

Task Force on Academic and Student Life



Final Report



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Report of the Task Force on Academic and Student Life

Introduction

The Task Force on Academic and Student Life was formed last Spring to assess ways of coordinating the Division of Student Life and the Dean of Faculty office with regard to their mutual pursuit of the educational mission of the College. Our charge read:

The Task Force will consider ways of integrating and coordinating the work of the Division of Student Life and the work of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Dean of the Faculty. Members of the Task Force will assess our institutional needs as a residential liberal arts college and explore the ways in which the two divisions can administratively best support the mission of the College. The Task Force will provide the President with recommendations by October 15.

To this end, the Task Force met throughout the summer; researched organizational structures at other institutions; interviewed officers at other institutions; conducted a literature review; studied the organizational history of the College; surveyed staff and administrators on campus, including former deans from both offices; conducted follow-up focus groups with some of those surveyed; sought input from elected representatives on faculty committees; and discussed at length the merits of multiple potential recommendations. The recommendations presented below reflect our best thinking on how to suffuse both areas with a shared mission, and on how to integrate the two areas as a more cohesive and communicative team in pursuit of that mission.

Background

The history of the Division of Student Life at Hamilton College over the last forty years is one of increasing independence from and non-involvement of the faculty. These years have seen a significant increase in the College's scholarly expectations of its faculty, which makes faculty less likely to invest time in student life outside of the classroom. At the same time, the increasing number and complexity of services provided by the Division, as well as the concentration of personnel and resources necessitated by this array of services, have required a professionalization of the Division that renders faculty less qualified to themselves provide such services.

This process of separation has occurred over many years. A few notable events include: elevation of the Dean of Students to officer status (1982); the closing of faculty apartments in residence halls (1987); the change in reporting structure to have the Dean of Students report directly to the President rather than to the Dean of the College, whose title was at the same time changed to Dean of the Faculty (1989); since the

appointment of Jan Coates as Dean of Students (1989), this position has been held by someone with “student affairs” rather than “faculty” credentials; with the appointment of Chris Willemssen (2001), the position of Associate Dean of Students (Academic) is filled for the first time by someone not coming in for a fixed term from the full-time faculty; the Dean of Students no longer presents student academic awards and prizes at Class and Charter Day (beginning 1994); the solicitation of nominees for student prizes has shifted from Dean of Students office to Dean of Faculty office (2002).

These kinds of changes over the years have helped produce the current situation, one of tenuous connection between the residential and academic experiences of our students. This disconnect is also reflected in the often tenuous relationships between the work of faculty, academic affairs administrators, and student affairs administrators.

The Task Force believes that mutual isolation of the academic and student services divisions—whether real or perceived—does not well serve the interests of our students, and underlying our deliberations and recommendations has been the belief that the College needs to create connections between classroom experiences and learning opportunities outside the classroom. Both are essential elements of our mission as a residential liberal arts college. Creating these connections requires administrative structures that encourage shared ownership of the successes (and failures) of the educational mission of the College.

Hence we make three kinds of recommendation: (1) programmatic ones intended to strengthen the presence of academics in residential life and to better coordinate existing academic programs; (2) structural ones affecting organizational form, reporting lines, and management practices designed to support the programmatic recommendations; and (3) cultural and symbolic ones intended to identify the Division of Student Life with the educational mission that we all pursue together.

Programmatic Recommendations

One of the concerns that motivated formation of the Task Force is a sense that the academic mission of the College is not adequately infused into the residential conditions that shape our students’ extra-curricular lives. Many good ideas exist for how to bring the curriculum into the residence halls, and to bring faculty further into students’ lives beyond the classroom. The Task Force holds that serious consideration of such proposals should be pursued by the officers designated in our structural recommendations below. The Task Force proposes that at the top of the list of proposals intended to enhance the reach of our academic mission into student life should be:

- **Establish first-year residence halls**
- **Link first-year advising to residence hall cohorts and Proseminars (or other small courses)**

The Task Force believes that the way to bring intellectual wealth to the residential experience of first-year students is to link advising to cohorts of first-years sharing common living arrangements. This can be accomplished by assigning small residential blocks of first-years to a common faculty advisor. This can also be accomplished by pre-registering first-years in Proseminars (or other small courses) and by housing classmates together in residence halls. Ideally, we would have cohorts of first-years sharing living space, a small course, and a faculty advisor teaching the course. As a part of this model, we recommend administrative coordination of regular communication between faculty advisors and their advisees' Resident Advisor (RA). This linking of advising, course work, and residential life can produce multiple benefits: (1) strengthened advisor/advisee relationships in the first year; (2) additional substantive intellectual exchanges among students in their residence halls; and (3) improved faculty awareness of residential circumstances, to name a few.

