

University College Reintegration: Academic Services Unit Recommendations

1. Introduction

The Academic Services reintegration teams are making the following recommendations to effectively and efficiently re-integrate University College resources with comparable resources at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). We understand that this reintegration has the full support of the Chancellor and Board of Trustees of the UMS. We believe that this new structure will serve the needs of faculty and students alike by combining the resources of University College and UMA into a functioning academic services unit.

2. Structure

A draft organizational structure is attached. This chart is proposed to delineate reporting lines, and not to in any way interfere with work processes. In this proposed structure, there are no new positions added. In effect, this structure represents current practice. The two major changes in reporting lines are that the one UMA Instructional Designer (ID) will now join the team of IDs on the Faculty Services team. The OCLS librarian (who currently reports to the Interim Director of Marketing, ID, and Library) will report to the UMA Director of Libraries. The administration of this unit reflects exactly the current structure. As the position of Dean of Academic Services is presently filled on an interim basis (Interim Dean of University College), there potentially will be a search to fill the position. This position was formerly held by Bonnie Sparks, and is now filled by 3 interim appointees.

3. History

In grouping the responsibilities and activities of the employees as we have, we relied on research into what other universities do. There are many examples of universities blending teaching and learning support functions into one cross-functional model. Members of our team looked at the models at Arizona State University, University of Arkansas, University of Georgia, and University of New England (UNE) as we discussed our new Academic Services unit. In these examples, the schools combined all faculty support (instructional design, media services) with library services and student support.

4. Rationale

The members of the Academic Support reintegration Oversight Committee believe that this streamlined model of collaboration will assist faculty for their pedagogical and technological needs. Currently, technology and Media Support services, which include technical support for our technology tools, classroom support for all modalities (web, VC, desktop, streaming), and production services are handled by IT staff and Faculty Services staff. Discussions should be held to define which team performs which function, further streamlining the process. The Faculty Services staff provide instructional design, faculty

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development and technology training, and copyright/streaming services and research assistance.

This new unit will also assist students whether on campus, at a Center or site, or at a distance online. Student academic services are accessible and available at the UMA libraries, our off-campus library services, and campus-like support at our Centers throughout the State. The Academic Logistics services provide faculty and student support by moving exams and homework, onboarding new faculty to distance teaching modalities, conducting placement testing and exam proctoring, and providing remote site support to both faculty and students.

5. Recommendations

We recommend that the new organizational structure be implemented by the end of June, 2018. We also recommend that a decision be made on the staffing of the Dean's position so a search can be conducted and a candidate identified by September 1, 2018.

There was concern when the teams recommended that the Writing Labs on the Augusta campus and the Bangor campus be integrated into the faculty services unit reporting to the Dean of the Academic Services unit and not to an Academic Dean. The team has recommended that the writing and math labs work with the academic services unit, but form a separate reporting line to the Academic Deans. We are recommending that further study be undertaken to better integrate the onsite writing labs with online support. Some tutoring is already provided for students at a distance from the onsite writing labs; perhaps using the VAWLT as a technological platform to increase the reach and availability of writing tutoring may increase student support. We also recommend the development of an online Math tutoring service.

At some point in the future, there may be discussion about integrating other student support services into the Academic Services unit, i.e. advising, learning success, and TRIO services, but we recommend that discussion be held after the successful implementation of the forming of the Academic Services unit as proposed on the organizational chart.