairs will maintain three colleges organized into nine schools and departments. The following administrative units will report directly to the Provost: Enrollment Management, Faculty Affairs, Student Academic Enrichment, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Research, and Sponsored Programs (Table 1).

The updated college structure, including new departments and program clusters, reflects attention to program identity, cost neutrality, administrative equity, and the support of administrative staffing and the allocation of associated resources. Equally important, the revised organizational structure leverages program strengths to heighten market distinctiveness to support future innovation and student success. All department chairs and school directors will have the option, in conjunction with their dean, to appoint additional faculty administrative support in the roles of program coordinators and/or assessment coordinators.

College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences	College of Business and Technology	College of Science, Health, and Wellness
Department of English, History, and Modern Languages	Department of Computer Science, Mathematics, and Engineering	Department of Natural and Physical Sciences
<i>16 faculty</i>	<i>8 faculty</i>	<i>17 faculty</i>
Department of Social Sciences	Department of Business and Sport Administration	Department of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling
<i>8 faculty</i>	<i>16 faculty</i>	<i>9 faculty</i>
School of Education		School of Nursing
<i>8 faculty</i>		<i>12 faculty</i>
School of the Arts and Media		
<i>17 faculty</i>		
Interdisciplinary Studies - 6 areas		

College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

The College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences is led by a Dean and includes two schools and two departments (Table 2).

School of the Arts and Media. Led by a School Director, this school houses the Music, Art, Theater, Communication and Media, and Journalism programs. It includes 17 full-time faculty and 219 majors. *

School of Education. Led by a School Director, the School of Education includes Elementary and Secondary Education programs, and oversight of the continuing education (EDPD) courses with 8 faculty and 267 majors.

Department of English, History, and Modern Languages. Led by a Chair, this department includes the English, History, and Spanish programs. It has 16 faculty and 89 majors.

Department of Social Sciences. Led by a Chair, this department houses Political Science, Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Global Studies. It includes 8 faculty and 182 majors.

Additional units housed within the college include:

- Honors Program
- Continuing Education (curriculum)

- Gender and Women’s Studies
- Appalachian Studies
- Civil War Institute

Graduate programs housed within the college include:

- Master of Arts in Appalachian Studies
- Master of Arts in Teaching
- Master of Education in Educational Leadership
- Master of Education in Teaching

College of Business and Technology

The College of Business and Technology is led by a Dean and includes two departments (Table 4).

Department of Business and Sport Administration. Led by a Chair, this department includes Business Administration, Economics, Accounting, and Recreation and Sports Studies. It has 17 faculty and 486 majors.

Department of Computer Science, Mathematics, and Engineering. Led by a Chair, this department includes Applied Mathematics and Data Science, Computer and Information Science, Computer and Information Technology, Data Analytics and Engineering Science. It has 8 faculty and 178 majors.

Graduate programs housed within the college include:

- Master of Business Administration

College of Science, Health, and Wellness

The College of Science, Health, and Wellness is led by a Dean and includes one school and two departments (Table 3).

School of Nursing. Led by a School Director, this school houses the Nursing and Health Promotion and Exercise Science programs. It includes 13 faculty and 227 majors.

Department of Natural and Physical Sciences. Led by a Chair, this department houses Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Science. It includes 18 faculty and 213 majors.

Department of Psychology, Social Work, and Counseling. Led by a Chair, this department includes Psychology and Social Work. It has 9 faculty and 190 majors.

Graduate programs housed within the college include:

- Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling

*Faculty counts reflect Spring 2026 employment. Major counts represent a five-year average from Fall 2021 through Fall 2025.

Faculty Affairs

An Associate Provost oversees Faculty Affairs, Online Learning, the Center for Faculty Excellence, the Registrar, and the Scarborough Library (Table 4).

This unit is responsible for faculty orientation and development, course evaluations, student registration, the academic catalog, the Faculty Handbook, faculty policy oversight, classroom facilities and technology coordination, library services, and online learning. The unit includes 14 staff members.

Enrollment Management

An Associate Vice President oversees Enrollment Management, which includes Admissions, Graduate Studies, Continuing Education (admissions), Dual Enrollment, and the Regents Bachelor of Arts program (Table 5).

The unit includes 14 staff members and is responsible for recruitment, admissions, and marketing efforts supporting all students pursuing educational experiences at Shepherd University.

Student Academic Enrichment

Student Academic Enrichment houses Academic Advising, Career Services, Academic Support, First-Year Experience, TRIO and Upward Bound, and Experiential Education, including Study Abroad (Table 6).

Led by an Assistant Provost and staffed by 12 professionals, the unit supports academic advising, career readiness, transition experiences, Common Read and Convocation programming, tutoring, study abroad, and federally funded student support programs.

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional Effectiveness is led by an Associate Vice President and oversees institutional accreditation, program reviews, and academic assessment. The unit includes a Director of Assessment.

Institutional Research

Institutional Research provides data reporting and analysis supporting federal and state compliance and accreditation. The unit is led by a Director and operates as a one-person office.

Sponsored Programs

The Office of Sponsored Programs coordinates grant development, submission, and post-award management in collaboration with principal investigators. The unit includes a Director and Assistant Director.

VII. Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits

The transformation of Academic Affairs is designed to position Shepherd University to meet contemporary institutional demands while strengthening its student-centered mission. Building upon the strategic objective to align organizational structure, resources, and academic programming with innovation and future-focused planning, the anticipated outcomes reflect both the guiding principles of the process and the themes identified across surveys, focus groups, workshops, and research.

Stronger Program Identity and Coherence

Program identity and visibility emerged as the most prominent theme across feedback sources, reflecting faculty concern that organizational complexity and frequent restructuring diluted disciplinary clarity and external recognition.

The transformation addresses this by grouping programs around natural academic synergies, reinforcing leadership roles, and aligning structural design with institutional branding and mission priorities.

By establishing clearer departmental and school alignments and formalizing leadership structures, including the updates to School Director and Department Chair job descriptions and the creation of Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Assessment

Coordinator job descriptions (Appendices J, K, L, and M), the new model strengthens internal coherence and external communication of academic offerings. Programs are better positioned to articulate their value to prospective students, employers, and community partners, while faculty gain stronger agency and organizational stability within their academic homes.

This enhanced coherence contributes to recruitment, retention, and program development by ensuring academic identities are both visible and strategically aligned with institutional goals.

More Sustainable Faculty and Administrative Workloads

Workload equity and role clarity were consistently identified as central concerns across survey responses and focus group discussions. Faculty reported challenges of balancing teaching, advising, service, and administrative responsibilities, often compounded by insufficient staffing support or unclear expectations.

Although addressing faculty and staff workloads will continue to be a priority following the Transformation process and restructuring, the realignment nonetheless introduces structural mechanisms to address these issues through clearer role definitions, standardized reporting lines, and expanded administrative support capacity. Recommended actions such as workload audits, redistribution of responsibilities, and development pathways for faculty and staff will support a more sustainable professional environment.

By aligning staffing structures with program size and complexity and reducing reliance on informal or hidden labor, the institution will help improve morale and professional effectiveness, while also supporting faculty workload in teaching, research, and service.

Allocation of Administrative Assistant Resources

The allocation of administrative assistant resources was a consistent theme throughout the information gathering phase. Feedback collected through surveys, focus groups, and leadership workshops consistently identified insufficient clerical and operational support as a factor contributing to faculty workload strain and inefficiencies within academic units. Although this issue remains a challenge to be more fully addressed, work has begun to develop two new centralized administrative positions that would reduce the workloads of all administrative assistants across the division.

- **Travel Administrator:** This full-time position would be the centralized authority over all travel in academic affairs, working closely with the Procurement Office

and ensuring budgets and operations support all travel requests and reimbursements. Academic leadership has met with Finance and Business to begin developing the concept for this position; next, current academic administrative assistants will be asked to develop the specific standardized operating procedures to ensure that the position delivers the administrative support it intends.

- **Grants Administration Assistance:** Provost DeRochi met with Emily Samide, Director of the Special Projects Office, about the current administrative pressures across the division and potential solutions. Director Samide suggested moving the facilitation of all grant-funded stipends to her purview, thus removing those duties from college administrative assistants. This new practice is currently under development.

Moving forward, the revised organizational structure emphasizes a more intentional and data-informed approach to the distribution of administrative support, paralleling the metrics used to guide leadership compensation and course reassignment allocations. Program size, credit hour production, faculty FTE, and unit complexity serve as reference points for evaluating administrative needs. This approach aligns with the broader strategic objective to optimize the distribution of resources across Academic Affairs in a manner that supports both operational stability and student-centered outcomes. The two examples above demonstrate how centralizing certain functions will support college-level and divisional administrative capacity.

Market Distinction

Marketing distinction emerged as a direct extension of the theme of program identity and visibility, the most frequently cited concern across multiple feedback mechanisms. Faculty emphasized the importance of clear academic identities, stable organizational homes, and leadership structures capable of advocating effectively for programs internally and externally. The reorganization of colleges and departments into coherent academic groupings, along with the formalization of Program Coordinator, Assessment Coordinator, Department Chair, and School Director roles, strengthens institutional clarity and reinforces program-level accountability.

Consistent with the guiding principle to enhance and scale innovative, market-responsive academic offerings, the structural realignment supports clearer communication of academic strengths to prospective students, families, and community partners.

- **College of Business and Technology** – Aligns high-demand, workforce-oriented programs under a unified structure that integrates business, applied technology,

and innovation; strategically repositions Computer Science to strengthen market responsiveness while maintaining a strong STEM foundation and industry relevance.

- **College of Science, Health and Wellness** – Reinforces Shepherd’s historic strength in the sciences and nursing while creating a scalable platform for growth in allied health and wellness fields (e.g., mental health counseling, social work, exercise science), aligning academic programming with regional workforce needs and student demand.
- **School of the Arts and Media** – Unifies music, art, theatre, and communication into a mutually supportive creative ecosystem, leveraging existing community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration to strengthen recruitment, visibility, and program sustainability.

The concurrent transition to a program-centered web architecture further advances this objective by emphasizing academic pathways and student experiences rather than internal administrative configurations. Together, these actions position Shepherd University to communicate its academic portfolio with greater coherence, consistency, and competitive distinction.

Improved Student Success, Retention, and Graduation Outcomes

The realignment strengthens student support pathways through enhanced coordination among academic and administrative units and more intentional integration of advising, enrollment, and academic data functions. Earlier structural adjustments, including clear collaboration between Admissions, Registrar, and academic leadership, already demonstrate improved communication and shared planning, reinforcing the capacity to identify student needs earlier and intervene more effectively.

The transformation responds directly to institutional priorities identified through thematic analysis emphasizing the need for improved advising consistency, stronger career alignment, holistic student services, and targeted interventions to increase retention and completion.

By organizing academic programs and student-facing services within clearer structural frameworks, the institution improves navigation for students, reduces fragmentation, and aligns support resources more effectively with academic pathways.

Collectively, these changes support the institutional objective of strengthening learning outcomes, improving persistence, and increasing graduation rates by ensuring student success initiatives are structurally embedded rather than programmatically isolated.

Clearer Governance and Communication Pathways

Transparency, shared governance, and communication consistency were core values throughout the transformation process and remain central anticipated outcomes. Thematic feedback emphasized the need for defined decision-making protocols, stable leadership roles, and accessible communication channels across academic units. In addition to providing weekly communications to the entire division and informal “pop-up conversations,” the Provost will have two leadership teams that meet consistently, each comprised of leaders charged to communicate effectively with their teams.

Provost Council – Provost, Associate Provost, College Deans (3), Associate Vice President (2), Assistant Provost, Director of Institutional Research, Director of Sponsored Programs, Senior Administrative Coordinator.

Academic Leadership Council – Provost, Associate Provost, College Deans (3), Assistant Provost, Senior Administrative Coordinator, School Directors (3), Department Chairs (6), Program Coordinators (variable).

Effective communications and transparency will be an evaluated expectation for each academic leader. In addition, effective communications and shared governance will be an essential part of each biennial survey.

VIII. Implementation and Change Management Plans

Socialization of the new academic structure began in January 2026 with the announcement of the new department and school unit configurations to existing departments and schools through a series of ten unit-level meetings. These meetings were followed by communication from the Provost which outlined the three-college model and identifying the units aligned within each college.

Positions, Compensation, Units, Elections, and Appointments

Positions. Position descriptions for department chairs, school directors, program coordinators, and assessment coordinators, as well as an organizational crosswalk of these roles, were reviewed with the Faculty Senate on February 16, 2026, and ALC on February 18, 2026 (Appendices J-N). This discussion also introduced the framework for course reassignment and stipend allocation, including the concept of minimum and maximum parameters. Under this model, chairs and directors will work collaboratively with their respective deans to distribute these resources within established guidelines.

Compensation. Compensation, in the form of stipends and course reassignments, was a central consideration in the Transformation Process. Each unit carries distinct and often competing leadership responsibilities, including curriculum oversight, assessment coordination, faculty development, student support, accreditation compliance, specialized admissions processes, and sustained community engagement. The revised model acknowledges these layered responsibilities and builds upon the foundations established in FY25 and FY26 to better align resources with unit needs.

To maintain a commitment to budget neutrality, the total pool of stipend dollars and course reassignments was fixed at an established upper limit. Within that constraint, resources were apportioned using consistent institutional metrics, including:

- A five-year average of declared majors across all programs within the unit (Fall 2021-Fall 2025).
- Fall 2025 student credit hour production.
- Spring 2026 number of full-time faculty.
- A five-year average of part-time faculty FTE (Fall 2021-Fall 2025).

In addition to these quantitative measures, the model recognizes the qualitative dimensions of complexity. Programs with heightened accreditation demands, specialized admissions requirements, and/or sustained strategic partnership obligations received additional course reassignment allocations to reflect the expanded scope of leadership and compliance responsibilities. The model included existing allocated resources for Graduate Program Coordinators, and other specialized department and school needs already recognized by the division.

Together, this approach provides a transparent, data-informed, and equitable framework that aligns compensation structures with demonstrated workload, program scale, and institutional priorities, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Schools and Departments. The new organizational structure retains schools and departments within each of the three colleges. Alignment of these academic units under a college served as a guiding parameter throughout the transformation process.

During the Transformation and Realignment process, a recurring concern was the lack of clarity regarding how schools were determined and differentiated from departments. As a result, a draft formal policy (Appendix O) has been developed that clarifies the similarities and distinctions between schools and departments. This policy has been shared with the

Academic Leadership Council for feedback and will be distributed to the Faculty Senate as well.

Elections and Appointments. After consulting with Senate President Larry Daily and General Counsel Alan Perdue, the Provost encouraged the Faculty Senate to begin planning representation under the new structure and directed deans to conduct special elections of college at-large Senators using the Senate-approved model on April 17, 2026, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements governing faculty representation.

Chair and Director nominations and elections will occur prior to April 1 in anticipation of the new model approval by the Board of Governors, before faculty contracts end, and in compliance with the Faculty Handbook. The April 1 deadline also includes the election of department and school Senators, and the appointment of other department administrative needs (Program and/or Assessment Coordinators).

Implementation, Assessment, and Continuous Refinement

The comprehensive organizational chart will be provided as part of the President's Report by March 15, 2026, in compliance with the Board of Governors' requirement for 30-day advance notification prior to the April 16, 2026, meeting.

Concurrent with academic restructuring, the University initiated the selection of a new web design firm to enhance external program marketing and recruitment. This work emphasizes the promotion of academic programs rather than departments or schools and is complemented by ongoing efforts to develop an internal faculty and staff portal and to review policies and procedures for administrative efficiency and reduced paperwork.

Updates to signage and internal coding within institutional systems, including Banner, have been identified but cannot proceed until final approval of the model. Implementation of these updates will begin following approval, with the goal of having many changes in place by August 2026.

To support continuous improvement, a campus survey will be administered in spring 2027 to assess stakeholder experiences with the new structure. Feedback will inform ongoing refinement and address any emerging issues.

IX. Conclusion

The Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment process represents a deliberate and collaborative effort to position Shepherd University for continued relevance, stability, and innovation in a changing higher education environment. Grounded in institutional

mission and informed by broad stakeholder engagement, the process emphasized transparency, shared governance, and data-informed planning while maintaining a focus on student-centered outcomes. Through surveys, focus groups, workshops, and structured faculty input, the transformation sought not simply to restructure units but to strengthen the coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability of the academic enterprise.

The resulting organizational model reflects a balance between honoring disciplinary identity and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. By clarifying leadership structures, aligning administrative support with program complexity, and strengthening communication pathways, the model responds directly to recurring themes identified across multiple phases of data collection. The reconfigured structure promotes program visibility, supports workload equity, and creates clearer governance processes, all of which contribute to a more stable environment for faculty, staff, and students. Importantly, the transformation reframes organizational change not as an episodic response to constraint, but as an intentional strategy to enhance educational quality, recruitment, retention, and long-term institutional effectiveness.

Implementation and ongoing assessment underscore the understanding that organizational transformation is iterative rather than static. Planned evaluation measures, stakeholder feedback opportunities, and continued refinement ensure that the structure remains responsive to emerging needs and opportunities. As these changes take hold, Shepherd University is positioned to communicate its academic strengths more clearly, support its community more effectively, and extend its impact regionally and beyond.

Ultimately, this transformation affirms the institution's commitment to aligning structure with purpose. By integrating stakeholder voice, strategic priorities, and operational clarity, Academic Affairs advances a model designed not only to address present realities but to sustain future growth, innovation, and student success.

Table 1. Academic Affairs Organizational Chart

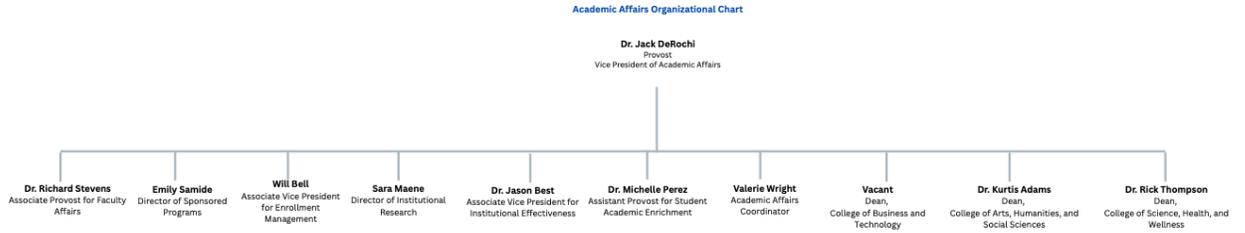


Table 2. College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

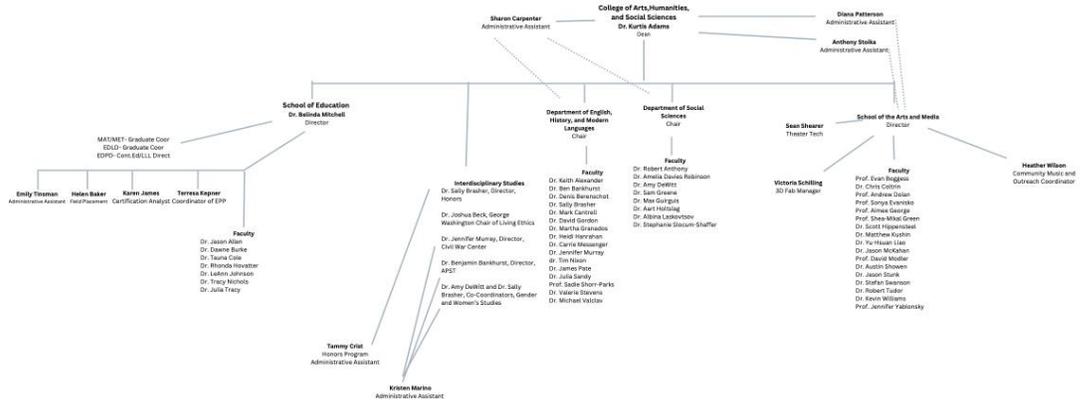


Table 3. College of Business and Technology

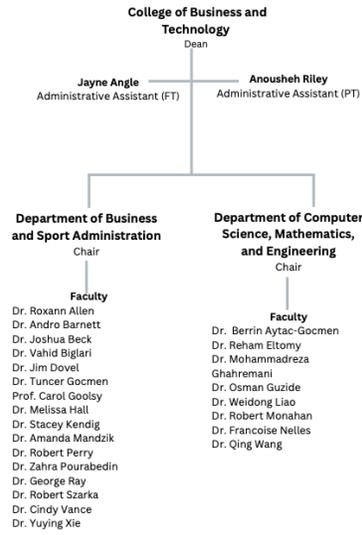


Table 4. College of Science, Health, and Wellness

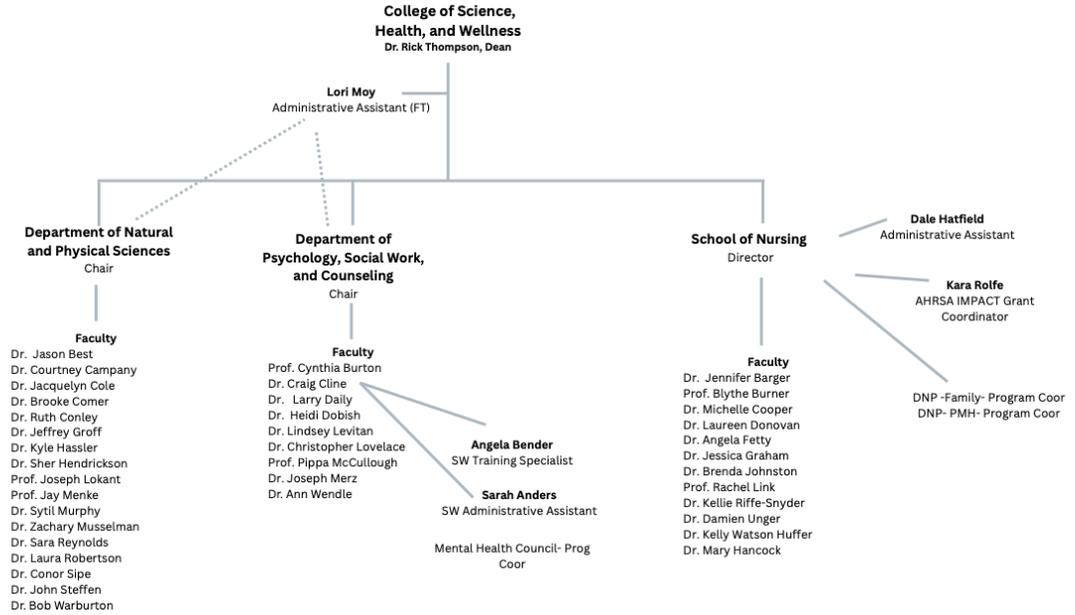


Table 5. Faculty Affairs

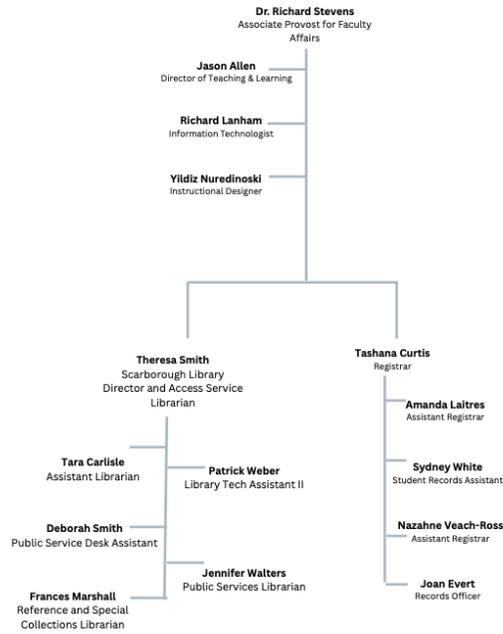


Table 6. Enrollment Management

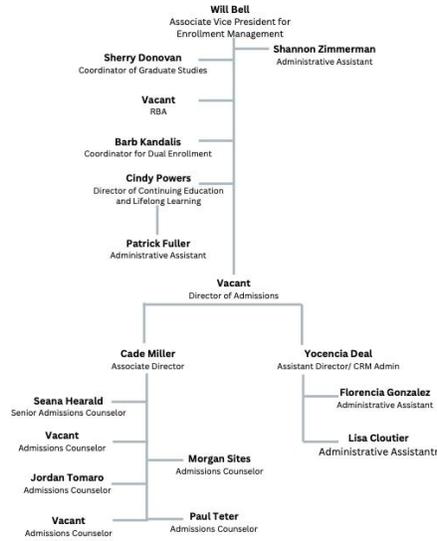
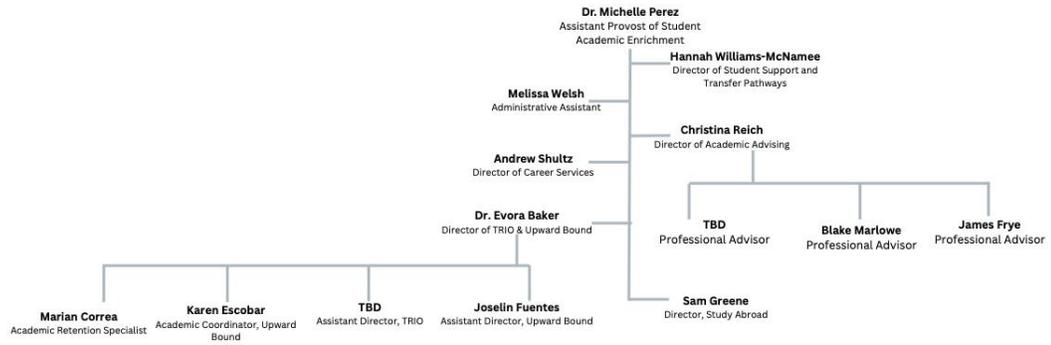


Table 7. Student Academic Enrichment



Appendix A - Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment 2025

Planning and Feedback Process

Office of the Provost

Process: June 15-December 18, 2025

Implementation: January 1- August 1, 2026

Strategic Objective

To transform the Division of Academic Affairs organizationally in order to be innovative and future-focused, thus expanding Shepherd University’s impact on our students, community, and region.

Underlying Principles

Re-imagining and transforming the Division of Academic Affairs will be future-focused and

- Drive the ongoing review and enhancement of Shepherd’s academic portfolio, exploring innovative and market-driven programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Optimize the distribution of resources to support administration of Academic Affairs, including departments and schools.
- Contribute directly to stronger student learning outcomes, improve retention, and higher graduation rates.
- Optimize current successes and opportunities to scale student enrollment.

Faculty	Staff	ALC	ALT	Provost Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• II. Survey• IV. Faculty Conference• VI. Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• II. Survey• VI. Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• III. Research on Org. Structures & Best Practices• VII. Administrative Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IX. Final Model Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I. Memo to Faculty• V. Program Interaction Matrix• VIII. Additional Research as Necessary

I. Memorandum to Faculty - early July

Activity: Provost to send memo to faculty announcing plans and process for transformation of academic affairs division.

Content

- Timelines – Data Gathering; Implementation. - Tentative
- Focus/Goals.
- Faculty Contributions (Upcoming Survey etc.)
- Points of Transparency – Sharing of aggregate information, when and how; modifications to any given unexpected issues.
- Parameters/Boundaries that help focus all feedback at all levels.
 - Maintain 3 dean structure
 - Focus structure tied to increased student success and retention
 - Focus structure tied to academic programs – interdependence, innovation potential
 - Suggestions can be any program(s) in Academic Affairs, not just your own unit.
 - Consider appropriate administrative support
 - All units ultimately reporting to a dean
 - Cost neutral
- Optional participation.

II. Survey – July 9-September 8

Activity: Provost to distribute a survey to faculty and staff separately to encourage reflection and innovative ideas for the future realignment of academic affairs.

Purpose: To gather information on topics of interest by faculty and staff (e.g., opportunities for better collaboration, positives of current structure, innovative program ideas, potential partnerships, ties to student success, administrative support, etc.).

Look for current and new partnerships with other faculty and programs – potential to increase and strengthen innovation tied to retention and student success.

Outcome: Bullet list of questions to use in other data gathering.

Participants: All full-time faculty and staff; long-term adjuncts by invitation only.

III. ALC Research: Models/Organizational Charts – July 1-September 8

Activity: ALC to research common or best practice models for similar institutions.

Purpose: To understand how other schools of Shepherd's size organize academic programs.

Outcome: Have several organizations or parts of organizations to use in future discussions that will complement faculty survey and focus group feedback.

Robust excel spreadsheet updated throughout the summer: institution, student body information demographics, link to organizational chart, and potential advantages (aspects to emphasize for consideration).

IV. Faculty Conference – September 22

Activity: Faculty from all colleges to meet and workshop potential ideas, concepts for the future of academic affairs. Faculty only, facilitated by faculty members.

