

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

January 22, 2015

TO: José Wudka, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Jennifer Doyle, Chair  
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: New College Proposal

At this juncture, CHASS Executive Committee is not supportive of a merger: all of the members of this committee have serious concerns about the potential negative impact that such a merger might have not only on the CHASS community, but on UCR as a whole.

We do not see a compelling justification for the substantial administrative labor required to effect such a merger. We want to see this level of effort directed to supporting our students.

We worry that this is part of the drive towards centralization — usually executed in the name of making our systems more efficient while in reality making them more baroque. We worry that such a merger is nominated in the interest of staff reduction: too many faculty in this college have experienced the debilitating effect of administrative clustering. We worry, too, that this is part of a drive towards the de-departmentalization of student advising. (Which separates faculty from students, and removes advising staff from the pedagogical structure of departments.)

CHASS is somewhat unusual in that interdisciplinary collaboration is already an important aspect of its identity and its national profile. The proposal folds CHASS into a larger college structure that itself would be organized by disciplinary structures—this may encourage disciplinary division between, for example, the fine arts, humanities and social sciences. The committee is concerned that UCR will lose the ongoing negotiation and conversation across fields that make CHASS a national center of innovation.

CHASS faculty have experience with tendencies in other disciplines to devalue our research, publications, and creative output. We are always interested in university-level projects that address these problems—they will always be with us, and an ongoing commitment to open conversation and collaboration across the campus is in everyone's interest. There is concern, however, that a College of Arts and Sciences will amplify these kinds of structural problems, rather than address and resolve them. These are not just vague anxieties: senior scholars at UCR working in especially fields related to race,

ethnicity, gender and sexuality have experiences of bias in the workplace (at the college level and at the university level), and fear that such issues when combined with a cultural resistance to our disciplines will inform this larger college's culture regarding merit and promotion, and the distribution of resources. These are the concerns of a faculty actively committed to a healthy workplace.

Although the Executive Committee can see the potential benefit of this merger to upper-level administration, we do not understand what the "positives" are for the university community as a whole.

We understand that some of the pressures behind this initiative are particular to challenges faced by CNAS faculty and administration. We do not understand why these problems can't be addressed through attention to that college. We wholeheartedly support our colleagues in CNAS, and see the resolution of those challenges as integral to the well-being of the campus as a whole.

Jennifer Doyle, Chair

UCR CHASS Executive Committee