

November 29, 2017

Dear CLAS Advisors:

I'm writing to let you know about some exciting new plans for the programs within the Colleges of Letters, Arts and Science (CLAS).

As you are likely aware, the originally desired interdisciplinary purpose of CLAS as an overarching four-college structure has not developed as designed. In practice, the current role of CLAS is to house undecided students as well as the bachelor's degrees in General Studies and in Global Studies.

The plan is to develop innovative programs to enhance the experience of students by creating a unit specifically for that purpose, and reporting to the Provost's Office through a new position (exact title TBD). This proposal will ultimately be included in discussions with ABOR as part of the elimination of the broader CLAS structure.

The plan has been discussed with current CLAS leadership, and I wanted to share it with you today as the planning develops further. A task force will be formed to work through the details of this reorganization. Below, I list some current ideas to be considered so you can begin to discuss your ideas with your colleagues.

The new structure will emphasize refocused programs with a positive framing (e.g., exploratory versus undecided). Current thinking is that undecided (NMS) students will be in a new Exploratory Studies Program that will be organized into subunits, or meta-majors. Advisors will work primarily within a meta-major with names such as Exploration in Life Sciences, Exploration in Arts and Humanities, Exploration in Business and Commerce, etc. The same positive framing approach will extend to the General Studies and Global Studies majors. A working title for the unit could be the Undergraduate Exploratory and Interdisciplinary Programs or something similar (one alternative suggestion was a concept name, e.g., the "Socrates Program"). Clearly, at this stage there are still many details to be determined, and coming up with those recommendations will be the job of the task force.

Leticia Soto-Delgadillo will continue to serve as the Executive Director of Academic Advising in the new unit, and all advisors in the unit will report to her. I want to be clear that you need not be concerned about your job in relation to this proposal – we will still need a passionate team of advisors to support the students in these programs! Per the point on topical areas above, specific advisors are expected to be assigned to students in focal areas as the final structure is determined.

The switch-over to the new structure will likely happen in summer 2018. Also, because plans are still at an early stage and we must, among other things, develop appropriate communications to students and the rest of campus, please be circumspect when discussing these ideas. As more news becomes available my office will be in touch. Should you have any questions or if you would like to contribute ideas in the interim, please channel them through Leticia.

With thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Comrie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew C. Comrie, Ph.D  
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost