



Faculty Senate

November 21, 2007

Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee Four Hundred Fifty-Fifth Report

Proposed School of Communication

S E C T I O N I

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

This proposal is for the establishment of a School of Communications within the College of Arts and Sciences. The School will be led by a Director who will report directly to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The School comprises the Departments of Communication Studies and Journalism, the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and the Programs in College Writing and Film Media. All units, degrees, programs, majors, minors, endowments, and transfer credit agreements will be retained as well as space, equipment, budget (including lab fees), and facilities are unchanged.

On November 19, 2007, after reviews by the Council of Deans and the Budget Office, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the proposal from the College of Arts and Sciences to establish a new School of Communication under the provisions of section 8.85.31 of the University Manual as a program for which no additional funding is required.

BACKGROUND

The proposal for a School of Communications was approved by all of the relevant academic units between January 2006 and January 2007, by the Curriculum Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences on April 3, 2007 and by the College of Arts and Sciences faculty on April 17, 2007 and was subsequently submitted to the Council of Deans and the Budget Office prior to consideration by the Curricular Affairs Committee.

On October 3, 2007, the Council of Deans "unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed" the proposal.

In her review, Budget Director Linda Barrett noted on November 6, 2007 that it was the Budget Office's understanding, based on the information provided by the

College of Arts and Sciences "that no additional budgetary resources are required to implement the School at this time."

Ms Barrett went on to note that the College had assured her that the new Director position would be funded initially by "reallocating existing college and university resources..." and that no additional staff or technology would be required because courses, as well as administration and advising within departments and programs would not immediately change.

In conclusion, Ms. Barrett stated that "there are no provisions for accommodating increased support for this program beyond what is generated by the increased revenue from students outside of the institution."

The Curricular Affairs Committee accepted assurances that additional funding would not be required for implementing the immediate establishment of the School of Communications.

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S E C T I O N I I

RECOMMENDATION

The Curricular Affairs Committee has reviewed the proposal and considered all of the comments forwarded to it by the various bodies. On November 19, 2007, the committee voted to recommend to the Faculty Senate that the proposed School of Communication be approved as a proposal that requires no new funding for its implementation. The proposal is in the format required by the Board of Governors for Higher Education.

Proposal for a School of Communication

A. PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Name of Institution

University of Rhode Island

2. Administrative Unit

College of Arts and Sciences

3. Title of proposed organizational unit

"School of Communication"

4. Intended date of organizational change

July 1, 2008

5. Intended location of organizational unit

The units that will form the School will remain in their current locations until a new or a newly renovated building can be provided where all units can be co-located. All offices, laboratories, and special facilities will remain as currently

assigned. The university is committed to working collaboratively with the various departments that comprise the proposed School of Communication to determine the location and facilities needed to provide state-of-the-art technology and support for the teaching, research, service, and outreach activities of the School.

6. Description of institutional review and approval process

	<u>Approval Date</u>
College Writing Program	2/03/06
Department of Communication Studies	4/26/06
Department of Journalism	1/31/07
Graduate School of Library and Information Studies	1/25/06
Program in Film Media	2/01/06
College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee	4/03/07
College of Arts and Sciences	4/17/07
Curricular Affairs Committee	11/19/07
Faculty Senate	
President of the University	

7. Summary description of proposed organizational change

Five academic units and programs currently affiliated with the College of Arts and Sciences will be housed in the School of Communication within the College, with a Director serving as the head of the administrative unit. The units include the College Writing Program, Department of Communication Studies, Department of Journalism, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and the Program in Film Media. All units, degrees, programs, majors, minors, endowments, and transfer credit agreements will be retained as well as personnel, space, equipment, budget (including lab fees), and facilities. The Director of the School will report directly to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In terms of governance issues, curricular proposals would be approved first by the department or program, then by the School, and would then be submitted to the College curriculum committee.

8. Signature of the President

Robert L. Carothers

9. Statement that no new or additional resources are required or that compensatory reduction or reallocation of resources will take place

A reallocation of resources will be required to support a competitive salary for the person chosen as Director in a national search and to increase clerical and fiscal support for the School. These funds will be reallocated from some of the revenues available due to forthcoming retirements within the College as well as from the University.

We anticipate building a school of distinction for the 21st century that will attract major private and corporate donors, and thus plan to seek leadership investment in the forthcoming URI Capital Campaign for endowments to support School excellence initiatives, the Director's salary, professorships, graduate fellowships, and undergraduate scholarships.

Eventually, we anticipate a need for additional faculty members and graduate teaching assistants as undergraduate and graduate enrollments increase. As the School grows, we anticipate increased support from the University to meet personnel and infrastructure needs.

10. Person to contact during the review

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University of Rhode Island
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11. Signed agreements for any cooperative arrangements made with other institutions/agencies or private companies in support of the program

None

B. RATIONALE

1. Reason organizational change is being proposed

Establishing a School of Communication will unite the strengths of five academic units within Arts and Sciences to create programs of national distinction, attract investment, help to recruit and retain talented faculty and students, and enhance the visibility and quality of our programs. Communication Studies is one the two largest undergraduate majors at URI; the program in Library and Information Studies is the largest graduate program. With the organizational change that we propose, we anticipate that the School will generate the highest undergraduate and graduate enrollments at URI. We expect that even more students will major, double major, and add minors offered by the School. Recent and anticipated future growth of the programs will require a strategic plan for commensurate growth of personnel, budget, and infrastructure, including state of the art equipment.

