

University College Task Force
Report and Recommendations

The Faculty Senate requested that a task force “study the issue of academic affiliation for University College faculty” and “the placement of University College and its administration within the university's academic structure.” A task force was created consisting of the following members:

Deborah Barnes, Assistant Dean, College of Education
Kurt Boniecki (Chair), Associate Professor, College of Health and Behavioral Sciences
Deborah Bratton, Lecturer II, University College
Julia Winden Fey, Director, University College
Adriian Gardner, Lecturer, University College
Ramesh Garimella, Chair, Department of Mathematics
Lance Grahn, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Diane Newton, Vice President for Finance and Administration
Carl Olds, Lecturer II, University College
John Parrack, Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts
Scott Payne, Chair, Department of Writing
Diana Pounder, Dean, College of Education

The task force met on three occasions, and following discussion, voted to make the following recommendations to the Faculty Senate. Voting results are presented in parentheses.

I. Move the University College program and faculty to a newly created department within the College of Education with a full time chair (11 in favor, 0 opposed).

The task force widely agreed that (1) members of the university faculty, including the University College faculty, are appointed under Academic Affairs, and (2) Academic Affairs has authority over the curriculum of the university's academic programs, including the University College program. However, the recent creation of the Division of Enrollment Management moved the University College program and faculty outside of Academic Affairs. By moving the University College program and faculty to the College of Education, University College will again be under the purview of Academic Affairs.

Although the task force considered other options, the task force saw the following advantages to the current recommendation:

1. Despite teaching a diverse range of remedial and general education courses, the University College faculty consists of a cohesive group of educators that work as a team with a focused mission to provide developmental education to our students. Moving University College into a new department within the College of Education would maintain that cohesiveness and focus. Thus, options such as moving University College faculty appointments, either fully or jointly, to each faculty member's disciplinary department were rejected by the task force because they potentially undermined not only

the cohesiveness of the University College faculty but the quality of the developmental education provided to our students.

2. By moving the members of the University College faculty to a college, they will gain the same representation in faculty governance afforded other members of the faculty within the six colleges. Because members of the University College faculty are not currently affiliated with any college, they can only run or vote for the at-large positions on the Faculty Senate, whereas faculty members in the colleges can also run and vote for positions representing each college. The current recommendation will resolve this inequity and further ensure that the University College faculty can collectively participate in faculty governance.
3. The University College program and faculty do more than provide remedial content to students. The members of the University College faculty are dedicated to the study and implementation of developmental education. They not only teach students math and writing, but also skills that will help those students succeed throughout the rest of their education and beyond. This focus on developmental pedagogy fits well with the College of Education's mission to improve "the educational programs and services" of the State of Arkansas.
4. The Department of Higher Education and the State Legislature are focusing on remediation in higher education as part of an overall aim to increase retention and graduation rates across colleges and universities in Arkansas. Because college-level remediation is also a K-12 issue, the College of Education could add extensive knowledge and expertise to the statewide debate if it incorporated developmental education into its broader mission. Furthermore, moving the University College faculty to the College of Education would reinforce the perception that UCA sees remedial courses as part of a broader policy to educate the students of Arkansas, rather than just as a means for increasing enrollment.

II. Create a transition team to oversee the move of University College faculty to the College of Education (11 in favor, 0 opposed).

If Recommendation I is followed, the task force further recommends that the Provost appoint a transition team to address issues such as (1) the physical location of the new department, (2) the connection of the department with discipline-related departments (e.g., Math, Writing, etc.), (3) the department's connection to UCA's student learning centers, (4) changes in teaching load and faculty resources, (5) the department's affiliation with Enrollment Management, and (6) the new department's title.

III. Move Enrollment Management under Academic Affairs (11 in favor, 1 opposed).

Members of the task force agreed that remediation was part of the overall mission of enrollment management and grappled with the possible negative consequences of moving University College

out of Enrollment Management to Academic Affairs. Although the task force strongly believes that University College is an academic program that belongs in Academic Affairs, it also recognizes that University College is an essential component of our broader strategic plan to recruit, retain, and graduate our students. If Recommendation I is followed, members of the task force agreed that the connection between Enrollment Management and University College must be preserved.

The task force considered several options, but decided that the best resolution was to move Enrollment Management into a subdivision of Academic Affairs, with the VP for Enrollment management becoming an Associate Provost in a direct reporting line to the Provost. This recommendation was not only based on preserving the connection between University College and Enrollment Management, but also on the recognition that enrollment management should be part of the strategic plan of Academic Affairs. The success of enrollment management depends on its integration with the academic goals of the university and its connection to the entire faculty working to achieve those goals.