

Report
University College
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Executive Summary

The following represents the findings of the review of University College (UC) held April 17-19, 2017. As charged by the Provost, the committee was asked to shape its assessment around two basic components of the University of Iowa's (UI) new Strategic Plan (2016-2021): student success and engagement. A third major aspect of the committee's charge centered on analyzing the organizational structure of University College. In terms of contextualization, it should be noted that the review comes ten months after Division of Continuing Education (DCE) merged with University College. Much of the report centers on the opportunities and challenges associated with the combination of these two units. As added context, the review team conducted its assessment while taking note of the university-wide exercise to reconsider the overall structure of the UI by the year 2020.

University College is an expansive unit that deals with, among other things, the campus-wide first year student experience as well as issues related to nontraditional students. In addition to housing an amalgamation of smaller, otherwise non-affiliated units across campus, it is also home to two degree programs—the Bachelor of Applied Studies (B.A.S.) and the Bachelor of Liberal Studies (B.L.S.). Both programs enable students to complete a bachelor's degree via distance education. These degree programs were reviewed in 2016, with the report included in the self-study document for University College. The Division of Continuing Education (DCE), in partnership with the University's Colleges and Departments, provides credit and noncredit courses, and is in large part responsible for helping develop the UI's online course offerings. In addition, it offers workshops, and programs to traditional and nontraditional learners. The review committee began its work by reading a thorough self-study prepared by a committee comprised of the Associate Deans for both UC and DCE as well as representatives of Instructional Technology Services (ITS), and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). During its 48-hour site visit, the review committee met with the self-study committee, the Provost's Office, the Dean of University College, Program Directors and Team Leads from both units, DCE faculty, the UC Executive Committee, Associate Deans from Undergraduate Colleges, faculty for Place-Bound students, the UI Des Moines Academic Programs Committee, the UI Associate Vice President for Administration and Planning, an Open Forum for Staff, the Kirkwood Regional Center Executive Committee, representatives from the Academic Advising Center and the Office of the Registrar, as well as the Director of the Iowa Center for Higher Education in Des Moines. A confidential email account was also made available for staff to submit comments. The review committee's questions centered on each group's particular function with respect to University College/DCE and emphasized collaboration, efficiency, as well as how the merger could enhance the visibility and impact of the units under its supervision. Each of the groups interviewed provided substantive commentary and it is clear that faculty and staff working in each of the units as well as those sitting on advisory committees to University College are dedicated professionals committed to ensuring UC's success.

The review committee's report underscores that UC/DCE is working well. At the same time, it makes specific recommendations with respect to accessing nontraditional markets, strengthening curricular development and overall entrepreneurship, rethinking parts of its administrative structure, and facilitating better communication and closer partnerships with the UI's various colleges and support units whose missions overlap with UC/DCE. The report's narrative is recommendation-oriented in its approach, and concludes with the suggestions that recurred most frequently in the committee's discussion and have the greatest potential for

moving the unit forward while maintaining fiscal discipline. We call special attention to pp. 5-6 (Organizational Structure) and pp. 10-11 (Engagement, Iowa and Beyond) that outline the proposed Division of Professional Education, the key feature of assessment on how best to rethink current operations, structures, and audience.

I. Student Success

1. The University College serves an important role in supporting undergraduate student learning at the University of Iowa. The Division of Continuing Education provides a specific focus on providing educational opportunities for nontraditional undergraduate students. The Student Success Initiatives within University College benefit traditional undergraduate students in all colleges. This is cost effective for the University as well since it provides a consistent experience for all undergraduate students entering the university. Registrar Lockwood noted major increases in 4 and 6-year graduation rates, as well as retention rates. These increases have netted the University approximately \$10,000,000 and are due, in part, because of the upsurge in student success programming coordinated by University College.
2. University College supports undergraduate student learning in the following ways:
 - a. Through DCE:
 - i. Administers the online BAS and BLS degrees, mandated by the Regents for “place-bound” Iowans earning a bachelor’s degree
 - ii. Oversees a variety of online courses and certificate programs – we heard about the positive impact from professors in Sociology, Nonprofits, Rhetoric and others.
 - iii. Instructs faculty across the University in developing and maintaining online or blended courses. The committee heard from multiple faculty and staff members that showcased UC’s success in this area.
 - iv. Plays a special role in working with nontraditional or marginalized students, including those who left on-campus study due to academic and/or non-academic factors, veterans returning to college or adult students starting later in life.
 - b. Through Student Success Initiatives (SSI):
 - i. Transition Programs – Orientation and OnIowa!
 - ii. Curricular Initiatives
 - iii. Early Intervention and Student Support
 - iv. DCE staff currently work with students who left the UI or who were failing out, helping them take online courses. There is potential to integrate this programming more tightly with Student Success, Supplemental Instruction, and Advising.