By centralizing units within the School, URI can take advantage of economies of scale and convergence of common interests to develop new program offerings, and effectively recruit faculty with diverse areas of expertise. Formation of the School will facilitate strategic planning of collaborative leading edge programs that will allow URI to create an important academic niche in emerging markets. For example, faculty members are already engaged in discussion of new courses and program tracks for new communications and information technologies, web-based communications, sports writing, media and communications, visual literacy, and international communications with a particular interest in China. Formation of the School will continue to generate exciting curricular innovation as units come together. The School will also be able to respond effectively to workforce development needs. We have a number of successful alumni with leadership roles in the broad field of communication who strongly support this proposal, who see the advantages of uniting and integrating the program and faculty strengths, and who have strongly urged us to go forward with the proposal. Among those, is Barbara Cardillo '72, a technology marketing executive in California's Silicon Valley, and co-founder of three successful high technology companies in the past 10 years, retired Vice

President of Marketing for Firetide, Inc. and recipient of the 2006 URI Distinguished Professional Achievement Award. Fred Joyal, '79, CEO of 1-800-DENTIST, a national marketing and communications firm, expressed interest in the compelling synergies that should emerge from formation of the School. George Marshall, Executive Director of the RI International Film Festival, immediately saw the possibilities for integrating the disciplines and seizing opportunities to respond to current market trends and workforce needs. Morton Irvine Smith '88 of the Joan Irvine Smith & Athalie R. Clarke Foundation has strongly encouraged the formation of a School of Communication for several years.

All of the units proposed for the School are engaged in active teaching, research, and outreach programs involved with theories, media, skills, assessment, and modes of human communication and have achieved considerable success in meeting their respective missions. All units contribute to the general education and honors programs and serve students in a variety of degree programs as well as their affiliated majors and graduate programs in both face-to-face and online programming. Journalism and Communication Studies currently collaborate to deliver a major in Public Relations, and faculty members from several units contribute to the interdisciplinary program in Film Media and the Leadership minor. Others contribute to the environmental sustainability initiative and/or programs in English, Women's Studies, and African and African-American Studies. Most units have already attracted donors who have established over \$1,000,000 in endowed funds to support students, faculty and programs (See examples in Appendix A).

Precedents for launching a school already exist at other institutions. We have examined a number of programs that include a variety of organizational structures (See Appendix B). Our proposed School contains the critical units of many top schools in a unique combination of programs that capitalizes on program availability and strengths at URI.

Bringing these strong units together in a School would allow URI to do the following:

- increase the regional, national and international visibility of the academic programs to prospective students and faculty, employers, and funding partners;
- facilitate recruitment of nationally recognized faculty and outstanding students;
- integrate and build on existing program strengths;
- attract significant investment from alumni donors and friends as well as corporation and foundation support for the people, programs, and special initiatives of the School;
- develop an economy of scale in an arena where leading edge technology is costly;

- draw on the considerable integrated strengths of the constituent units forming the School to enhance the quality of the efforts in teaching, research, service and outreach;
- encourage sharing of resources and equipment where possible and appropriate to achieve economies of scale and encourage collaborative proposals to support School initiatives with internal and external funding;
- increase collaboration to enhance their curricula and research programs;
- foster and increase interdisciplinary collaboration, communication, education, research and outreach;
- prepare students to meet workforce development needs in Rhode Island and the global marketplace;
- and offer students more learning opportunities than the units do independently.

We propose a School of Communication with a Director who will be selected in a national search and who will report directly to the Dean and supervise and coordinate efforts of the five units and programs to be housed in the School: the College Writing Program, Department of Communication Studies, Department of Journalism, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and the Program in Film Media. The constituent units would retain their existing autonomy for their units within the School, and integrate their collective strengths to enhance the quality and quantity of their achievements in teaching, research, service, and outreach. The units would retain all of their operating and endowed funds previously established through the URI Foundation. We anticipate that new endowed funds would be established to support students and faculty throughout the School and that would provide support for new collaborative initiatives.

The current degrees and majors offered by the units in the School include the Masters of Library Science and the Masters of Arts in Communication Studies on the graduate level, and the Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies, Film Media, Journalism, Public Relations, and Writing and Rhetoric. The School will continue to offer these degrees and majors and will develop and launch new programs and tracks. One possibility under consideration is to establish an integrative living/learning community for undergraduates in the School. The College Writing Program recently launched a new Bachelor of Arts in Writing and Rhetoric. There is also an opportunity to create a new undergraduate major or minor in Information Studies. The Graduate School of Library and Information Studies has developed a post-baccalaureate Certificate in Information Literacy Instruction and more certificates will be developed drawing on the strengths of the new School. The School may propose an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in the future that draws on faculty expertise in all units.

