



**MEMORANDUM**

**PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

voice 906-635-2211

fax 906-635-6671

email mwalworth@lssu.edu

**TO:** Campus Community

**FROM:** Morrie Walworth *mw*

**DATE:** July 12, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Academic Restructuring Plan

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The restructuring of academics was not something that I was planning to pursue when I was appointed Provost. Many individuals asked me about it as I took office and then provided me with their insights as to how it might be best implemented, but other higher-priority issues needed immediate attention. Now, with three deans leaving their positions, I felt obligated to review the administrative role in academics. Our current structure has four colleges; varying from about 10-60 faculty and 200-1200 students. As I reviewed options, I looked for obvious areas of need, a better balance of faculty, a better balance of students, and possible alignments where collaborations exist. I also hoped that the new structure would reduce administration by at least one position.

We are a small institution, but we offer a very diverse set of programs. Finding a balance was not something primarily pursued numerically, but more practically. Furthermore, I found that grouping these diverse programs, into somewhat connected schools within a college, was a difficult task.

As has been noted in my previous two Newsletters, needs exist in the School of Education. After the upcoming evaluation by the Michigan Department of Education, our education program will be moved into the "low performing" category this fall. This is the lowest category and it requires that LSSU develop an improvement plan, utilize external consultants, possibly work with another institution to certify our graduates, and show yearly improvement. Our one and only graduate program is in education as well.

Another need was identified during the drafting of our ten-year self-study for the HLC. The HLC has minimum expectations, that it assumes we are abiding by, and then additional criteria for accreditation. We do not meet the minimum expectations in the areas of assessment and, once again, LSSU must respond with a plan to address these issues.

Assessment, our education programs, and graduate programs are all areas that cross into or impact all areas of campus. As such, I have created a new associate provost position to oversee these areas. The job description can be viewed on the Human Resources website. I have asked Dr. David Myton to assume this role. This component of the restructuring is necessary and complete.

The remaining schools and associated departments have been grouped into four colleges. The names of the colleges have not been finalized. We will work through the year to better define schools and departments as we begin the process of program prioritization, review, and assessment. The last page of this document provides a diagram of the restructuring. The significant changes are: CJ, FS, and EMS have been moved into the CoALSS; Nursing, Recreation Studies, and Exercise Science have been moved into their own college; Business and Engineering have been grouped into a new college; and three dean positions will be interim appointments with searches to be launched.

### **Rationale:**

I have several reasons for proposing this new structure. These reasons follow.

- 1) Business and Engineering have been working together on several projects within the SmartZone and Product Development Center. These partnerships will be able to expand, and more emphasis on entrepreneurship will be encouraged. Both programs have struggled with enrollments. Strong leadership is needed to help define clear strategies for future growth. Recent surveys of pre-college students indicate a significant decrease in interest for business management and marketing, while engineering interest remains relatively flat. Perhaps continued collaboration in entrepreneurial studies can bolster enrollment and provide niche programs in this area. We also have an ongoing commitment to a new Business building. Leadership is needed to work internally and externally to move the process forward.
- 2) I propose moving CJ, FS, & EMS into the existing CoALSS where it was housed before. This is consistent with many other university structures since criminal justice is generally categorized as a social science. Dr. Gordier is a full professor with 18 years at LSSU; 9 years as a chair, and 3 years as a dean (department head). The School of CJ, FS, and EMS has been one of the largest schools on campus with her as either a chair or dean. The CJ, FS, and EMS areas have seen good enrollments and growth with future prospective student interest on the increase. Dr. Gordier will provide stability in this transition since one-half of the new colleges will have inexperienced interim appointments for deans. She has provided good leadership and shown initiative in her current administrative role, and her experience will be valuable in this transition and in the implementation of new initiatives.
- 3) The combining of Nursing with Recreation Studies and Exercise Science will provide better visibility for these high demand programs. We have, at times, struggled to find proper leadership for the Nursing program due to the associate dean position. Moving this position to the dean level will hopefully provide better search results. We currently have an opening for the associate dean position. It has been posted since April and there are no applicants.
- 4) We will maintain the Associate Dean of Education position. The education program must improve its standing with the Michigan Department of Education and must pursue accreditation next year to stay viable. The job description has been changed to reflect the reporting line to the Associate Provost. With over 200 students in the education program, LSSU must take steps to remedy the issues identified by the state and by the consultant (see Provost webpage for report).
- 5) There are modest cost savings (about \$110,000 of salary and benefits) associated with this restructuring. Much of this savings will be redirected back into academics to support Program Prioritization, Assessment, and any necessary resources identified in these aforementioned processes.
- 6) The proposed structure has a better balance of faculty and staff between the colleges. College enrollments now vary from 530-850 students and the numbers of faculty vary from 20-35. Each college has one large program or several "good sized" programs housed within it.
- 7) The two colleges without leadership will be asked to meet and make recommendations for interim appointments. They will also be asked to draft proposed criteria for a search to fill the vacancy.
- 8) The current structure of five deans, two associate deans, and a director of assessment (this was a failed search) is replaced with an associate provost, four deans, an associate dean, and an executive director. This is a reduction of one position.

**The Plan and Timeline:**

This plan is being provided to the campus community and to the Board of Trustees for review and comment. Please submit comments to me (provost@lssu.edu) until July 27<sup>th</sup>. I hope to implement the final restructuring on August 1, 2011. This will provide time, before the fall semester begins, for possible identification of deans within the two colleges that are lacking leadership at this point.

I am asking for interim dean recommendations anytime before September 15, 2011. Recommendations must be provided by the college with a majority of the faculty from each school within the college supporting the recommendation. More than one candidate may be submitted. Appointments will be made as soon as possible.

I also ask that colleges without dean appointments draft search criteria for those positions before October 28, 2011. Search criteria should be approved by a majority of the faculty from each school within the college. Criteria should ensure that candidates possess the credentials necessary to oversee all the schools within the college.