In other words, the Task Force recommends that the College establish programs that approximate some residential and advising features of the sort of First Year Seminar program many of our peer institutions have. Clearly our commitment to a Sophomore Seminar Program in the recent curricular reform limits the extent to which we can pursue a full-blown FYS model. This limitation need not keep us, however, from realizing the positive benefits of course-advisor-residential cohorts to the extent possible within our current residence hall and curricular landscape. These potential programs have two other benefits as well: (1) they provide the College an opportunity to make the most of a relatively neglected component of the new curriculum, the Proseminar; and (2) they provide the College an opportunity to reconfigure dramatically the current residence hall demographics on campus, thereby potentially solving other problems associated with the distinct cultures of some of our residence halls.

Furthermore, the Task Force recommends:

- **Continue the First Year Forum program and encourage faculty participation**

The First Year Forum provides an excellent opportunity to engage students at an intellectual level about the cultivation of work and life habits essential to thriving as responsible members of an academic community. The Forum provides much of the programming that our first-years would otherwise miss due to the College's lack of a First Year Seminar program, and in a format that complements our established curricular commitments. The First Year Forum cannot accomplish its purpose, however, without the active participation of faculty, and faculty cannot be expected to add yet another responsibility to their demanding work loads without appropriate rewards or credit earned. There are various ways to reward faculty for their participation, such as counting their participation toward fulfillment of service expectations, or providing a course reduction for some number of years of contribution to the Forum.

Finally, with regard to curricular programming, the Task Force recommends:

- **The College should establish theme housing for suitable academic pursuits**

The College has contemplated the notion of theme housing for some years. Some of the hesitation over establishing theme houses has to do with concerns about what “themes” to house. The Task Force believes that language-themed houses, an arts house, or other curricularly motivated theme houses, provide a remarkable opportunity to bring together residentially students with shared intellectual passions. They also provide an opportunity for direct faculty involvement in residential programming. Even if not every idea for a theme house is academically wise, the Task Force recommends that the College establish selectively the sorts of theme housing that complements our academic mission.

Our programmatic recommendations are modest in number but potentially transformative in scope. The Task Force holds that successful implementation of these recommendations requires significant adjustments to the administrative structure of the Division of Student Life and to its structural relationships with the College’s academic affairs administrative areas.

Structural Recommendations

See the attached and proposed organizational chart for visual guidance in understanding these recommendations.

A Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of the College

The Task Force was convened due in part to concerns about whether current administrative structure allows the educational mission of the College to inform consistently the daily work of the Division of Student Life. This Division benefits from many talented administrators and staff who, more often than not, must focus on daily tasks, regular problems, and managing crisis moments. Less often does the senior administration of this division have the luxury of time to strategize and implement a residential life experience for our students that complements and extends the academic mission. The goal of several of our recommendations is to encourage opportunities for strategic vision and planning by the Division, and in the process enhance the reputation of the Division among faculty members.

The Task Force was also convened due to concerns that the daily work, as well as the longer-term strategic planning, of the Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Students offices is not well coordinated. The kinds of programmatic recommendations we propose necessitate shifts of administrative authority, and a sharing of administrative responsibilities, that can better integrate the two offices and foster a stronger partnership in pursuit of the instructional mission of the College.

Our first set of recommendations is intended to address these matters:

- **Establish a Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of the College position (VPSA/DOC) to replace the current Dean of Students position.**

The Task Force interviewed officers at several institutions that use this organizational model. In cases where this model was adopted in the last ten years (e.g., Colgate, Middlebury, Mt. Holyoke), it was adopted precisely to address the sorts of concerns the Task Force was charged to address. Institutions that have discerned a problematic separation between academic and student life administrative functions have sought to bridge that gap by establishing a Dean of the College. The VPSA/DOC would be a senior officer reporting directly to the President, and would be invested with both academic and student life responsibilities in ways that link student life policy-making to the instructional mission pursued by the Dean of Faculty or VPAA/DOF.

It is well known that what goes around comes around. Our study of the organizational history of the College reminded several on the Task Force that Hamilton had a Dean of the College, under multiple configurations, between 1957 and 1988. Yet through all of those years this position functioned essentially as a Dean of the Faculty, and so is only nominally comparable to our recommendation. We propose the establishment of a senior officer position to *partner* with the VPAA/Dean of the Faculty in fulfilling the educational mission of the College in tandem with our character as a *residential* liberal arts college.

Regarding the credentials of candidates for this position, the ideal candidate would have a terminal degree in their field, experience in the classroom, a scholarly record, and administrative experience involving student life. For example, someone who had teaching experience, research experience, and who had served in a position analogous to one of our current Associate Deans of Students or Faculty would be desirable. It may be valuable for the VPSA/DOC to have faculty status, but we understand that the successful candidate might not be eligible for a faculty appointment. Personal attributes often override technical qualifications, and we do not want to preclude the possibility that a strong individual who did not have one or another of the types of experience mentioned above might be the best candidate. In any case, the Task Force recommends that a national search be conducted to fill this position.

It should be noted that in the course of our investigation of organizational models at other institutions, the Task Force gave serious consideration to the possibility of a provost to whom the Dean of Faculty and the Dean of Students would report. Our interviews with officers elsewhere convinced us of the superiority of the VPSA/DOC model that we propose, given the specific charge of the Task Force. We saw little indication that establishing a provost would help accomplish the goal of better integrating the academic mission of the College into our student life configurations and administration. Establishment of a provost might assist with annual and longer-range fiscal and facilities planning, but the Task Force is not convinced that a provost would help bridge the problematic gap between the functions of the Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Students divisions.

In sum, the Task Force holds that a VPSA/Dean of the College would be well-positioned to implement the programmatic recommendations presented above. Furthermore, many of those recommendations complement nicely the ideas generated by the recent Task Force on Alcohol. Implementation both of those ideas and of our recommendations will require the leadership of a Dean of the Faculty and a Dean of the College both advancing our instructional mission.

Establishing a Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of the College entails other structural adjustments within the current Dean of Students office. The Task Force recommends:

- **Locate the current Dean of Students position as the Dean of Students and Associate Dean of the College, reporting to the VPSA/DOC.**

During the years that Hamilton had a Dean of the College, this officer functioned effectively as a Dean of the Faculty to whom the Dean of Students reported. We recommend that the Dean of Students and Associate DOC report to the VPSA/DOC. The purpose of this reporting structure is to place at the top of the Division of Student Life an officer shielded in large part from crisis management, able instead to focus on curricular and residential planning in concert with the VPAA/DOF.

It should be noted that the Task Force has made no assumption regarding whether the Associate Dean of the College and Dean of Students would be a member of the President's cabinet. The Associate DOC/DOS could potentially be counted among the senior officers and be included in the cabinet.

The Task Force also recommends:

- **Locate the current Associate Dean of Students (Academic) as a second Associate Dean of the College, reporting to the VPSA/DOC.**

While the Dean of Students and Associate Dean of the College would assume responsibility for much of the current Student Life reporting structure, the Associate Dean of the College (Academic) would work with the VPSA/DOC (and the VPAA/DOF and Associate DOF) on curricular matters, on the advising system, and on coordination of class dean functions (see below) within the Office of the Dean of the College.

- **Retain the current Associate Dean of Students (Study Abroad) position as a third Associate Dean of the College, reporting to the VPSA/DOC and coordinating a new Office of Off-Campus Study.**

The Office of Off-Campus Study would coordinate communication between the Programs in Washington and New York, the Programs Abroad in China, France, and Spain, and study abroad generally, under the oversight of the Associate Dean of the College (Off-Campus Study). Administrative support personnel would continue to report to the relevant departments; the purpose of the Office of Off-Campus Study would be to

centralize information resources for students considering all forms of off-campus study. Because an Associate Dean of Students already partially fulfills this role, and is currently supported by a temporary Coordinator of International Student Services, the staffing needs of this office should be explored.

- **Elevate the current Assistant Dean of Students for Multicultural Affairs position to a fourth Associate Dean of the College.**

Elevation of the latter position expresses the College's commitment to diversity and to multiple diversity initiatives. This Associate DOC would work closely with the Associate DOF/Diversity Coordinator on some of those initiatives.