Purpose: To gather information generally and speak about the process overall.

Outcome: Questions answered regarding the overall process and project timeline, transparency, and involvement. Recommendations and ideas that will inform focus groups, administrative workshops, and final decisions.

Topics associated with survey: Look for current and new partnerships with other faculty and programs – potential to increase and strengthen innovation tied to retention and student success.

Participants: All full-time faculty not serving in an administrative role (provost council, ALC, or ALT).

V. Program Interaction Matrix – July 9-September 15

Activity: Provost's office to pull together feedback from surveys and faculty conference.

Purpose: To see current and potential interactions among the various programs based on feedback from faculty survey

Outcome: A matrix with interaction/questions/synergies from faculty surveys and faculty conference.

Participants: None, administrative task completed by provost office

VI. Focus Groups – September 22-October 17

Activity: facilitated focus groups of faculty and staff to begin analyzing results of surveys and faculty conference.

Purpose: To gather specific ideas from a smaller group of faculty members. Allow that group to create the agenda based on a comprehensive list generated by the processes above (matrix, survey, faculty conference).

Best practice: 6-10 people; prepped questions (based on survey/matrix) - helps ensure topics are addressed by all/most groups and still gives time for personal reflection and thoughts beyond the questions.

Do we have good tools to record conversations? Should capture verbatim language initially.

Consider the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the groups. Is it better to have all non-tenured faculty in groups separate from tenured faculty? On specific topics based on personal interests (reduces anonymity and would need to address that all comments from surveys/matrix may not rise to further focused conversations.

Outcome: Themes that are analyzed and shared with the faculty. Themes used by chairs/deans/provost to develop a new structure.

Participants: All faculty excluding ALC members; all AA staff

VII. Administrative Workshops – October 29, November 5 and 12

Activity: ALC to review and analyze proposals and feedback from focus groups.

Purpose: To develop structural models based on key goals/concerns gathered by the faculty voices.

Outcome: Multiple models presented to the provost to consider and finalize.

Participants: ALC members, focus group facilitator(s).

VIII. Research on Best Practices, Lightcast – September 8-November 5 (if necessary)

Activity: ALC additional research as necessary.

Purpose: To provide support for any part of models that are developed that may support best practice tied to student success/retention, fundraising, administrative workload, SU mission/values. Lightcast data is used to inform.

Outcome: Provides additional support for Administrative Workshop outcomes before ALT reviews.

IX. Final Model Recommendations - November 13-14

Activity: ALT to review models proposed by ALC, reviewing budget implications and potential for enrollment growth and student success.

Purpose: To develop structural models based on key goals/concerns gathered by the faculty voices.

Outcome: Multiple models presented to the provost to consider and finalize. Tied results to chair compensation.

Participants: ALT members.

X. Provost Decision – November 16

XI. Board of Governors Approval – December 18

Approval by the Board of Governors is required prior to implementation of the following changes in the organizational structure of the institution:

Creating any new college, school, or other division consisting of multiple academic units providing instruction, or creating a department or other unit that provides instruction, independently of established colleges, schools and other divisions.

XII. Implementation – Spring Semester 2026 – Fall Semester 2026

Appendix B - Academic Affairs Transformation and Realignment 2025 - Updated

Planning and Feedback Process

Office of the Provost

Process: June 15-December 18, 2025

Communication and Implementation: January 1- August 1, 2026

Strategic Objective

To transform the Division of Academic Affairs organizationally in order to be innovative and future-focused, thus expanding Shepherd University’s impact on our students, community, and region.

Underlying Principles

Re-imagining and transforming the Division of Academic Affairs will be future-focused and

- Drive the ongoing review and enhancement of Shepherd’s academic portfolio, exploring innovative and market-driven programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Optimize the distribution of resources to support administration of Academic Affairs, including departments and schools.
- Contribute directly to stronger student learning outcomes, improve retention, and higher graduation rates.
- Optimize current successes and opportunities to scale student enrollment.

Faculty	Staff	ALC	ALT	Provost Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• II. Survey• IV. Faculty Conference• VI. Focus Groups• IX. Additional individual feedback on possible department units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• II. Survey• VI. Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• III. Research on Org. Structures & Best Practices• VII. Administrative Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IX. Final Model Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I. Memo to Faculty• V. Program Interaction Matrix• VIII. Additional Research as Necessary

XIII. Memorandum to Faculty - early July 2025

Activity: Provost to send memo to faculty announcing plans and process for transformation of academic affairs division.

Content

- Timelines – Data Gathering; Implementation. - Tentative
- Focus/Goals.
- Faculty Contributions (Upcoming Survey etc.)
- Points of Transparency – Sharing of aggregate information, when and how; modifications to any given unexpected issues.
- Parameters/Boundaries that help focus all feedback at all levels.
 - Maintain 3 dean structure
 - Focus structure tied to increased student success and retention
 - Focus structure tied to academic programs – interdependence, innovation potential
 - Suggestions can be any program(s) in Academic Affairs, not just your own unit.
 - Consider appropriate administrative support
 - All units ultimately reporting to a dean
 - Cost neutral
- Optional participation.

XIV. Survey – July 9-September 8, 2025

Activity: Provost to distribute a survey to faculty and staff separately to encourage reflection and innovative ideas for the future realignment of academic affairs.

Purpose: To gather information on topics of interest by faculty and staff (e.g., opportunities for better collaboration, positives of current structure, innovative program ideas, potential partnerships, ties to student success, administrative support, etc.).

Look for current and new partnerships with other faculty and programs – potential to increase and strengthen innovation tied to retention and student success.

Outcome: Bullet list of questions to use in other data gathering.

Participants: All full-time faculty and staff; long-term adjuncts by invitation only.

XV. ALC Research: Models/Organizational Charts – July 1-September 8, 2025

Activity: ALC to research common or best practice models for similar institutions.

Purpose: To understand how other schools of Shepherd's size organize academic programs.

Outcome: Have several organizations or parts of organizations to use in future discussions that will complement faculty survey and focus group feedback.

Robust excel spreadsheet updated throughout the summer: institution, student body information demographics, link to organizational chart, and potential advantages (aspects to emphasize for consideration).

XVI. Faculty Conference – September 22, 2025

Activity: Faculty from all colleges to meet and workshop potential ideas, concepts for the future of academic affairs. Faculty only, facilitated by faculty members.

Purpose: To gather information generally and speak about the process overall.

Outcome: Questions answered regarding the overall process and project timeline, transparency, and involvement. Recommendations and ideas that will inform focus groups, administrative workshops, and final decisions.

Topics associated with survey: Look for current and new partnerships with other faculty and programs – potential to increase and strengthen innovation tied to retention and student success.

Participants: All full-time faculty not serving in an administrative role (provost council, ALC, or ALT).

XVII. Program Interaction Matrix – July 9-September 26, 2025

Activity: Provost's office to pull together feedback from surveys and faculty conference.

Purpose: To see current and potential interactions among the various programs based on feedback from faculty survey

Outcome: A matrix with interaction/questions/synergies from faculty surveys and faculty conference.

Participants: None, administrative task completed by provost office

XVIII. Focus Groups – October 15-24, 2025

Activity: facilitated focus groups of faculty and staff to begin analyzing results of surveys and faculty conference.

Purpose: To gather specific ideas from a smaller group of faculty members. Allow that group to create the agenda based on a comprehensive list generated by the processes above (matrix, survey, faculty conference).

Best practice: 6-10 people; prepped questions (based on survey/matrix) - helps ensure topics are addressed by all/most groups and still gives time for personal reflection and thoughts beyond the questions.

Do we have good tools to record conversations? Should capture verbatim language initially.

Consider the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the groups. Is it better to have all non-tenured faculty in groups separate from tenured faculty? On specific topics based on personal interests (reduces anonymity and would need to address that all comments from surveys/matrix may not rise to further focused conversations.

Outcome: Themes that are analyzed and shared with the faculty. Themes used by chairs/deans/provost to develop a new structure.

Participants: All faculty excluding ALC members; all AA staff

XIX. Administrative Workshops – November 5 and 12

Activity: ALC to review and analyze proposals and feedback from focus groups.

Purpose: To develop structural models based on key goals/concerns gathered by the faculty voices.

Outcome: Multiple models presented to the provost to consider and finalize.

Participants: ALC members, focus group facilitator(s).

XX. Research on Best Practices, Lightcast – September 8-November 5 (if necessary)

Activity: ALC additional research as necessary.

Purpose: To provide support for any part of the models that are developed that may support best practice tied to student success/retention, fundraising, administrative workload, SU mission/values. Lightcast data is used to inform.

Outcome: Provides additional support for Administrative Workshop outcomes before ALT reviews.

XXI. Individual Faculty – Department preferences - November 21-December 3

Activity: Email sent to faculty for each program (major) with recommendations for new department possibilities and an option to rank order and create one additional suggestion.

Purpose: To hear individual faculty voices on program identity and how it might be incorporated into a department.

Participants: All full-time faculty

XXII. Communication with current department faculty – New departments and college realignment – January 26-30, 2026

Activity: Provost and senior leadership meet with all current departments to provide specifics to their new unit(s) before the larger picture of the entire Academic Affairs unit.

Purpose: To inform impacted faculty directly about changes to their current unit and to reduce the chance that other faculty might share the changes that will most impact the faculty of a particular unit.

Participants: All full-time faculty

XXIII. ALT Final College Model Recommendations - January 30, 2026

Activity: ALT to review models proposed by ALC, reviewing budget implications and potential for enrollment growth and student success.

Purpose: To develop structural models based on key goals/concerns gathered by the faculty voices.

Outcome: Multiple models presented to the provost to consider and finalize. Tied results to chair compensation.

Participants: ALT members.

XXIV. Provost Final Recommendation/Report – February 15, 2026

XXV. Presidential Submission of Org. Change (30 Days Comment): March 13, 2026

XXVI. Board of Governors Approval – April 16, 2026

Approval by the Board of Governors is required prior to implementation of the following changes in the organizational structure of the institution:

Creating any new college, school, or other division consisting of multiple academic units providing instruction, or creating a department or other unit that provides instruction, independently of established colleges, schools and other divisions.

XXVII. Implementation – Spring Semester 2026 – Fall Semester 2026

Appendix C – Survey Sample Questions

Transformation of AA

Description:
Date Created: 6/30/2025 1:50:16 PM
Date Range: 7/9/2025 12:00:00 AM - 9/8/2025 11:59:00 PM

Page - 1

The confidential responses from this survey will generate themes and data to inform our envisioned transformation of academic affairs. These themes will also be used in the optional focus groups later this fall to gather more detailed thoughts from faculty and staff. You may opt out of any questions. As a reminder the Provost's email highlighted a few parameters for this transformation work that may be helpful to consider with your responses. • Maintain 3 dean structure • Focus structure tied to increased student success and retention • Focus structure tied to academic programs - interdependence, innovation potential • Suggestions can be any program(s) in Academic Affairs, not just your own unit. • Consider appropriate administrative support • All units ultimately reporting to a dean • Cost neutral

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 0

Q1 Considering the resources Shepherd University has, how do you define a healthy unit?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Q2 What aspects of the current organizational structure should be maintained and why?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Q3 What aspects of the current organizational structure should be a focus of review and why?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Next Page: Sequential

Page - 2

Q4 What aspects of the current departmental structure should be maintained and why?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Q5 What aspects of the current departmental structure should be a focus of review and why?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Next Page: Sequential

Page - 3

Q6 What partnerships or collaborations exist among current units that you would want to maintain and scale?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Q7 What partnerships could be improved with a new structure and why?

[Code = 1] [Textbox]

Required answers: 0 Allowed answers: 1

Next Page: Sequential

Page - 4

Appendix D: Focus Group Invitation

AA Faculty and Staff,

You are invited to participate in an optional in-person focus group, which will be scheduled by October 17, 2025. Each focus group will last approximately 1.5 hours. Participants should arrive on time but may leave early if needed.

The focus groups will explore one of six themes identified from the recent survey and faculty conference. Each group will ideally include 7–10 participants with a designated facilitator:

- Faculty groups: facilitated by Dr. Craig Cline or Prof. Pippa McCullough
- Staff groups: facilitated by Dr. Richard Stevens, Dr. Craig Cline, or Prof. Pippa McCullough

Participants will be grouped according to their campus role:

- Administrative Assistant
- Non-Classified Staff
- Classified Staff (not Administrative Assistant)
- Faculty – Untenured/Visiting/Clinical/Lecture
- Faculty – Associate Professor
- Faculty – Full Professor

Please note: Some employee categories and/or themes may be combined depending on interests of those opting into the focus group process.

Focus Group Themes

Advising and Student-Facing Functions: How do we best structure advising and student interactions to maximize support and strengthen relationships?

Program Identity and Leadership: Should a consistent role (e.g., Program Coordinator) be formalized across colleges? What expectations, compensation, and duties should accompany this role?

Shared Governance, Trust, and Communication: What information do faculty need from administration? How do committees, Faculty Senate vs. Faculty Assembly, and the idea of a Campus Common Hour fit into this?

Department Structures and Collaborations: Where do we see value in collaboration, and where is independence more appropriate?

Re-Imagining the College Structure: Considering interdisciplinary programs, professional school synergy, and potential transitions (e.g., from three to four colleges), how can we ensure equity in representation and voice?

Faculty, Staff, and Student Support: What additional resources or systems would most improve the experience for students, staff, and faculty?

Scheduling Preferences

You will have the opportunity to indicate:

- Your preferred theme (ranked by priority)
- Your preferred day of the week and time of day (AM/PM)

While we cannot guarantee exact preferences, we will make every effort to accommodate them. Each participant will be assigned to one focus group only.

Next Steps

These focus groups represent the final opportunity for formal feedback before the Academic Leadership Council develops models based on your input. The Academic Leadership Team will review these models before they are presented to the Provost and ultimately the Board of Governors.

Thank you in advance for contributing your valuable perspective.

Dr. Craig Cline

Professor Pippa McCullough

Dr. Richard Stevens

Appendix E – Focus Group Invitation

Academic Affairs Focus Groups

*This form will record your name, please fill your name.

1. Name

2. Focus Group Themes Preference

Advising and Student-Facing Functions
Program Identity and Leadership
Shared Governance, Trust, and Communication
Re-imagining the College Structure
Faculty Staff and Student Support
Department Structures and Collaborations

3. Day of the Week Preference: Choose all that apply

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

4. Morning or Afternoon Preference: Choose all that apply

- AM
- PM

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.


Appendix F – Workshop 1

Transformation and Realignment Process: Program Identity, Agency, and Structural Clarification Session

1. Opening Discussion – Clarifying Themes and Workshop Process (10-15 minutes)
 - a. Clarifying Themes (5-10 minutes)
 - Begin with questions or clarifications about the previously identified themes and bulleted items. See the attachment.
 - Address omissions as seen by chair/director/dean.
 - Focus on the most essential elements to this part of the process.
 - Avoid extended discussion on topics such as faculty wellness, training, and job descriptions—these will be addressed once basic structural decisions are finalized.
 - Goal: Ensure shared understanding of priorities before deeper exploration.
 - b. Process Direction – Focus on Program Identity (5 minutes)
 - Emphasize program recognition and identity as the foundation of this phase.
 - Clarify that external recognition (e.g., marketing, branding, student-facing materials) will come later in alignment with program identity outcomes.
 - Begin exploring program partnering possibilities, such as:
 - Accreditation or licensure alignment
 - Professional program linkages
 - Shared or overlapping research bases
 - Complementary curricular or faculty expertise
 - Equity across units.
 - Keep focus on the program/unit level—avoid discussions about potential colleges or schools at this stage.
 - Reiterate: This phase primarily centers on faculty and administrative structures, not student-facing experiences which are at the program level more so than department or college.
2. Program Partner Brainstorming – Small Groups (40-45 minutes)
 - Break into intentionally mixed small groups (chairs, deans, and others) to encourage diverse perspectives.
 - Individuals in each group use current degree programs, minors, and other curricular units such as EDPD and Honors to identify potential partnerships or clusters. Share ideas with group members to explain reasoning and prompt other combinations or partnerships. Explain how program agency is maintained within the suggested units.

- Do not have to address all units and can address units more than once with different combinations.
 - Capture rationales for suggested pairings (e.g., shared faculty expertise, accreditation overlap, interdisciplinary opportunities, etc.). One size does not fit all and there are no bad ideas in this first step.
 - Use Post-its to visualize connections, similar combinations. Share small group summaries with large group.
3. Closing and Next Steps (5 minutes)
- Summarize themes and patterns emerging from group discussions.
 - Identify areas needing further clarification before moving to the next phase (unit head roles, administrative structures, college/school formation).
 - Reinforce unit leadership and hierarchy decisions depend on finalized unit configurations.
 - Homework: Shared document of consolidated brainstorms and have chairs/dean begin using these groups to create colleges and departments.

Appendix G – Workshop 2

Transformation and Realignment Process: College/Unit Alignment and Program Identity

1. Program and College Alignment Brainstorming – Phase 1 - 3 areas no headings (25 minutes)
 - Provost Office provides:
 - a stack of program cards for each major, GWST, EDPD, and Honors on Post-Its and one sheet of large notepad paper to each person.
 - the program identity grouping lists from the November 5 workshop as a lens for this activity. Attached to email.
 - a list of all majors, interdisciplinary-type minors, and special units for context and inspiration. Attached to email.
 - Individuals place all Post-its in 1 of 3 finite units that would report directly to the Provost.
 - Share in a small group.
 - Discuss interesting takes from other configurations and/or noticeable themes. Take personal notes for homework activity.
 - Richie takes pictures. Remove all Post-its from sheets to re-use in phase 2.

Group 1: BB, Sytil, Jim, Tim

Group 2: Ben, Mary, David, Osman

Group 3: Kurtis, Bob, Scott, Stacey

Floaters: Jack, Richie, Stephanie, Court

2. Program and College Alignment Brainstorming – Phase 2 – 4 areas no headings (20 minutes)
 - Same resources as in 1.
 - Individuals place all Post-its in 1 of 4 finite units that would report directly to the Provost.
 - Share in a small group.
 - Discuss interesting takes from other configurations and/or noticeable themes. Take personal notes for homework activity.
 - Richie takes pictures.

Group 1: Sytil, Kurtis, Tim, David

Group 2: Osman, Ben, Scott, Jim

Group 3: Mary, BB, Bob, Stacey

Floaters: Jack, Richie, Stephanie, Court

3. Closing and Next Steps (5-10 minutes)

- General comments.
- A SharePoint folder will be created with all resources from two workshops including photos.
- Homework:
 - Each ALC member creates a model based on documents used in two workshops, the ideas generated in the two workshops, and overarching strategic vision of this transformation.
 - Submit a model to Richie by COB on Monday, November 17. May use titles and unit names to outline your model. Should include all majors in the proposed model as well as suggestions for non-aligned minors and other educational units such as EDPD and Honors.
 - All models will be shared through a SharePoint folder for review prior to the ALC meeting.
 - Meet on November 19 to discuss the pros and cons of the models. Confirm that all major themes from data collection are addressed in models that will be proposed to ALT. Provide top 5 models for ALT to consider.

