**Organizational Structures of Colleges of Arts & Sciences**

**and Their History**

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The purpose of this report is to provide data on how different universities organize the typical departments from traditional Liberal Arts disciplines into what most universities now call Colleges of Arts & Sciences (or a variant). Data were gathered from all SEC universities. As an additional comparator, data were also gathered from the BIG10 Universities, most of which are peers or aspirational for UTK. I also chose the BIG10 since a number of UTK administrators are familiar with at least one of those schools. In addition, I provide some information about the history of different organizations and report on the perspectives of Deans that I interviewed about the organizational structures.

**Summary of Current Organization of Arts, Humanities, Social Science and Natural Science Departments into Colleges**

Within the **SEC**, 50% of the universities have A&S college that includes all 4 common divisions (Arts, HUM, SS, NS). See *Appendix A*, yellow highlighted institutions. Many of these colleges name the Arts departments as “Schools” as is the custom in those fields. Only the University of Georgia has an administrative structure with Associate Deans of each Division. The remaining schools have an administrative structure, much like UTK, with Associate Deans of Personnel, Academics, Research, Budget/Finance, and most now have a named D.E.I. leader with various titles. These universities range in size from approximately 21,000 to 39,000 total students.

All but one of the remaining SEC schools have one additional college. Two have only Music separated, 4 have all the Arts separated (ranging from 2-4 Schools/Departments) and one has a separate College of Science. LSU is the only institution in the SEC with 3 colleges (College of Music and Dramatic Arts [Art is in College of Humanities and Social Sciences] and College of Science). The Universities that have 2 or 3 colleges range in size from approximately 13,500 to 70,500 students.

Note that the average size of the SEC student population is about 34,000. It appears that the size of the institution is not a predictor of which one has multiple colleges, or which units are in separate colleges. In addition, neither the number of departments or the organization of the college administration appears to correlate with the size of the university. Having more departments does not predict having additional colleges or an administrative structure that includes associate deans over divisions.

The **BIG10** schools have more variety in the college structures that include departments most typically associated with Arts & Sciences (see *Appendix A*). The most common pattern is for either just Music or just Art (4 – 28.6%) to have their own college/school. Three schools (21.4%) have all four divisions (Arts, HUM, SS, NS). Thus, 50% of the BIG10 schools include some or all of the arts within the larger College of Arts & Sciences (in the SEC those with all or some arts as well as HUM, SS and NS is 64%). Two universities, Michigan and Nebraska, have all the arts in separate college(s) (14.3%). Two universities split off the Natural Sciences and left the rest (Arts, HUM, SS) together (Purdue and Minnesota). Finally, three universities (21.4%) have multiple non-Art related colleges. They are different from one another in the organization of departments into colleges and, obviously, differ from the remaining. Appendix A lists the separate colleges for the University of Maryland, Penn State and Michigan State.

The Average size of the total student population in the BIG10 schools is approximately 44,000 students, and ranges from 22,000 to 61,500. Seven of the BIG10 colleges (50%) note that they have divisions (or colleges or schools within the large Arts & Sciences structure). Five of these schools have a college administrative structure that includes Associate Deans or Deans of the Divisions, in addition to a Dean or Executive Dean who reports to the Provost directly. This may have evolved because of the size of those institutions and, therefore, the larger number of faculty to be hired, reviewed and promoted. Only one school using this organizational approach is the size of UTK, and that is Iowa. That said, the college administrations that do not report a structure that includes an Associate Dean/Dean with an Executive Dean range in size from approximately 22,000 to 53,000. Thus, size may help drive this structure, but only in about half the cases.

Looking **across the two Conferences** of R1, very high research (mostly) and nearly half land-grant schools, a few patterns emerge. The two most common patterns of organization are having all Arts, HUM, SS and NS in one college (35.7%) or having some Arts (or none) with HUM, SS and NS (35.7%). Only 14.3% have a separate College of Science (or more than one Science) while sustaining the Arts, HUM and SS in one college. Finally, 14.3% have three or four different types of colleges, some in rather unique configurations.

