

**TO:** All Faculty and Staff

**FROM:** John M. Wiencek, Provost and Executive Vice President

**DATE:** July 6, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Organizational changes in the Provost's division

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Dear University of Idaho community:

I write to share with you a new vision for the Provost's division as well as to describe some changes in the function and organization of our central support units. Ideally, such changes would occur more gradually and not in the depths of a summer break, but the recent departure of our Vice Provost for Student Affairs has afforded an opportunity to enact needed changes during the fall 2016.

Last spring, I engaged the ASUI as well as some external advisors in an assessment of our student support areas (advising, tutoring, registration, student accounts, financial aid, etc.). Their feedback indicated that we have excellent and dedicated staff doing this work, but services are widely distributed across campus in colleges and other places making it difficult for new students to figure out where to go for their particular issues. This finding was supported by faculty who also found the Provost's division a confusing organization where the lines between the Vice Provost of Student Affairs and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs lacked clear definition. In addition, we have not fully utilized actionable data to inform our allocation of effort and resources to address student success as measured by academic success in key gateway classes, retention rates and graduation rates to name a few obvious metrics.

### **Why reorganize?**

I believe our core mission is to advance and share knowledge. We do this at the undergraduate level by ensuring student success inside and outside the classroom. I am moving forward with a reorganization to enable a higher level of focus on undergraduate student success so that we can better serve our students, grow our enrollment via improved recruiting and retention and improve the clarity of roles and responsibility across the entire campus.

## **Why now?**

Our new strategic plan is in place and it is clear that the first leg of our journey forward will focus on improved undergraduate student success which will lead to increased enrollment. In addition, the departure of Dr. Jean Kim, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, creates an opportunity to move from an incremental approach of reorganizing efforts in the division to a holistic change as quickly as possible.

## **What will change?**

An enrollment management shift started to occur last spring. We are moving back to an organizational structure where enrollment and student affairs are separate entities. We will launch a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) organization that will shift from strictly serving as a recruiting office to an office that includes both student recruitment and retention. SEM will be led by a Vice Provost for Strategic Enrollment Management, a position that will replace what was the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management position vacated by Steve Neiheiesel in fall 2013. As you will see in [the draft functional organizational chart](#), many units currently reporting to the Vice Provost for Student Affairs will be moving to SEM or elsewhere. The current plan is to place the Dean of Students in charge of the remaining student life functions and not refill the Vice Provost for Student Affairs position.

The remaining changes will be focused on the broad portfolio of the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs (Jeanne Stevenson currently serves in this role). This portfolio will be divided into two new units – a Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives and a Vice Provost for Faculty. This division of labor will allow for more meaningful strategic efforts to innovate our academic offerings as well as to provide better support for faculty development.

No one will lose their job and the vast majority of people will continue doing exactly what they are doing now, reporting to the same supervisor. This change is mainly aligning reporting lines at the Vice Provost level and will create clearly defined core roles and responsibilities. The [draft functional organizational chart](#) shows these structures, the defined responsibilities and a list of major subunits, team members (cross hatched) and key activities occurring in these units. It is not meant to represent personnel reporting lines below the major unit leads. The chart includes only units that are experiencing some sort of change; thus, colleges and some other direct reports are not included on these charts.

## **When will things change?**

We are in the midst of a national search for a Vice Provost of Strategic Enrollment Management and are hopeful the search will complete successfully with someone in that role by September 2016. Changes in reporting structures will occur in SEM after this new position is filled. We will likewise soon be starting a search for a Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives. And Jeanne Stevenson will assume the Vice Provost for Faculty role once we have completed the Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives search.

## **Process**

I met with Faculty Senate in the spring to start this discussion. With Dr. Kim's announcement of her departure, I met with Faculty Senate leadership again this summer to discuss this broader vision for organizational change in the Provost's division. Given that no new financial resources or positions were requested, Faculty Senate leadership had no objections to the proposal. I have also discussed and vetted this matter with all of the deans, the vice presidents and a variety of impacted units, especially those in student affairs where significant changes in reporting lines will occur. To date, we have made several modifications to the proposed structure and fully anticipate getting more feedback that will result in additional changes. There have been no major objections so far, and many people are enthusiastically embracing this renewed focus on student success.

### **Moves and location changes**

To the maximum extent possible, we are NOT changing the physical location of any of these offices. One key change will be an attempt to co-locate advising and student support services (TRIO, tutoring, College Success, Academic Coaches, etc.) to a "one-stop" shop on the third floor of the Idaho Commons. This hub will become a referral center to help direct students to the appropriate people and places to get the services they need right away and on the first attempt. This will likely cause additional moves, but these plans are not yet fully developed. Vice President of Infrastructure Dan Ewart and his team are busy trying to get this one-stop shop in place by fall 2016. Stay tuned ...

### **Feedback**

I firmly believe that this reorganization will position us for improved effectiveness in enrollment and student success. After this new mindset and organization is in place, it may take two to three years to have significant impact. Thus, President Staben has encouraged us to move quickly to implement these needed changes since we cannot afford to lose another year. I view this as a UI-wide project and know that there are more ideas and improvements to be discussed. Please take some time to discuss and review these plans with your colleagues and provide feedback for improving these ideas to your dean, area vice president or leader. Or, if you prefer, you can email your thoughts, ideas and questions directly to my office. Please send your email to Lodi Price at [lodi@uidaho.edu](mailto:lodi@uidaho.edu).

I hope that you have a productive and renewing summer. I am eager to see our campus vibrant with students again as we start classes in late August. I am looking forward to showing our students where they can go to get help of any sort ... on the third floor of the Commons!

Best wishes,

John

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