Appendix H - Academic Affairs Transformation Comprehensive Thematic Analysis

This document provides an expanded thematic analysis of open-text responses from staff and faculty regarding Academic Affairs transformation. Each theme has been expanded into detailed subthemes that reflect common perspectives, concerns, and opportunities for improvement. Percentages represent thematic frequency.

Programs, Departments, and Organizational Structure (47.4%)

Identity and Visibility

- Departments and programs want clearer identities that reflect their strengths.
- Concerns about being overshadowed or diluted during reorganizations.

Duplication and Efficiency

- Some programs may overlap, causing inefficiencies.
- Suggestions for consolidating or differentiating offerings while preserving academic quality.

Impact of Restructuring

- Frequent renaming or reorganization disrupts continuity.
- Faculty and students struggle with shifting program affiliations.
- Frequent changes create confusion for students, reduce efficiency, and erode morale.
- Respondents want longer periods of structural stability to allow units to develop and grow without interruption.

Effectiveness of Current Structure

- Respondents questioned whether the current arrangement of colleges, schools, and units truly supports student and faculty needs.
- Some units are perceived as too fragmented, while others feel too large or misaligned.
- Calls for a structure that is coherent, stable, and easy to navigate for students, faculty, and staff alike.

Alignment with Institutional Mission

- Concerns about whether the current structure aligns with the university's overall mission and goals.
- Some felt the structure should more clearly reflect student success, program strengths, and institutional identity.

- Suggestions to realign units around natural academic synergies (e.g., grouping related disciplines together).

Prompts and Questions

- How can we ensure departments and programs maintain strong and visible identities?
- What risks and benefits do you see in consolidating or differentiating programs?
- How has frequent restructuring (merging, renaming, reassigning) affected your work or students' experiences?
- What would a more coherent and navigable structure look like for faculty, staff, and students?
- How well does the current structure align with the institution's mission and goals?
- What strategies could improve communication around structural changes?
- How can we better support smaller or less visible units to ensure equity across departments?

Student Support and Success (19.9%)

Advising and Career Services

- Students need more consistent, professional advising.
- Calls for enhanced career services to better connect students with internships and employment.

Holistic Student Services

- Requests for stronger support in mental health, belonging, and engagement.
- Recognition that student success extends beyond academics into overall well-being.

Retention and Graduation

- Emphasis on strategies to improve retention and completion rates.
- Suggestions include earlier interventions, closer tracking, and better resource alignment.

Prompts and Questions

- What are the most urgent improvements needed in advising?
- How can career services more effectively connect students with opportunities?
- What additional supports (e.g., mental health, belonging, engagement) do students need to thrive?
- Which strategies would most improve student retention and graduation rates?

- What kinds of early interventions could be introduced to help at-risk students?

Faculty and Staffing (19.7%)

Workload and Role Clarity

- Faculty workload is a recurring concern, particularly balancing teaching, advising, research, and service.
- Calls for clearer expectations and fairer distribution of responsibilities.
- Need for recognition of hidden labor (e.g., mentoring, committee work).

Administrative and Staff Support

- Shortages in administrative staffing leave faculty handling tasks beyond their core responsibilities.
- Requests for dedicated support staff to reduce administrative burden.
- Gaps in specialized staff (advisors, IT, communications) reduce efficiency.

Recruitment and Retention

- Concerns about the university's ability to recruit and retain talented faculty and staff.
- Calls for competitive salaries, professional growth opportunities, and recognition.
- Loss of staff creates instability and impacts student and faculty experience.

Prompts and Questions

- How can faculty workload be better balanced among teaching, advising, research, and service?
- In what areas are administrative staffing shortages most affecting your work?
- What roles should be prioritized when hiring new staff to improve efficiency?
- How can the institution better support recruitment and retention of faculty and staff?
- What types of recognition or professional growth opportunities would make a difference in retention?

Student Support and Success (19.9%)

Advising and Career Services

- Students need more consistent, professional advising.
- Calls for enhanced career services to better connect students with internships and employment.

Holistic Student Services

- Requests for stronger support in mental health, belonging, and engagement.
- Recognition that student success extends beyond academics into overall well-being.

Retention and Graduation

- Emphasis on strategies to improve retention and completion rates.
- Suggestions include earlier interventions, closer tracking, and better resource alignment.

Prompts and Questions

- What are the most urgent improvements needed in advising?
- How can career services more effectively connect students with opportunities?
- What additional supports (e.g., mental health, belonging, engagement) do students need to thrive?
- Which strategies would most improve student retention and graduation rates?
- What kinds of early interventions could be introduced to help at-risk students?

Resources and Support (9.5%)

Administrative and Operational Support

- Calls for better staffing in offices that support academic affairs.
- Faculty often report inefficiencies due to lack of clerical or technical support.

Technology and Infrastructure

- Requests for up-to-date technology platforms, online resources, and classroom tools.
- Concerns about gaps in training and accessibility of digital systems.

Professional Development

- Desire for more opportunities in leadership training, pedagogy, and innovation.
- Staff want structured support for skill growth and advancement.

Prompts and Questions

- Which areas of your work are most impacted by inadequate administrative or clerical support?
- What technology gaps are most pressing, and how do they affect teaching and operations?
- How accessible and effective are training opportunities for new digital platforms or tools?

- What types of professional development would most benefit you and your colleagues?

Leadership and Governance (3.5%)

Need for Clear Roles and Responsibilities

- Respondents emphasized the importance of well-defined roles for deans, chairs, and directors.
- Lack of clarity can create confusion, duplication of effort, or gaps in leadership.
- Calls for a consistent leadership structure that faculty and staff can rely on.

Decision-Making and Transparency

- Concerns that decisions are sometimes made without sufficient communication or consultation.
- Desire for greater transparency in how restructuring, staffing, and programmatic changes are determined.
- Better communication could increase trust and buy-in across departments.

Strength and Stability of Leadership

- Frequent changes in leadership roles were seen as destabilizing for departments and units.
- Respondents want stable leadership that can provide long-term direction and continuity.
- Leaders are expected to advocate for their units and buffer faculty/staff from constant reorganization.

Qualities of Effective Leaders

- Effective leaders should be collaborative, communicative, and supportive.
- Leaders should balance visionary thinking with practical problem-solving.
- Faculty and staff want leaders who are approachable and accountable, not just administrative figures.

Shared Governance

- Several responses suggested a need for stronger faculty and staff input in governance.
- Current structures may not always reflect the voices of those directly impacted by decisions.
- Calls for a renewed commitment to shared governance principles, ensuring meaningful participation in academic and organizational decisions.

Prompts and Questions

- What qualities should effective deans, chairs, and directors consistently demonstrate?
- Where do you see a lack of clarity in leadership roles?
- How can decision-making processes become more transparent and inclusive?
- What strategies would strengthen stability in leadership roles?
- How can shared governance be more meaningfully practiced in Academic Affairs?

Quality and Standards (conceptual presence)

Academic Rigor

- Respondents stressed the need to maintain standards in teaching and assessment.
- Concerns about pressures (e.g., AI, enrollment shifts) lowering academic expectations.

Assessment and Metrics

- Calls for clearer metrics to evaluate student success and program outcomes.
- Faculty want decisions to be evidence-based, using reliable data.

Continuous Improvement

- Recognition that assessment should be tied to actionable improvement strategies.
- Desire for greater alignment between assessment results and institutional planning.

Prompts and Questions

- How can the institution maintain academic rigor in the face of new challenges (e.g., AI, enrollment shifts)?
- What metrics would help us evaluate program outcomes more effectively?
- How can assessment results be more directly tied to planning and decision-making?
- What supports would help faculty continuously improve teaching and advising practices?

Appendix I - Organizational Transformation & Chart Development Theme Summary

The strategic objective to reimagine an effective and innovative organizational structure in Academic Affairs is driven by the following principles:

- Drive the ongoing review and enhancement of Shepherd's academic portfolio, exploring innovative and market-driven programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Optimize the distribution of resources to support administration of Academic Affairs, including departments and schools.
- Contribute directly to stronger student learning outcomes, improve retention, and higher graduation rates.
- Optimize current successes and opportunities to scale student enrollment.

In our work as the Academic Leadership Council to shape the most effective and conducive structure, we must attend to the following themes that arose from multiple focus groups and thematic reports related to Academic Affairs transformation.

Program Identity and Visibility

- Reinstate or formalize Program Director roles with compensation and authority.
- Tie program visibility and structure to institutional mission and branding.
- One size does not fit all in terms of organizational units.

Role Clarity, Hierarchy, and Consistency Across Units

- Develop a standardized framework for academic and administrative roles with defined responsibilities, compensation, and reporting lines.
- Create organizational charts at college, school, and department levels to illustrate hierarchy and accountability.
- Formalize leadership progression tracks (e.g., Program Coordinator → Director → Chair → Dean).
- Differentiate graduate, undergraduate, and accredited program roles to reflect unique compliance needs.

Staffing and Workload Equity

- Conduct a workload audit across units to align staffing levels with program size and complexity.
- Expand administrative and advising support to relieve faculty of clerical burdens.
- Develop a faculty/staff retention plan including workload redistribution, recognition, and development pathways.

Communication, Transparency, and Shared Governance

- Establish centralized communication systems (shared portals, consistent announcements).
- Develop a clear decision-making protocol (who decides, who's informed, who's consulted).
- Communicate success stories and institutional improvements to build morale and trust.

Data-Driven Decision-Making and Metrics

- Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) for roles (e.g., enrollment, faculty headcount, program complexity).
- Use data dashboards for workload distribution and organizational planning.
- Tie budget allocations and role justifications to measurable institutional outcomes.