Regarding organizational structure within the Division of Student Life, the Task Force also recommends that the VPSA/DOC office:

- **Reorganize administrative functions on a class dean model; and**
- **Establish a Judicial Coordinator position.**

The current three associate dean positions and the one current assistant dean (for multicultural affairs) position would, reconfigured as four Associate DOC's, double, in addition to their other duties, as four class deans in order to strengthen the advising system for our students. These functions within the DOC office would be coordinated by the Associate DOC (Academic). Class deans can be organized in several ways (one could be dean of the first-year class each year, or dean of the Class of 2008, for example), and the various options are under consideration by the Dean of Students office.

The Judicial Coordinator would report to the Dean of Students and Associate DOC. He or she would consolidate functions currently spread across the Associate Dean of Students (Academic) and the Director of Residential Life, and would work closely with the faculty chair of the Harassment Grievance Board.

All told, these recommendations entail the creation of one new position, that of Judicial Coordinator, and a reconfiguration of responsibilities for the VPSA/DOC position and his/her office.

The VPAA/DOF Position

In the course of studying ways of integrating and coordinating the work of the DOF and DOS offices, the Task Force considered the current range of responsibilities assigned to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty. These responsibilities include (among others): all of the personnel matters associated with faculty tenure and promotion; addressing individual and collective faculty concerns and needs; pursuing and sustaining consortial relationships with other institutions; large-scale budgetary

priorities for the College; strategies meant to enhance our competitive advantage with respect to peer institutions; academic facilities space planning for the social sciences, arts, and humanities; and assessment research intended to further strengthen curricular and co-curricular programs at the College.

The Task Force has concluded that meeting this expansive array of responsibilities would present significant challenges to any person occupying the VPAA/DOF position. Managing faculty personnel matters is by itself a full-time job that often leaves the VPAA/DOF insufficient opportunity to focus on broader issues of institutional planning and strategy.

Short of direct recommendations, we suggest that the College consider structural changes that might address this problem. These might include creation of a new administrative position or establishment of divisional deans.

The Task Force suggests that the President consider the possibility of dividing the VPAA/DOF position into two senior administrative positions: a VPAA/DOF and a person responsible for Planning and Research. The latter administrator would concentrate his or her energies on envisioning and leading the qualitative advancement of the institution as a whole. This person would conceivably include among his/her direct reports the Director of Institutional Research; the College Librarian; and the Emerson Gallery Director. This Planning and Research administrator would focus in particular on synthesizing the many complex facilities plans currently in development. Orchestrating planning for the Library and for future gallery space would be facilitated by close cooperation between this planner and the administrators responsible for such facilities.

Additionally, the current Mellon Assessment project is but the beginning of longer-term efforts by Hamilton to lead its peers with respect to sophisticated empirical assessment of its curricular and residential programs. A Planning and Research administrator would conceive and lead assessment efforts from the vantage point of an overarching perspective on the College, its programs, practices, and priorities.

Given the responsibilities envisioned for this possible administrative position, the Task Force believes that the person holding the position should have academic credentials.

The possibility of dividing the VPAA/DOF position into two administrative positions requires further study and reflection. One among several questions is whether a Planning and Research administrator would be a senior officer or would report to a senior officer. The view of the Task Force is that the recommendations in this report may be implemented concurrently with further consideration of this possibility.

The Task Force also suggests that the President and the VPAA/DOF explore the possibility of establishing divisional deans to whom department and program chairs would report. Divisional deans could be responsible for a variety of matters including budgetary oversight of departments, course scheduling and enrollment planning, timing of faculty leaves, evaluation of departmental educational equipment requests, etc. (Assumption of some of these responsibilities would also allow the Associate

DOF/Diversity Coordinator to focus attention on diversity initiatives). These part-time administrative positions could be staffed by faculty offered course releases or other incentives. The Task Force considers divisional deans a promising addition to administrative structure and, while the issue is complex, it warrants further study. Alternatively, an additional Associate Dean of the Faculty might have responsibility for the duties described for divisional deans.