**Some Case Histories of Changing College Organization**

This section provides some additional information about how a few universities modified their college structure and the perceived impact of those changes.

Within the SEC, two universities closely ranked with UTK, Auburn University and the University of South Carolina have followed opposite trajectories in the recent past with the natural sciences, with Auburn splitting off a College of Sciences & Mathematics from the rest of Arts & Sciences – creating a College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. While S. Carolina, which had a College of Sciences for as long as anyone could remember, joined those departments with the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (except for the School of Music). Auburn created the separate College of Science and Mathematics to “change the culture and build departments into R1 status”, according to the dean. While S. Carolina, having recently moved to an RCM-type budget model, saw an advantage of a larger, more efficient budgetary unit that would stabilize the costs of Science. Both deans describe the process of making the change culturally difficult, bumpy and costly. There were the costs of re-branding in both cases, adding an administrative structure for Auburn, and absorbing one for S. Carolina. Each argued that the goals of separating or unifying were met. In the case of S. Carolina, the dean reports financial savings and the surprising (to them) outcome of a burst of interdisciplinary development in new academic programs and research. [Note: The data collected on the SEC and BIG10 schools suggests that this is not a surprising finding since schools with 3 or 4 divisions often report on their website having a variety of interdisciplinary programs. In colleges with large numbers of departments, many units began as interdisciplinary programs and moved on to departmental status (particularly at universities with larger numbers of students).]

Within the Southeastern U.S., Clemson University also recently created a College of Science. Like Auburn, this was part of a strategic plan that included significant advancement in their research portfolio. As noted above for Auburn, Clemson also has seen growth in their research. When the research portfolio of the Natural Science departments at UTK are compared to that reported for Auburn and Clemson, one finds that our departments’ grant funding already exceeds those of the Colleges of Science (and Mathematics) at these two institutions. For FY2021, Auburn’s College of Science and Mathematics brought in $18.2 Mil, Clemson’s College of Science brought in $15.9 Mil, and the Natural Sciences departments at UTK brought in $25 Mil. All three universities have seen significant growth, with UTK’s departments climbing from $19Mil in FY16 to $31.4Mil for FY22. In addition, the UTK NS departments are key players in several interdisciplinary degrees (some of which have now moved into home departments) including Environmental Science, Sustainability, Neuroscience, and Data Science. The interdisciplinarity in NS departments extends to the growing number of research teams that cross within the college or with other colleges. The recent call for Cluster Proposals is a case in point. Of the eighteen cluster proposals chosen to create final proposals, 14 included CAS, 8 included more than 2 departments from CAS, and 3 included departments from more than one division in CAS. Departments and faculty from CAS generate and participate in both academic and research interdisciplinarity at a high rate.

There are a variety of reasons provided for the Art, Music, Theatre and Dance units to be organized as their own college(s). Most of the reasons I was able to garner fell into two main categories. First, a school was added later in a university’s history and was never part of the Liberal Arts College (as they were most often known). These were considered professional schools, and in many cases that is still their primary if not entire purpose (they sometimes, as we do, have a joint education program in a discipline). As a professional school, the expectations of the faculty and even the educational training of the faculty is very different from faculty in other departments within Arts & Sciences. It is not surprising that at the founding of an arts-related school, the institution (and Arts & Science?) may have thought the differences in expectations for type of productivity and educational training were too different to fit within the larger college.

Second, an individual art-related school or all of them may have been founded in the Liberal Arts college, often as a small group of faculty, who primarily trained teachers in the discipline. Later, in some cases, donors provided gifts to grow and further professionalize the college. Many of these schools are named, and separated into their own college (although there are also named schools within Arts & Sciences).

It seems that this separation into individual school/college happens with Music (fairly commonly), Art and sometimes all the fields for a variety of other reasons. An argument has been made to do so makes them more visible to students who are looking for one of these professional schools.