Appendix J – School Director Job Description

DRAFT

School Director

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Director plays a pivotal role in academic administration. The Director acts on behalf of departmental faculty members on all academic and faculty issues. At the same time, the Director represents Shepherd University and the specific college in the administration and promotion of all affairs pertaining to the delivery of academic programs in their department. The School Director thus plays an important bridging role between the faculty and the administration, advocating on behalf of school faculty and academic programs as well as ensuring the ongoing stewardship of institutional resources and policies. To support their administrative effectiveness, Directors must participate in ongoing professional development and training.

Specific Responsibilities include:

Supervision and Staff Management

- Mentors department full-time and part-time faculty – professional development, teaching, grant writing.
- Provides annual performance reviews to pre-tenured faculty and performance reviews to tenured faculty (See Annual Report and Performance Review Policy).
- Consistently observe and evaluate part-time faculty.
- Initiates and manages the three-year pre-tenure and tenure review processes.
- Promotes faculty development through the support of continuous improvement of teaching and the development of subject matter expertise.
- Recruits full-time and part-time faculty, consulting with Associate Provost and College Dean for searches.
- Reviews all fall, spring, and summer department/school course evaluations. Draft a memo of individual and systemic issues with actions/resolutions/training plans to Dean and Associate Provost. Fall reviews complete by February 28 and Spring/Summer by September 30.

Administrative and Budget Responsibilities

- Conducts regular department meetings, minimally monthly.
- Provides academic and professional leadership to school, College, and University.

- Conduct external accreditation reviews and Board of Governors program reviews in conjunction with the Assistant Vice President.
- Ensures and facilitates, as appropriate, school participation at recruitment, alumni, and fundraising events.
- Reviews and evaluates transfer students' transcripts.
- Collect and maintain department records as necessary for assessment, according to state, federal, and, where applicable, accreditation guidelines.
- Upholds and manages grade appeal and grievance policies.
- Meets regularly and as needed with students to understand their perspectives and hear their concerns about the department's programs and faculty.
- Fosters university, community, and alumni relations.
- Prepares budget requests and aids the College Dean in monitoring the department budget.
- Attends Academic Leadership Council.

Curricular Responsibilities

- Provides leadership in developing new curricula and programs and completing program changes.
- Recommends the school schedule of course offerings to College Dean. Works with graduate program coordinators to ensure graduate program needs are met.
- Recommends overloads to dean for final approval.
- Works with Associate Provost, College Dean, and Registrar to ensure all curricular changes for their department are incorporated into the catalog each academic year.
- Ensures syllabus, template, and modality compliance for all departmental courses.
- Promotes effective use of appropriate technology in programs and instruction.
- Assists in creating favorable rapport with outside agency personnel and ensures that all field-based students have proper supervision.
- Assists with and reviews inter-institutional (2+2) articulation agreements annually.

Community Engagement and Specialized Admissions Operations

- Partnering with the Dean, Provost, and VP for Development, cultivates external partnerships to support the academic program and student success.
- Directs and facilitates all specialized admissions requirements for the unit per accreditation, regulatory, and regional partnership requirements.
- Leads and facilitates unit and college philanthropy, partnering with the Dean in donor cultivation, annual giving, and alumni relations.
- Delivers accreditation-required strategic planning and supporting documents as per

defined accreditation cycle.

Staff Supervision and Personnel Contracts

- Hires, trains, supervises, and evaluates all full and part-time staff. Manages student employees and community volunteers.
- Provides ongoing staff timekeeping and approvals for annual and sick leave.
- Manages personnel contracts associated with accreditation and program stability (e.g., cooperating teachers, field supervisors, preceptors, and applied music faculty).

Perform other duties assigned by the Dean/Provost/VPAA.

Updated 6 March 2026

Appendix K – Department Chair Job Description

DRAFT

Department Chair

Roles and Responsibilities

The Department Chair plays a pivotal role in academic administration. The Chair acts on behalf of departmental faculty members on all academic and faculty issues. At the same time, the Chair represents Shepherd University and the specific college in the administration and promotion of all affairs pertaining to the delivery of academic programs in their department. The Department Chair thus plays an important bridging role between the faculty and the administration, advocating on the behalf of departmental faculty and academic programs as well as ensuring the ongoing stewardship of institutional resources and policies. To support their administrative effectiveness, Chairs must participate in ongoing professional development and training.

Specific Responsibilities include:

Supervision and Staff Management

- Mentors department full-time and part-time faculty – professional development, teaching, grant writing.
- Provides annual performance reviews to pre-tenured faculty and performance reviews to tenured faculty (See Annual Report and Performance Review Policy).
- Consistently observe and evaluate part-time faculty.
- Initiates and manages the three-year pre-tenure and tenure review processes.
- Promotes faculty development through the support of continuous improvement of teaching and the development of subject matter expertise.
- Recruits full-time and part-time faculty, consulting with Associate Provost and College Dean for searches.
- Reviews all fall, spring, and summer department/school course evaluations. Draft a memo of individual and systemic issues with actions/resolutions/training plans to Dean and Associate Provost. Fall reviews complete by February 28 and Spring/Summer by September 30.

Administrative and Budget Responsibilities

- Conducts regular department meetings, minimally monthly.
- Provides academic and professional leadership to department, College, and University.

- Conduct external accreditation reviews and Board of Governors program reviews in conjunction with the Assistant Vice President.
- Ensures and facilitates, as appropriate, department/school participation at recruitment, alumni, and fundraising events.
- Reviews and evaluates transfer students' transcripts.
- Collect and maintain department records as necessary for assessment, according to state, federal, and, where applicable, accreditation guidelines.
- Upholds and manages grade appeal and grievance policies.
- Meets regularly and as needed with students to understand their perspectives and hear their concerns about the department's programs and faculty.
- Fosters university, community, and alumni relations.
- Prepares budget requests and aids the College Dean in monitoring the department budget.
- Attends Academic Leadership Council.

Curricular Responsibilities

- Provides leadership in developing new curricula and programs and completing program changes.
- Recommends the department/school schedule of course offerings to College Dean. Works with graduate program coordinators to ensure graduate program needs are met.
- Recommends overloads to dean for final approval.
- Works with Associate Provost, College Dean, and Registrar to ensure all curricular changes for their department are incorporated into the catalog each academic year.
- Ensures syllabus, template, and modality compliance for all departmental courses.
- Promotes effective use of appropriate technology in programs and instruction.
- Assists in creating favorable rapport with outside agency personnel and ensures that all field-based students have proper supervision.
- Assists with and reviews inter-institutional (2+2) articulation agreements annually.

Perform other duties assigned by the Dean/Provost/VPAA.

Updated 6 March 2026

Appendix L – Undergraduate Program Coordinator Job Description

DRAFT

Undergraduate Program Coordinator

Position Type: Faculty Service Role

Reports To: Department Chair/School Director

Collaborates With: Department Faculty, Other Program Coordinators, College Dean, Advising, Registrar, and Accreditation Liaisons

Position Summary

The Program Coordinator is a faculty-only service role within an academic department that houses multiple majors. The Program Coordinator provides academic leadership and coordination for an assigned academic program, ensuring curricular coherence, effective scheduling, quality advising support, and alignment with departmental and university policies. This role supports the Department Chair by serving as the primary faculty point of contact for program-specific matters while advancing student success and program quality.

Key Responsibilities

- Serve as the primary faculty coordinator for the assigned major or academic programs.
- Coordinate curriculum planning, course sequencing, and catalog accuracy for the program.
- Collaborate with other Program Coordinators to ensure consistency across departmental programs.
- Represent the program in departmental discussions related to curriculum, assessment, and planning.
- Assist Chair/Director with adjunct classroom observations.
- Work with the Department Chair/School Director on course scheduling to ensure timely progress toward degree completion.
- Review curriculum proposals and revisions prior to departmental and college-level review.
- Monitor program requirements for alignment with accreditation, licensure, or disciplinary standards, where applicable.
- Assist with documentation for program review and accreditation processes.
- Serve as a program-level point of contact for internal and external stakeholders.
- Contribute to program marketing, recruitment, and outreach efforts in collaboration with the Chair and Dean.

- Attends Academic Leadership Council.

Workload & Compensation

The Program Coordinator role is recognized as a faculty service assignment. Workload credit, reassigned time, or stipend, if applicable, is recommended by the Department Chair/School Director to the College Dean in alignment with established budgets and Faculty Handbook provisions, with consideration given to program size, complexity, and accreditation requirements.

Appointment & Evaluation

Program Coordinators are appointed by the Department Chair/School Director in consultation with the Dean. The Chair/Director may choose to hold elections for recommendations for the position. Performance is evaluated as part of the faculty member's annual review, with emphasis on service contributions and program leadership.

Updated 6 March 2026

Appendix M – Assessment Coordinator Job Description

DRAFT

Assessment Coordinator

Position Type: Faculty Service Role

Reports To: Department Chair/School Director

Collaborates With: Department Faculty, College Dean, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment Committees, Accreditation Liaisons

If a department/school has appointed an Accreditation Liaison, this person will serve as the program's Assessment Coordinator.

Position Summary

The Assessment Coordinator is a faculty-only service role within the academic department responsible for leading and coordinating student learning assessment and program evaluation activities. The position supports a faculty-driven culture of continuous improvement by ensuring that assessment practices are meaningful, systematic, and aligned with departmental, college, and university expectations. The Assessment Coordinator works collaboratively with faculty colleagues and academic leadership to support curriculum quality, student learning, and institutional effectiveness.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the development, implementation, and periodic revision of departmental assessment plans.
- Coordinate assessment activities across all programs housed within the department.
- Establish and maintain assessment timelines, cycles, and documentation in conjunction with university-wide assessment cycles.
- Ensure alignment of assessment practices with departmental/program learning outcomes and university expectations.
- Support faculty in selecting appropriate assessment methods and measures.
- Compile, analyze, and synthesize assessment data related to student learning outcomes.
- Prepare annual assessment reports and summaries for departmental, college, and university review.
- Assist with assessment components of program review and accreditation reporting.
- Collaborate with the Department Chair/School Director and Dean on accreditation-related assessment requirements.