Reporting Structure

The Task Force was convened in part due to concerns that the current VPAA/DOF position is overburdened with a cumbersome reporting structure. Creation of a Dean of the College position provides an ideal opportunity to reconfigure reporting structures so as to spread the academic mission of the College across the current DOF and DOS structures. The Task Force recommends:

- **Shift some current VPAA/DOF direct reports to the VPSA/Dean of the College: Registrar, Quantitative Literacy/Study Skills**

These reports relate to academic support services that appropriately fall under the purview of a Dean of the College as conceived by our peer institutions. Having the administrators of these services report to the VPSA/DOC will shift responsibility for some elements of the academic program such that he/she will share with the VPAA/DOF oversight of key curricular components. While also lightening the load on the VPAA/DOF, this shift will help suffuse the current Division of Student Life with an emphasis on academics and curricular support.

- **Shift some current VPAA/DOF direct reports to the Associate Dean of the Faculty/Diversity Coordinator: Opportunity Programs (HEOP, Posse, Access)**
- **Shift other current VPAA/DOF direct reports to the Executive Assistant to the VPAA/DOF: Student Fellowships, Health Professions**

By formalizing this reporting structure we hope to shield the VPAA/DOF from some details of decision-making so that he can focus, with the VPSA/DOC, on larger matters of planning, vision, and strategy. As Diversity Coordinator, it is reasonable that directors of the various Opportunity Programs report to the Associate DOF in order to facilitate coordination of these programs and in order to avoid costly duplications of effort. Student Fellowships and Health Professions are linked to other functions of the DOF office (e.g., summer research) in which the VPAA/DOF's executive assistant can play a coordinating role.

These changes in reporting structure would leave the VPAA/DOF with the following direct reports: Writing Center, Oral Communications, Athletics Director, Emerson Gallery, and Librarian. The Task Force realizes, however, that the direct reports

occupying much of the attention of the current VPAA/DOF are the approximately 180 continuing faculty who bring all manner of concerns, great and small, to him daily. The Task Force is hopeful that the recently redefined position of Executive Assistant to the VPAA/DOF will make the VPAA/DOF role more manageable in this respect.

Additionally, the Dean of the Faculty office needs to communicate clear guidelines to the faculty regarding the great variety of issues that can be addressed and resolved satisfactorily by the members of the office without requiring the attention of the VPAA/DOF.

Meeting Practices and Committee Membership

The purpose of reconfiguring organizational structure in the ways the Task Force recommends is to strengthen expression and pursuit of our academic mission across the current separation of functions between the DOF and DOS offices. These changes also serve the purpose of creating a partnership of strategy and vision between the VPAA/Dean of the Faculty and a new VPSA/Dean of the College, so that these two senior officers can advance our educational mission together through their participation in the President's cabinet. That partnership requires teamwork and cooperation, hence we recommend:

- **Regular meetings between the VPSA/DOC and the VPAA/DOF, in addition to and independent of senior officer meetings**
- **Regular meetings between the Associate Dean of the Faculty and the Associate Dean of the College (Academic)**

The latter two deans (in their current form) already work closely on advising and other matters. Close collaboration between them, taking into account the Associate DOC's proposed role in coordinating a class dean model, is one of several ways to build more bridges between the two divisions while also enhancing everyone's promotion of the academic mission of the College.

The Task Force also expects that the Dean of Students and Associate Dean of the College, in addition to managing much of the current Student Life reporting structure, would also work closely and regularly with the VPSA/DOC and the other Associate DOC's on matters of policy and planning, and would potentially join the President's cabinet as a senior officer.

The current elected committee structure of the faculty attempts to honor the inclusion of the current DOS office in certain curricular and governance deliberations. The Associate Dean of Students (Academic) sits *ex officio* on the Committee on Academic Policy; the Dean of Students and the Associate Dean of Students (Academic) sit *ex officio* on the Committee on Academic Standing; the Dean of Students chairs *ex officio* the Committee on Student Activities.

