

Position Descriptions for Divisional Deans within Colleges of Arts & Sciences

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In my report of August 3, 2022, I reported that some associate deans within a college of arts & sciences structure were likely to have division-related duties and sometimes were even defined as “divisional deans”. This formulation seems to be more common in universities with more than 40,000 students – although Texas A&M with 70,000+ does not have divisional deans, while the University of Iowa with 30,300 students has two divisional deans (each with two divisions – arts & humanities and natural & social sciences). I provided some limited thoughts on the duties of these positions based on my experience from the Big10, but without any systematic gathering of data. To that end, I provide a report of the duties from a variety of schools, including those cited in the Chancellor’s message of September 19, 2022.

In the Appendix you can see the message I sent and the Schools/Deans from whom I requested information. Eight deans responded within 2 weeks, one (Univ of S. Carolina) wrote to say he would respond, but never has, and the dean at the Univ of Virginia did not respond.

Interestingly, the responses are varied as to the duties of the divisional deans, how they fit into the overall structure of the college, whether they are full or part time and whether there is a search. The most consistent parts are:

- The Divisional/Associate Deans work with a number of departments, typically fitting the traditional three or four divisions of Arts & Sciences. In most schools there is one Dean per division, but in some arts and humanities are combined and in one natural and social sciences are combined.
- The primary divisional dean duties include college-level oversight of faculty recruitment, hiring, mentoring, retention, leaves, and promotion within the departments of the division.
- Some colleges also explicitly include “support of research” in duties, while all still had someone named as college level research dean.
- Most colleges explicitly show these deans in the organizational chart as reporting to the “dean” or “executive dean” – used only at one school. Only the executive dean reports to the provost.
- All but one carried out searches and all preferred internal candidates, although two discussed needing an open or external search for an arts college.
- Fiduciary responsibility always resides with the Executive Dean, although three deans noted that the divisional deans have some budget with which to make strategic decisions.

What varies more between the schools:

- Four colleges had full-time divisional deans, but in all cases they did more than work with the departments in their division. For example, in one case the dean of natural sciences & mathematics was also the associate dean for research for the entire college. In two that called them “full-time”, the deans still taught a class.
- In three schools, the deans were part-time (75% effort), with one dean commenting that if the position were full-time, it would be difficult to recruit anyone. Another commented that it allowed the deans to continue some scholarly activity. In these schools the divisional deans were not carrying out other college-level duties.
- Some deans explicitly commented on the divisional deans being an important part of the senior team.
- In some colleges the department heads report to the divisional dean (and I presume have annual reviews with the divisional dean), while in other cases that is not the case. Several deans did not comment either way.

I have attached the job descriptions I received from the Univ of Michigan and Univ of Washington, Seattle. The former has 3 year, 75% positions that are renewable. The latter has full-time, 4-year position that was going to be an open/external search because they were not expecting a strong candidate to emerge from within the Arts division. The UM positions are primarily focused on personnel with some advisory role on budget, research concerns and graduate education. Having been there as a department chair, I can say that at UM the focus was primarily on personnel – I would talk to different associate deans about research and budget, and the graduate school was very powerful and answered most questions about graduate education. Note that there are no fund-raising duties for UM divisional deans, while there are for UW.

Several deans noted that the divisional deans were responsible for creating a P&T committee within the division for review of tenure and promotion cases. This was my experience at UM, where the divisional deans then wrote a report about the case, discussion and vote of the divisional committee – much as our CAS P&T committee now does for all cases. The divisional deans were part of the college cabinet that then discussed all cases and provided advice to the dean.

My thoughts for a new organizational structure.

Currently, the College Associate Deans struggle to manage everything within their portfolios. Adding divisional deans will be a big help for the office that is most overwhelmed, the A.D. for Personnel. It is clear from the other schools that the highest priorities at all institutions for divisional deans is the faculty personnel. If all we did was create 50 or 75% nine-month positions that worked on these issues and created more focused P&T committees – it would be a huge help. The positions at UM were like that when I was still there 11 years ago at 50% effort – it is clear they have expanded to do more now as the college has become much larger.

It is also the case that the A.D. for Research & Infrastructure has a job that is too big. It has become so because of the constant need to help departments and individual faculty who are dealing with “broken” buildings, to work with the space committee to deal with moving people and finding space for people, while dealing with the growing research portfolio. It leaves little time for this dean to work with department heads on strategic priorities. The college already plans to split the AD of Research position by hiring someone to focus only on Infrastructure, while one person focuses on research – but they will work closely. Divisional Deans will necessarily work with the A.D. for Research on setting expectations for new hire start-ups in the divisions.

Similarly, with the growth of new academic programs and online programs in our college, the A.D. for Academic Programs has a very large job, and I expect the online part is going to grow fast. Having divisional deans that help heads think about the new programs they want to develop would also be very useful. But the efficiency of having a centralized Assoc Dean who coordinates VolCore, Online and Curricular processes is critical.