- Serve as the department’s primary faculty liaison to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
- Ensure departmental assessment practices align with regional and disciplinary accreditation standards, where applicable.

Workload & Compensation

The Assessment Coordinator role is recognized as a faculty service assignment. Workload credit, reassigned time, or stipend, if applicable, is recommended by the Department Chair/School Director to the College Dean in alignment with established budgets and Faculty Handbook provisions, with consideration given to program size, complexity, and accreditation requirements.

The Assessment Coordinator is appointed by the Department Chair/School Director in consultation with the Dean. The Chair/Director may choose to hold elections for recommendations for the position. Performance is evaluated as part of the faculty member’s annual review, with emphasis on service contributions.

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Appendix N - Faculty Service Role Crosswalk

Assessment Coordinator, UG Program Coordinator, and Department Chair/School Director

Dimension	Assessment Coordinator	Undergraduate Program Coordinator	Department Chair	School Director
Primary Purpose	Leads departmental assessment of student learning outcomes and continuous improvement	Provides academic leadership and coordination for an assigned major within a multi-program department	Provides overall academic, administrative, and strategic leadership for the department.	Provides overall academic, administrative, and strategic leadership for the school.
Faculty Handbook Alignment	Faculty role in supporting academic quality, assessment, and accreditation.	Faculty role in supporting curriculum quality, advising coordination, and program coherence.	Faculty leadership role with responsibility for administration, governance, and departmental effectiveness.	Faculty leadership role with responsibility for administration, governance, and school effectiveness.
Governance and Leadership	Serves as faculty liaison for assessment-related governance and institutional effectiveness.	Represents assigned program(s) in departmental governance and curriculum discussions.	Leads departmental governance, implements policies, and represents the department at college and university levels.	Leads school governance, implements policies, and represents the school at college and university levels.
Curriculum Interaction	Coordinates assessment integration across the curriculum	Coordinates curriculum planning, sequencing, and catalog	Oversees curriculum development and approval processes, and	Oversees curriculum development and approval processes, and

		accuracy for the program.	scheduling across all programs.	scheduling across all programs.
Data and Evaluation	Collects, analyzes, and reports assessment data for improvement.	Uses program-level data in collaboration with the Assessment Coordinator.	Uses enrollment, assessment, and performance data for planning, evaluation, and resource allocation.	Uses enrollment, assessment, and performance data for planning, evaluation, and resource allocation.
Student Support	Supports faculty reflection on teaching and learning.	Supports program advising and identifies student barriers.	Ensures effective advising structures and addresses escalated student concerns.	Ensures effective advising structures and addresses escalated student concerns.
Accreditation	Ensures assessment alignment with accreditation standards.	Monitors program-specific accreditation or licensure requirements.	Leads departmental accreditation and program review processes.	Leads school accreditation and program review processes.
Personnel and Supervision	No formal supervisory responsibilities.	No formal supervisory responsibilities.	Supervises faculty. Conducts evaluations and mentoring per the Faculty Handbook.	Supervises faculty and staff. Conducts evaluations and mentoring per the Faculty Handbook.
Expected Outputs	Assessment plans, annual reports, and improvement documentation.	Program Schedules, curriculum maps, and advising materials.	Department schedules, budgets, evaluations, strategic plans, and reports.	School schedules, budgets, evaluations, strategic plans, and reports.
Workload Recognition	Course reassignment	Course reassignment	Recognized as faculty	Recognized as faculty

	and/or compensation based on program size and complexity.	and/or compensation based on program size and complexity.	administrative leadership role with defined course reassignment and compensation.	administrative leadership role with defined course reassignment and compensation.
Appointment and Evaluation	Appointed by Chair/Director in consultation with Dean; evaluated in annual report under faculty service.	Appointed by Chair/Director in consultation with Dean; evaluated in annual report under faculty service.	Appointed per Faculty Handbook; evaluated by Dean with faculty input. Must submit a chair annual report.	Appointed per Faculty Handbook; evaluated by Dean with faculty input. Must submit a director annual report.

Appendix O - Policy on Academic Units: Departments and Schools

Purpose

The policy establishes clear, consistent, and durable definitions for academic departments and academic schools, and articulates the institutional rationale for the designation of academic units as either departments or schools.

Guiding Principles

All academic units are essential to the University's mission. The distinction between departments and schools reflects primarily differences in regulatory responsibility, external accountability, and administrative complexity, not differences in academic quality, prestige, or importance. Furthermore, designations of academic units are not based solely on enrollment size, number of faculty lines, or historical precedent.

Schools are established only when academic programs require heightened levels of external accreditation, regulatory compliance, or administrative oversight beyond standard institutional accreditation or operations.

The University shall maintain a limited and intentional number of schools in order to preserve clarity of governance, administrative efficiency, and consistency in organizational design.

Unit Definitions, Oversight, Accountability, and Leadership

Academic Departments

Definition. Academic Departments are the University's primary academic units, responsible for delivering instruction, advancing scholarship, and supporting student learning within a defined academic discipline or closely related group of disciplines.

Responsibilities. Academic Departments are responsible for:

- Development, delivery, and assessment of undergraduate and graduate curricula within the programs.
- Faculty workload assignment, mentoring, evaluation, and promotion and tenure processes.
- Course scheduling and academic advising for students enrolled in departmental programs.
- Assessment of student learning outcomes and program effectiveness.
- Contribution to general education and interdisciplinary academic initiatives.

Oversight and Accountability. Academic Departments operate within the academic and administrative framework of their respective colleges and remain accountable to:

- Institutional accreditation standards.
- University academic policies.
- College-level and University-level strategic priorities and resource frameworks.

Leadership. Department Chairs serve as faculty administrative leaders, with primary responsibility for:

- Academic quality and curricular integrity.
- Faculty success and development.
- Effective management of departmental operations.

Academic Schools

Definition. Academic Schools are specialized academic units that houses programs requiring substantial external accountability due to professional accreditation, licensure, regulatory oversight, and/or administrative complexity.

Schools are established when academic programs involve institutional obligations, compliance requirements, and administration that extend beyond those of standard academic departments.

Criteria for School Designation. An academic unit may be recommended to the Board of Governors as a School by the Provost based on the assessment of the following criteria:

- Are subject to specialized or professional accreditation and/or state or federal regulatory requirements.
- Require ongoing reporting to external accrediting or licensing bodies.
- Must adhere to profession-specific standards affecting curriculum, faculty qualifications, student progression, and assessment.
- Utilize specialized admissions processes, including selective, cohort-based, capacity-limited, or licensure-driven admissions.
- Involve clinical, practicum, studio, or field-based education with associated compliance and risk management responsibilities.
- Require formal collaborations or agreements with external agencies or partners.

- No single criterion shall be determinative; rather, designation as a School reflects the collective complexity and external accountability of the programs housed within the unit.

Responsibilities. Academic Schools are responsible for:

- Development, delivery, and assessment of undergraduate and graduate curricula within the programs.
- Faculty workload assignment, mentoring, evaluation, and promotion and tenure processes.
- Course scheduling and academic advising for students enrolled in departmental programs.
- Assessment of student learning outcomes and program effectiveness.
- Contribution to general education and interdisciplinary academic initiatives.
- Coordinating compliance with all applicable external accreditation, licensure, and regulatory requirements.
- Ensuring academic programs meet professional standards and eligibility requirements for student credentialing.
- Managing specialized admissions, progression, and completion processes.
- Overseeing clinical, practicum, studio, or field-based learning experiences.
- Serving as the primary institutional liaison to external professional and regulatory bodies.

Oversight and Accountability. Academic Schools operate within the academic and administrative framework of their respective colleges and remain accountable to:

- Institutional and program-specific accreditation standards.
- University academic policies.
- College-level and University-level strategic priorities and resource frameworks.

Leadership. School Directors provide academic and compliance leadership, with responsibilities that include:

- Oversight of externally regulated academic programs
- Coordination of accreditation, licensure, and regulatory activities
- Management of institutional risk associated with professional program compliance
- Supervision of administrative staff as necessary in support of above criteria.
- The scope of these responsibilities may warrant differentiated administrative compensation or workload recognition, as determined by University policy.

Relationship Between Departments and Schools

- Schools may contain one or more academic programs and may include disciplinary groupings comparable to departments; however, schools do not supersede departments in academic importance.
- Departments and schools are complementary structures that serve different institutional functions.
- The presence of a school within a college does not diminish the authority, autonomy, or academic standing of departments within that college.
- The scope of responsibilities may warrant differentiated administrative compensation (stipends) or workload recognition (course reassignment), as determined by University policy.

Marketplace Alignment and External Recognition

Institutional Consideration. In addition to regulatory responsibilities, compliance factors, or administrative complexity, the University may consider marketplace alignment and branding potential in support of enrollment growth as a supporting consideration when designating an academic unit as a School. Marketplace considerations shall not supersede academic, accreditation, and regulatory criteria for School designation.

In professionally regulated and workforce-aligned fields, the designation of a School may:

Signal professional identity and institutional commitment to prospective students, employers, and external partners.

Enhance recruitment and retention in competitive or high-demand academic markets.

Align the University's organizational structure with common expectations in the profession, including employer, accreditor, and licensure-body norms.

Limitations. Marketplace considerations alone shall not constitute sufficient justification for the creation of a School. School designation shall not be based solely on:

- Enrollment size or growth potential.
- Revenue generation.
- Branding or marketing preference.

Authority and Review. The establishment, modification, or elimination of academic schools shall require approval through established University governance processes and final authorization by the Board of Governors.

This policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with accreditation standards, regulatory requirements, and institutional mission.