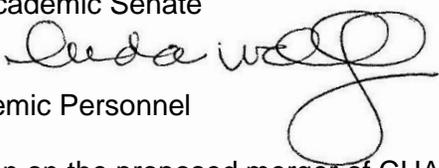


COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

January 24, 2015

To: Jose Wudka, Chair
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Linda Walling, Chair 
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: CAP recommendation on the proposed merger of CHASS and CNAS

At your request, CAP has discussed the January 2015 *Proposal for the Realignment of Academic Units at the University of California, Riverside*. With a vote of 0, 9, 1 (supporting, opposing, abstaining, respectively), the majority of CAP members do not support moving forward with the formal process to consider the merger of CHASS and CNAS.

The proposed merger of CNAS and CHASS will have detrimental impacts on faculty and staff morale and UCR's identity. The "positive effects of realignment" are minimal and insufficient to embark on the two-to-three year initiative to merge CHASS and CNAS. The "problems to be addressed by the change" are not due to flaws in organization. The issues can be more effectively addressed by alternative strategies that are less disruptive, complex, time consuming, energy-intensive, and fiscally demanding. CAP believes that creep of responsibilities from the colleges to the upper administration is historical; it is a remnant of a small university growing fast and the lack of interest of previous upper administration to empower the colleges. CAP agrees that it is now time to return the many of the critical decision-making processes to CHASS and CNAS. CAP does not believe this needs to be accomplished by a fusion of the two largest colleges at UCR.

While not required, CAP provides its opinions on selected issues in the proposal. At this time a full comprehensive report does not seem to be required. Many of "problems to be addressed by the change" are due to recent fiscal contractions and insufficient funding to support current college activities (eg. teaching, TAs, student advising, and research). Additionally, there may be a need to improve communication channels across colleges. CAP's comments and recommendations follow.

(1) The proposal for a single Dean to lead the College of Arts and Science will not meet the needs of its exceptionally diverse faculty. CAP's concerns include:

- The merger will result in inadequate representation of faculty perspectives in the Deans Council. At the present time the CHASS and CNAS Deans represent very diverse faculty assemblages. In fact, some faculty in CHASS and CNAS are of the opinion that the current college organization does not provide adequate representation of current diversity of department/faculty needs at the Deans Council. Reducing this representation to a single Dean will exacerbate this situation markedly. Better communication and more transparency would solve the perceived problems in curriculum and advising that cross current college boundaries.

- The proposed merger creates a new administrative structure that further distances faculty from the upper administration. The proliferation of new administrative positions was not viewed as needed or advantageous; it was viewed as time consuming and costly.
- (2) It is unclear why the Provost/EVC will not consider providing decision-making and fiscal authority to the Deans of CHASS and CNAS. The upper administration appears to be capable of making the needed decisions for downloading decision-making authority to BCOE, SoM, SoE, SoBA, and SPP. If this were not the case, we would have expected that there was a proposed fusion of these smaller units with CHASS and CNAS.
- CAP strongly believes that delegating additional decision-making authority to CNAS and CHASS is the best solution for bringing decision-making closer to the UCR's colleges and faculty.
 - CAP sees no reason to expand the Provost or EVC's office if the merger is not considered. This is costly and will further inflate the upper administration.
 - Instead of consolidating colleges, CAP would like the upper administration to seriously consider a model proposed in the 2007 proposal for CNAS restructuring. In this proposal, teaching, research and fiscal decisions were moved closer to the faculty with Deans of Divisions having a stronger decision-making role in the college. We encourage the upper administration to examine this model. It does not require costly changes in organization and it downloads the decision to the college level.
 - Perhaps external searches for both CNAS and CHASS Deans are needed at this time to allow a shift in power.
- (3) CAP is deeply concerned about the proposed merger of CHASS and CNAS on staff morale.
- Morale of UCR staff is at all-time low due to consolidation of administrative units and sharing of FAOs with multiple administrative units.
 - Our staff are over-worked, often underpaid, and the prospect of the merger of CNAS and CHASS makes them uncertain of their future.
 - CAP recommends the upper administration seek the opinions of UCR's staff that supports CHASS and CNAS departments ASAP.
- (4) The perceived problems regarding delivering the CHASS and CNAS curriculum can be easily addressed with current structures. Due to the fiscal contractions in recent years, the colleges have been forced to contract their course offerings. Neither CHASS nor CNAS are currently provided sufficient funding to cover their teaching costs. Moreover, there is inadequate funding for the colleges to respond nimbly when extra courses or course sections need to be delivered.
- The solution is for the upper administration to provide the needed funds to support the TA lines needed for the delivery of the curriculum. CAP members are aware that many major and non-major classes previously delivered by CHASS and CNAS are no longer taught due to insufficient numbers of TAs. New course proposals that require TAs cannot be made without compromising current curricula.
 - A second solution is for the colleges to receive funds for temporary lecturers, when a teaching crisis is encountered. This would allow the colleges to bridge the unanticipated curriculum delivery changes rapidly and provide the colleges adequate time to find long-term solutions to these problems (eg., reallocating faculty teaching commitments).