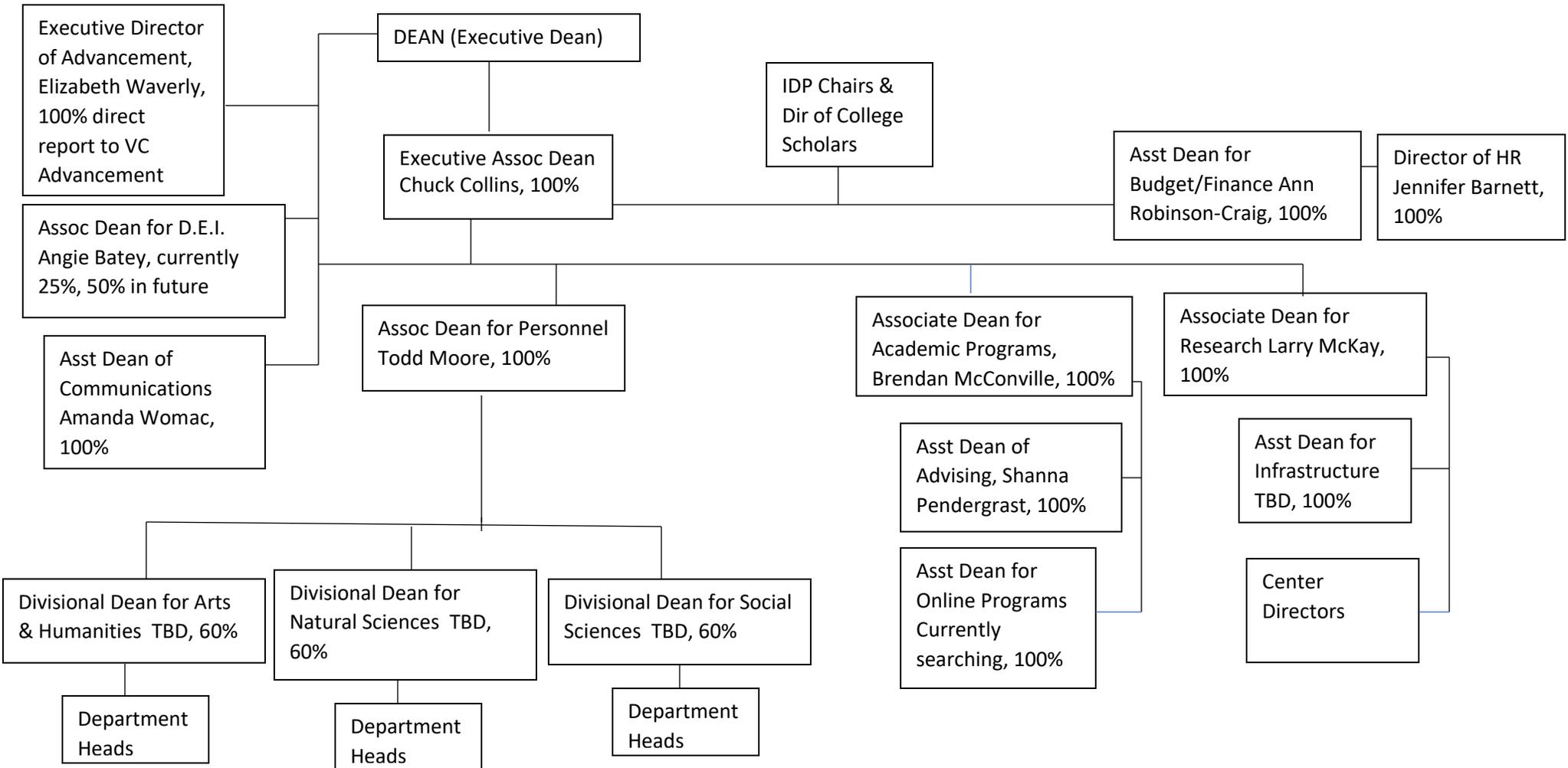
So, my recommendation for the new Divisional Dean appointments is a 9-month 60% effort appointment (reduced teaching load, no service at departmental level) with a summer month and an administrative stipend. This will allow faculty to carry out these jobs earlier in their careers without worrying so much that they may be abandoning their academic productivity – but providing some very useful service. I would recommend that heads have an annual review jointly with the divisional and executive dean, but let the divisional dean prepare the materials. I would suggest a 3-year, renewable term. At UM, some renewed, but not all, and it was a source of new full-time Associate Deans.

Because some personnel issues are complex and require care and communication with other parts of campus (OED, Legal, Provost’s office, etc), I would recommend that there continue to be a single point of contact in the college for more difficult personnel issues to whom the Divisional Deans would directly report. That would be the current full-time Associate Dean of Personnel.