2. Goals the organizational change will accomplish

We anticipate that forming the School of Communication at URI will achieve the following goals:

- enhance the reputation of the programs within the School to various stakeholders and constituencies;
- increase undergraduate and graduate applications and enrollment;
- support the delivery of excellent undergraduate and graduate education in communication, journalism, film media, library and information studies, public relations, and writing;
- enhance coordination of academic and career advising;
- provide students with increased scholarship support;
- increase and upgrade equipment, technology, and facilities available to support students;
- enhance the value of the degrees students earn;
- engage and lead in the discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge;
- develop new interdisciplinary learning opportunities through design and implementation of innovative courses and programs of study, collaborative teaching models, and internships with the public and private sectors;
- facilitate development of interdisciplinary minors such as web design and communications;
- support development of undergraduate and graduate courses and programs, such as sports writing, media and communications, and information literacy;
- integrate more leading edge technology in academic programs to best prepare graduates for the workplaces of the future;
- and increase collaboration in international programming and research.

C. INSTITUTIONAL ROLE

1. Consistency of organizational change with the published role and mission of institution and how it is related to institutional planning

The proposed organizational change is consistent with the President's Strategic Plan and Management Letter. Specifically, one primary goal in the Strategic Plan is to "grow total enrollment by 1,000 FTE undergraduate and graduate students." Moreover, in his July 7, 2005 Management Letter, President Carothers suggested the possibility of a School of Communication.

Going forward, we need to have more internal discipline about investing in the academic programs that have the greatest likelihood of success. As we attempt to "brand" the university in ways beyond our historic association with marine programs,

we need to enhance those areas where there is strong student demand. Being enrollment or tuition driven means that we must better balance high cost and low cost programs so that our total expenses better match our income. **For example, we might move to create a "School of Communication,"** our largest academic major and an area with a still growing undergraduate enrollment. This would require investment in several high profile professors and a new home, perhaps a renovated Ranger Hall, but the impact could be broadly felt across the university. [page 25].

The proposed School will help URI recruit and admit more talented students on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Each of the programs proposed for inclusion in the School is already successful or, in the case of the newer programs, showing strong promise of success. The success of the interdisciplinary degree programs such as Public Relations, and the indications of forthcoming success with the newly approved Film Media major (we anticipated five majors by this period, but 75 students have already declared this major and nine more have already graduated) foreshadow the success of bringing all of these programs together in a School of Communication. The opportunity for these programs to collaborate in formal and informal ways will enhance student learning and satisfaction, contributing to increased recruitment and retention. The synergy and enhanced success that should come with this collaboration will help to "brand" URI in the ways the President suggests.

The University mission statement notes that URI is committed to promoting "students' ethical development and capabilities as critical and independent thinkers." Of the proposed participating departments and programs, three (Communication Studies, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, and Journalism) have an established record of success to "promote students' ethical development and capabilities as critical and independent thinkers." Indeed, each offers specific courses in ethics and has a focus on developing critical thinking skills. Although new as a program separate from English, and with a new B.A. degree, Writing has the same record of success in these areas. Film Media and Public Relations are interdisciplinary programs made up of faculty and courses from the above departments, among others, which also promote critical thinking and analysis. Overall, as the mission statements of each program show, these programs have the same goals, and sometimes the same students (double majors, major/minors). At the graduate level, the faculty of each these programs often serve on the committees of graduate students in the other programs. Joining together in this way will benefit the students, the faculty, and the university, contributing to research, teaching, outreach, recruitment and retention, and will create a climate conducive to the development of new programs.

D. INTERINSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1. Projected impact of organizational change on other Rhode Island public higher education institutions**

None.

- 2. Cooperative arrangements with institutions relative to the organizational unit**

We have transfer articulation agreements with our state institutions which we will maintain. Both the undergraduate program in Film Media and the graduate program in Communication Studies encourage collaboration with students, faculty, and programs at RIC.

E. EVALUATION

1. Process and criteria by which the organizational change will be monitored and periodically evaluated

The Graduate School of Library and Information Studies is accredited by the American Library Association, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Rhode Island Department of Education. We will retain the learning outcomes and performance measures for assessment that have been developed by each unit to date. Each unit will complete the URI AIIM survey and will meet the URI standards for NEASC accreditation. We will also collect data on student recruitment and retention for the School. Surveys of alumni will also be conducted to examine the impact of the School organizational structure on graduate school performance and employment opportunities. Students will be assessed on a degree program level and faculty will be evaluated through the annual review process. We anticipate that programs will use the True Outcomes e-portfolio system or a comparable system for students.

Each year, data will be collected on for all units in the School for the following indicators:

- undergraduate and graduate applications;
- undergraduate and graduate acceptances;
- retention rates;
- graduates;
- graduation rates;
- gifts to the School and endowments;
- grant applications and awards received;
- presentations and publications;
- faculty and student regional, national, and international awards;
- and outreach activities.

Five years after its formation, we recommend that URI conduct the first review of the School. The review should indicate whether the School should be continued in its present form, enhanced, or restructured to best meet institutional and program goals.

APPENDICES are available on the web at
http://www.uri.edu/facsen/455_CAC_Appendices.pdf