The Task Force believes that an effective partnership between the VPAA/DOF and the VPSA/DOC requires changes to these *ex officio* committee appointments:

- **VPSA/DOC to sit *ex officio* on the Committee on Academic Policy along with the VPAA/DOF**
- **VPSA/Dean of the College to sit *ex officio* on the Academic Council. “Academic Council” to be renamed the Dean of the Faculty Advisory Council.**
- **Rename the Committee on Student Activities as the Dean of the College Advisory Council. VPAA/Dean of the Faculty to sit *ex officio* on this Council.**

These last recommendations strike the Task Force as especially important. The Academic Council functions as the executive committee of the faculty, sets the agenda for faculty meetings, sets ballots for faculty committee elections, and counsels the VPAA/DOF throughout the year. Under the structural changes we propose, the entity in need of that counsel is a *partnership* of the VPAA/DOF and the VPSA/DOC. Inclusion *ex officio* of the Dean of the College on the Dean of the Faculty Advisory Council will reflect this partnership. Similarly, elevation of the CSA into a DOC Advisory Council reflects the elevation of the current DOS position into a Dean of the College, while also reflecting the partnership between VPSA/DOC and VPAA/DOF in the latter’s *ex officio* inclusion on this Council. The Task Force anticipates that, on occasion, the VPAA/DOF and the VPSA/DOC may opt to convene these Councils jointly for discussion of curricular, student life, or other matters.

It should be noted that inclusion of the VPSA/DOC on the Dean of the Faculty Advisory Council may require that the Dean of the College be a member of the faculty. The Task Force nevertheless remains ecumenical about the variety of educational administrative professionals who may be appropriate candidates for this position.

It should also be noted that these changes of committee membership would require changes to the Faculty Handbook.

Finally, the Task Force recommends:

- **Rename the On-Campus Planning Committee as the Priorities and Planning Committee and enhance its charge.**

The purpose of this committee will be to advise the President on institutional and financial priorities, and facilities and space planning. The Task Force hopes that the changes will result in a more active and authoritative campus committee, thereby assisting the President and senior officers with decision-making and long-term planning. Although the precise membership of the committee will be determined by the President,

the Task Force recommends that it include four faculty members (including one member of the Faculty Committee on Budget and Finance) and representatives from the student body, staff, administration and M&O. The VPAA/ Dean of the Faculty, the VP for Administration and Finance, and the VPSA/ Dean of the College will serve as voting members. Should the College establish a senior administrator to focus on planning and research, this committee would fall under that person's oversight and would be chaired by the person holding that position.

Structure and Culture

The Task Force believes that the structural recommendations outlined above would play a significant and positive role in enhancing pursuit of the academic mission across the current Dean of Faculty and Dean of Students offices. We want to convey, however, that many of the staff members and administrators that we interviewed from across the College expressed greater concerns about the administrative and faculty *culture* of the institution than they did about our administrative *structure*.

While changes to administrative structure can enhance everyone's pursuit of a shared academic mission, the Task Force believes that structural changes cannot alone be expected to accomplish cultural change. Changing the culture of our community toward greater cooperation, coordination, and fellow-feeling will require that mutual respect, trust, honesty, responsibility, hard work, and good humor be shared among all contributors to our mission.

As one contribution to that cultural change, the Task Force recommends:

- **Orientation for new faculty that is designed to strengthen the structural changes recommended here.**

Rearrangements of senior officer responsibility, shifts in reporting structure, and changes to management practices will not alter the faculty culture unless each new cohort of continuing faculty learns a new way of excelling not only as teachers and scholars but as members of a thriving intellectual community that is also a complex organization. New faculty orientation should inculcate a respect for the partnership between the VPAA/DOF and the VPSA/DOC such that both offices are identified with the academic mission. And new faculty orientation should inculcate an understanding of a reporting structure in which many matters can be resolved without addressing the senior officers directly.

Furthermore, the College deserves a system of values in which faculty members are assessed by the full range of their contributions (or lack thereof) to the life of the campus community. Hence the Task Force recommends:

- **For purposes of promotion and tenure, conceive teaching excellence to include excellent academic advising of students**

- **Evaluate faculty advising, reward excellent advisors, and hold negligent advisors accountable**
- **Distinguish between and value both committee service and co-curricular forms of service**

Many faculty contribute actively to the life of the College in ways other than elective or appointive committee service, often without acknowledgement or appreciation. We recommend that faculty annual reports, and tenure and promotion personal statements, detail both committee and co-curricular forms of service, and that both be taken into account in salary decisions as well as in tenure and promotion cases.