I will note that creating new Divisional Deans with duties as described in the Provost announcement (direct report for department heads) will require a change in the campus and college by-laws. As the job description and effort are finalized, the college can create the appropriate by-law changes at the college level through our by-laws defined process – for example, we will need to add Divisional Deans and define them. The campus by-law change will require some additional effort. [ex. 1.6.5 on pg 9 says “The dean meets with the head annually to discuss job performance. This discussion is based on the review of the departmental faculty and the evaluation of the dean. The dean provides a summary assessment, including goals established for the coming year, which is available for inspection by departmental faculty.”]

I provide below a new organizational chart that takes into account some planned changes to address growth and online programs, as well as re-arrangement of reporting lines to reach the Chancellor’s desired endpoint of fewer direct reports for the Executive Dean.

Proposed Organizational Chart:



I sent the following message to 10 deans/executive deans:

Dear Dean XX,

My college is considering adding a few associate (or divisional) deans to help with the work-load. We are currently discussing what duties these positions should carry, how the individuals are hired and at what effort. I am writing several deans for which the websites indicate this type of position based on titles to ask these three questions:

1. What is the job description?
2. Are they full or part-time (ie, what % effort with the college)?
3. Is there a “search” to fill the position, and is it internal and/or external search?

The Deans that were asked for information and the current structure:

University of Georgia –

College leadership site link: <https://www.franklin.uga.edu/deans-office>

Alan Dorsey (Dean of Franklin College of Arts and Sciences) – atdorsey@uga.edu

5 divisions –

- Biological sciences (AD Michelle Momany)
- Fine arts (Ad Jean Martin-Williams – oversee 8 units across arts and social sciences)
- Humanities (AD Jamie Kreiner)
- Physical and mathematical sciences (Thomas Mote)
- Social sciences (AD Paula Lemons)

University of Florida –

College leadership link: <https://dean.clas.ufl.edu/associate-deans/>

David Richardson (Dean of College of Liberal Arts & Sciences) – der@ufl.edu

Unclear, but some sites suggest they have 3 divisions

- Behavioral and social sciences (Acting Cognizant Associate Dean – Christopher McCarty)
- Humanities – AD Mary Watt is assigned a few departments that appear to be in Humanities but unclear
- Natural and Mathematical Sciences (Acting Cognizant Associate Dean – Brian Harfe)

University of Michigan –

College leadership link: <https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/about/administration.html>

Anne Curzan (Dean of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts) – acurzan@umich.edu

3 divisions

- Natural Sciences (AD Myron Campbell)
- Humanities (AD Greg Dowd)
- Social Sciences (AD Barbra Meek)

Ohio State University –

College leadership link: <https://artsandsciences.osu.edu/people>

David Horn (Dean of CAS) – horn.5@osu.edu

3 divisions with “divisional deans”

- Social and Behavioral Sciences (Dean Ryan King)
- Natural and Mathematical Sciences (Dean Susan Olesik)
- Arts & Humanities (Dean Dana Renga)

UCLA –

College leadership link: <https://www.college.ucla.edu/about/about-the-deans/>

David Schaberg (Dean of “UCLA College”?) – schaberg@humnet.ucla.edu

4 divisions

- Humanities (Dean David Schaberg – seems to be handling both roles)
- Life Sciences (Dean Tracy Johnson)
- Physical Sciences (Miguel Garcia-Garibay)
- Social Sciences (Interim Dean Abel Valenzuala, Jr.)

UNC-Chapel Hill –

College leadership link: <https://college.unc.edu/contactus/>

Jim White (Dean of CAS) – casdean@unc.edu

3 divisions

- Fine Arts & Humanities (Senior AD Elizabeth Engelhardt)
- Social Sciences and Global Programs (Senior AD Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld)
- Natural Sciences (Senior AD Jaye Cable)

University of Alabama –

College leadership link: https://as.ua.edu/about/divisions-departments/deans-office/?_sft_classification=leadership-team

Joseph P. Messina (Dean of CAS) – jpmessina@ua.edu

3 divisions

- Social Sciences (AD Lisa Dorr)
- Humanities and Fine Arts (AD Tricia McElroy)

Natural Sciences and Mathematics (AD Raymond White)

University of South Carolina –

College leadership link: https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/about/leadership/office_of_the_dean/index.php

Joel Samuels (Dean of CAS) – joelsamuels@sc.edu

4 divisions

Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AD Nina Levine)

Natural Sciences (AD Jane Roberts)

University of Virginia –

College leadership link: <https://www.as.virginia.edu/deans-office-leadership-and-staff>

Christa Davis Acampora (Dean, College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences) – artsciweb@virginia.edu

3 divisions

Social Sciences (AD Jennifer Bair)

Arts & Humanities (AD Sarah Betzer)

Sciences & Research? (AD Laura Galloway)

University of Washington –

College leadership link: <https://artsci.washington.edu/leadership>

Dianne Harris (Dean of CAS) – only email is her assistant – Julianna Jones – juj@uw.edu

4 divisions with “divisional deans”

Arts (divisional dean Gabriel Solis)

Humanities (divisional dean Brian Reed)

Natural Sciences (divisional dean Daniel Pollack)

Social Sciences (divisional dean Andrea Woody)