**Organizational Structures of Colleges of Arts & Sciences**

Appendix A notes whether the administrative organizational structure of a college includes recognition of the divisions within it. Whether the organizational structure recognizes Arts, HUM, SS, and NS officially, it is clear from conversations with deans of mid-size to large colleges that these divisions are recognized and accommodated in college by-laws, policies and procedures. This is necessary because of the differences in expectations of the different fields, which occurs even within divisions (e.g., Math vs other NS departments), but more so between them.

What is clear from the comparison of SEC and BIG10 schools, is that schools with bigger populations or more departments are more likely to have Associate Deans of individual divisions or a couple of them. One reason this may occur is the increased workload of hiring, reviewing, promoting, retaining and retiring faculty is too much for just one Associate Dean of Personnel. One of the main jobs that fall to these deans is to oversee these processes in their division and to work with faculty mentoring, respond to crisis situations, and settle expectations across the division in policy and procedures related to faculty. In some cases, these deans also play a college administrative role with graduate programs. It seems that these colleges maintain unified undergraduate, advising, research/infrastructure, IT and budgetary management teams.

In thinking about UTK’s needs, I found Ohio State University an interesting case study of an organization that has more recently transitioned. The website explains that “In most years before 1968, Ohio State’s arts and sciences programs were organized within a College of Arts and Sciences. In 1968, the college divided into five colleges: Arts; Biological Sciences; Humanities; Mathematical and Physical Sciences; and Social and Behavioral Sciences. In 2010, the College of Arts and Sciences was reunified by a unanimous vote of the university’s Board of Trustees, reincorporating the five legacy colleges and defining the academic heart of Ohio State.” Not surprisingly, bringing 5 colleges back together that had operated separately for over 40 years was not easy, and was done in response to the RCM-type model on the campus. The 5 colleges were joined to create 3 Divisions (Arts & Humanities, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Natural & Mathematical Sciences) with their own “Divisional Deans” who report to an Executive Dean. There are additional Associate Deans, Chief Administrative Officer, Assistant Deans and Directors who also report to the Executive Dean. What was unique and interesting was the title of Divisional Dean, to whom the faculty within each Division report through their Department Chairs.

This seems like an Organizational Model that could provide the distinctiveness of independent colleges by renaming our current Divisions as Colleges and assigning a “Divisional Dean” with appropriate duties. The recruiting office can use the language about a College (or School) of Art(s), a College of Science, as well as Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences – or whatever names the Divisions might want to assign. The structure could find an advantage of having Divisional Deans for fund-raising, recruiting undergraduates and graduate students, divisional award ceremonies, and other activities that might bind smaller groups into communities. At the same time the overlaying structure efficiently provides financial, fund-raising, research, and infrastructure support to all the departments.

**Cost/Benefit Analysis Within BAM**

As we have entered a new era with a carefully crafted Budget Model, it is becoming apparent that larger units will provide some stability during times of change. What is of interest to students today will change, as it has in the past – they are responsive to the world they experience shaping their curiosity/passion and their recognition of which fields lead to jobs. It is a balance of those forces that cause shifting of students between fields within colleges and between colleges. In addition, the cost of supporting fields/colleges also differs because the cost of doing research/creative activity varies, differences in national salary expectations, and variation in the number of students entering a field/college. In the case of Arts & Sciences, binding these units together is not only good for delivering the Vol Core (General education) to the broader campus and generating interdisciplinary programs and many interactions with other colleges, it creates a stable financial community that works well together across disciplines.

Appendix B is attached as a reminder of the current budgetary variations by division. The biggest difference between divisions is the space needed for research/creative activity and teaching, and the number of student credit hours generated in the division. These differences could become exaggerated if new colleges are created and they become more isolated (as has been suggested by the “burst of interdisciplinarity” that occurs when divisions rejoin Arts & Sciences). In addition, the cost of creating a new administrative structure, particularly for the research-active, expensive infrastructure heavy natural science division is substantial.

**Conclusion**

If there are benefits to be gained by creating colleges out of some divisions in Arts & Sciences, I would suggest that those can be met by creating Divisional Deans. The addition of those individuals while maintaining the current administrative structure would help manage our growing college and make the divisions more visible while providing efficiencies of size.