Symbolic Recommendations

The Task Force was convened in part due to concern that the academic mission of the College did not consistently inform the work of the Division of Student Life. Unfortunately, some of the traditions and practices of the College do not invite constant involvement of the Division of Student Life in the intellectual life of the campus. The Task Force believes that some modest symbolic changes can help to shift perceptions and realities in a positive direction. We recommend:

- **The VPSA/Dean of the College should award student prizes at Convocation and on Class and Charter Day (and the VPAA/Dean of the Faculty should award Class and Charter Day faculty teaching awards)**
- **Every employee with at least a bachelor's degree should be welcome to march at Commencement**
- **The VPAA/Dean of the Faculty and the VPSA/Dean of the College should encourage organizers of public lectures and other events to welcome staff and administrative participation**

This can be accomplished by, for example, including interested staff and administrators in invitations to guest lecturer dinners.

In the interest of fostering friendships and camaraderie across the range of College employees, we also recommend:

- **Regular subsidized College employee happy hours at the Little Pub.**

This last recommendation, while seemingly trivial, reflects the outcome that the members of the Task Force hope all of our recommendations can help to realize: a more congenial intellectual community on the Hill. Such a community is fostered by the

full range of College employees, diverse in their contributions but united in their focus on providing a truly excellent educational experience for all of our students.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Bedient, Chair of the Task Force

Vivyan Adair, Associate Professor of Women's Studies

Meredith Harper Bonham, Executive Assistant to the President

Ann Burns, Staff Assistant for Advising

Mark Castro '05

Marianne Janack, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Bob Kazin, Director, Counseling and Psychological Services

G. Roberts Kolb, Professor of Music

Kirk Pillow, Associate Dean of the Faculty

Nancy Thompson, Acting Dean of Students

Christina Willemsen, Associate Dean of Students (Academic)

Task Force on Academic and Student Life: Summary of Recommendations

Programmatic Recommendations

- Establish first-year residence halls.
- Link first-year advising to residence hall cohorts and Proseminars (or other small courses).
- Continue the First Year Forum program and encourage faculty participation.
- Establish theme housing for suitable academic pursuits.

Administrative Structure

- Establish a Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of the College position (VPSA/DOC) to replace the current Dean of Students position.
- Locate the current Dean of Students position as the Dean of Students and Associate Dean of the College, reporting to the VPSA/DOC.
- Locate the current Associate Dean of Students (Academic) as a second Associate Dean of the College, reporting to the VPSA/DOC.
- Retain the current Associate Dean of Students (Study Abroad) position as a third Associate Dean of the College, reporting to the VPSA/DOC and coordinating a new Office of Off-Campus Study.
- Elevate the current Assistant Dean of Students for Multicultural Affairs position to a fourth Associate Dean of the College.
- Reorganize administrative functions within the DOC office on a class dean model.
- Establish a Judicial Coordinator position.
- Consider the possibility of a Planning and Research administrative position.
- Consider the possibility of a system of divisional deans.

Reporting Structure

- Shift some current VPAA/DOF direct reports to the VPSA/DOC: Registrar, Quantitative Literacy/Study Skills.
- Shift some current VPAA/DOF direct reports to the Associate Dean of the Faculty/Diversity Coordinator: Opportunity Programs (HEOP, Posse, Access).
- Shift other current VPAA/DOF direct reports to the Executive Assistant to the VPAA/DOF: Student Fellowships, Health Professions.

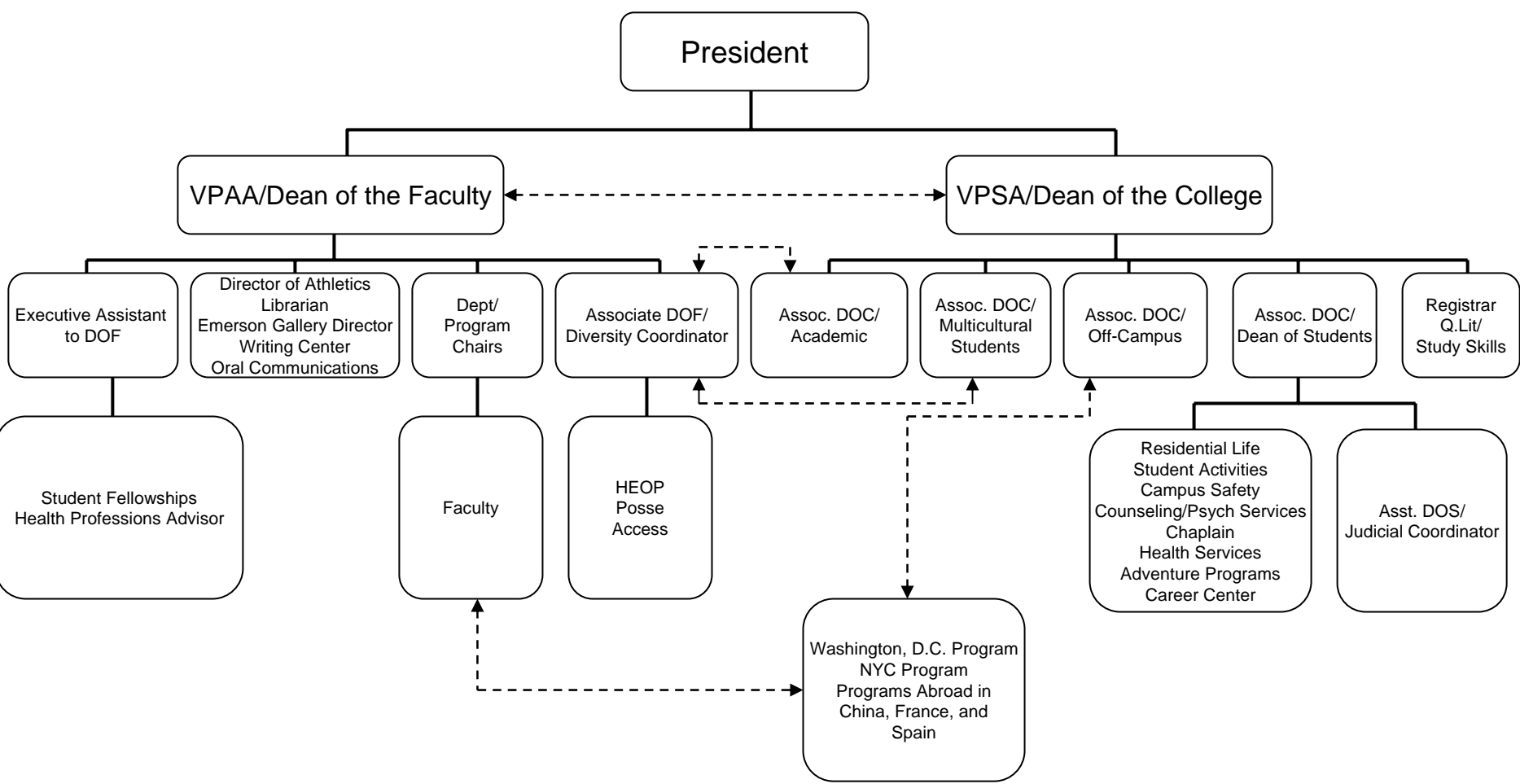
Meeting practices and committee membership

- Regular meetings between the VPSA/DOC and the VPAA/DOF, in addition to and independent of senior officer meetings.
- Regular meetings between the Associate Dean of the Faculty and the Associate Dean of the College (Academic).
- VPSA/DOC to sit on the Committee on Academic Policy along with the VPAA/DOF.
- VPSA/Dean of the College to sit *ex officio* on the Academic Council. "Academic Council" to be renamed the Dean of the Faculty Advisory Council.
- Rename the Committee on Student Activities as the Dean of the College Advisory Council. VPAA/Dean of the Faculty to sit *ex officio* on this Council.
- Rename the On-Campus Planning Committee as the Priorities and Planning Committee and enhance its charge.

Cultural and symbolic recommendations

- Orientation for new faculty should be designed to strengthen the structural changes.
- For purposes of promotion and tenure, conceive teaching excellence to include excellent academic advising of students.
- Evaluate faculty advising, reward excellent advisors, and hold negligent advisors accountable.
- Distinguish between and value both committee service and co-curricular forms of service.

- The VPSA/Dean of the College should award student prizes on Class and Charter Day (and the VPAA/Dean of the Faculty should award faculty teaching awards).
- Every employee with at least a bachelor's degree should be welcome to march at Commencement.
- The VPAA/Dean of the Faculty and the VPSA/Dean of the College should encourage organizers of public lectures and other events to welcome staff and administrative participation (by, for example, including interested staff and administrators in invitations to guest lecturer dinners).
- Regular subsidized College employee happy hours at the Little Pub.



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