- Faculty teaching responsibilities are often established two to three years in advance. This allows faculty to meet their teaching responsibilities and to have dedicated time for their research/creative activities and accept speaking invitations at national and international meetings and universities. If UCR wishes to reach AAU status, faculty research and creative activity time cannot be compromised by sudden changes in teaching loads or schedules.
- (5) It is not clear why enhancements to advising for CHASS and CNAS undergraduates cannot occur under the current college structures.
- No data has been provided to document that this is a major problem for UCR undergraduates at the present time. CAP acknowledges that this was a critical issue in the past and is concerned that current data has not been vetted by CHASS and CNAS faculty.
 - Both colleges have transition advisors that enable undergraduates who change their major and cross college boundaries. It is CAP's understanding this is working well in CNAS.
 - CNAS has invested strongly in innovative advising and mentoring strategies. Grants from foundations and federal agencies have enabled some of this change. These advising/mentoring initiatives have increased CNAS graduation rates and decreased the number of CNAS students that transfer to another college or leave UCR.
 - The solution to advising problems that impact students transitioning between any college or school lies in better communication between the colleges/schools. Perhaps new communication channels are needed to relay best practices, innovations and challenges. A merger of CHASS and CNAS is not needed to execute these changes.
 - There is little to be gained and a lot to be lost by fusing CHASS and CNAS advising. The identity of our Colleges will be lost, which will impact faculty, staff and student morale.
- (6) The two alternative structures for the College of Arts and Sciences impacts the legacy of agricultural sciences in a negative manner and may have negative impacts on the delivery of CNAS' life science/environmental science curriculum.
- Senate faculty with Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) appointments provide strong contributions to the undergraduate and graduate curriculum; many AES faculty are teaching critical lower division BIOL courses, upper division courses, as well as non-major breadth classes. Separating the AES faculty into a School of Agriculture will perpetuate and likely exacerbate the issues associated with coordinating teaching across college /school boundaries.
 - As all AES faculty have 50% or less IR appointments and yet have teaching loads equivalent to 100% IR faculty in their disciplines, the merger of CHASS and CNAS and the proposed changes to a School of Agriculture may cause AES faculty to seriously consider adjusting their teaching load to align with their AES % appointment. This will have a strong impact on curriculum delivery in the life and environmental sciences.
 - The proposal to form a UCR Agricultural Institute and eliminate current AES departments will erode the legacy of agriculture at UCR. AES faculty provide an important component in translation of cutting-edge research to application in the field. Compromising this critical role has major ramifications for the CA economy. It has been estimated that every dollar invested in agricultural research translates to over two-hundred dollars for the CA economy.

- (7) The consolidation of CHASS and CNAS is unlikely to positively or negatively impact cross-cutting interdisciplinary research and creative activities nor will it facilitate joint appointments. These activities already occur efficiently at UCR. Therefore the time, expense and energy that will be expended in consolidation of the colleges is not needed. There are many examples of successful research initiative, institutes, centers, and graduate programs that cross college and school boundaries. To name a few:
- the Materials Science Program (CNAS, BCOE)
 - the Neuroscience Graduate program (CNAS, CHASS, SoM)
 - the Institute of Integrative Genome Biology (CNAS, CHASS, BCOE, SoM)
 - the Center for Conservation Biology (CNAS, CHASS), and
 - the new UCR Institute - the California Agricultural and Food Enterprise (CAFÉ, CNAS, CHASS, SPP).
- (8) Both CHASS and CNAS have invested heavily in recent year highlighting their colleges' strengths and initiatives. The consolidation of the colleges will negate these critical marketing and identity efforts.
- (9) CAP discussed the fact that the mathematical and physical science departments within CNAS are disgruntled (eg., the proposal to form a new college). It appears that many of the problems are due to the budgetary cuts that have impacted the availability of TAs to support the teaching missions and erosion of funding for core facilities. In addition, these faculty desire fiscal decisions to be made closer to the department level. The proposed merger of CHASS and CNAS moves in the wrong direction to solve this problem.