- c. Advising
 - i. The advising staff within DCE provides a unique function in supporting distance and online students.

3. Recommendations

- a. Keep both DCE and SSI in UC.
- b. Create better risk assessment and advising tools for online students – whether place-bound or on-campus. This can be accomplished through collaborations between existing staff in DCE and the Academic Support and Retention staff.
- c. Utilize online tools to help place-bound students feel more integrated into campus life and the campus experience
- d. Funding is a challenge across the entire University. Our proposals are intended to be budget-neutral. Because UC will be funded as a “tax” under the new university budget model, we encourage UC to proactively seek Strategic Initiative Funding, external or internal grants, create cost-recovery and revenue-generating programs, and other revenue opportunities to assist itself in continued funding in a time of great change.
- e. Hire another staff person to allow for increased Supplemental Instruction and course-based support. It is apparent that student usage of Supplemental Instruction has increased since 2011. This could be an area where the unit requests Strategic Initiative Funding. While many areas within University College are appropriately staffed, this is one area where a lack of additional staff limits student opportunity. An additional staff person would support this point in the University’s Strategic Plan: “Increase course-linked academic support and encourage course redesign for high failure rate and gateway courses.”
- f. Create a course on how to be successful in online classes. This can be a collaboration between the staff in DCE and the staff in Academic Support and Retention.
- g. Update the current University College website to reflect reporting structures since the merger. For example, New Student Programs (Orientation and OnIowa!) are not listed and DCE staff are not listed under the Staff Directory.
- h. Examine the managerial positions for OnIowa and Orientation. Currently, there is a Director and Assistant Director for OnIowa! Are 12 months necessary to run these positions? Could these appointments be utilized in other ways throughout the year? The same could be asked about Orientation. There is a Director and two Assistant Directors – it makes sense that one would need to have a 12-month focus on orientation, but could the two Assistants be used in other ways during the academic year?

It should be noted that the Student Success units do not believe they belong with the other units in University College. This was clear from the confidential email account as well as the open sessions. The services and programs they provide to students benefit all traditional undergraduate

students entering the university, including students in all Colleges. If time and money were no object, it would make sense to create a separate unit that reports directly to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education rather than the Associate Dean of University College. However, given budget and administrative realities, our recommendation is that cross-unit projects and interactions should be created to bridge diminish the tension that now exists.

II. Organizational Structure

We present our Organizational Structure recommendations along several lines: recommendations regarding reporting to Associate Provost Lon Moeller, recommendations on the organization of University College, per se, and recommendations on establishing cross collaborations within University College.

Recommendations Regarding Reporting to Associate Provost Lon Moeller

- We believe that Associate Provost and Dean Lon Moeller has too many direct reports. The University College should be reorganized, along with other direct reports to Associate Provost Moeller, so that these direct reports instead report up through Associate Deans Beckett and Zalenski.
- We recommend that positions held by Andrew Beckett and Anne Zalenski be elevated to Associate Dean positions equal to Associate Deans in UI Schools and Colleges in terms of their authority to set goals and targets, to make decisions, and to manage budgets within their divisions. Additionally:
 - We were shown two models that reorganized the units within the University College, the Division of Continuing Education, and other direct-report units to Associate Provost Moeller. Both models looked reasonable to us since both models reduced direct reports to Associate Provost Moeller. The exact list of reports should be finalized by Associate Provost Moeller's leadership team.
 - Additionally, Associate Provost Moeller can and should delegate committee chair responsibilities to Associate Deans Beckett and Zalenski – such as chairing the committee of Collegiate Associate Deans.
 - Some units reporting to Associate Provost Moeller appeared misplaced. We believe that Conferences should move elsewhere (possibly to Student Affairs) and the Summer Writing Festival should move to CLAS (aligned with their other writing programs).
 - Additionally, it appeared to us that other units currently not reporting to Associate Provost Moeller should instead report to him because of their close relationships with other units within University College, namely the Center for Teaching. This unit should report up to Associate Provost through one of the Associate Deans.

- These changes will allow Associate Provost Moeller the time and capacity to focus on institutional leadership and external-stakeholder responsibilities, commensurate with his UI central-leadership position.
 - We discussed, but did not reach consensus, on whether Associate Provost Lon Moeller’s position should be separated from the Deanship of University College. Some of us believed that a separate Dean was required to lead University College. Others believed that if the two Associate Deans stepped up into their new roles (per above), Associate Provost Moeller would have the time and capacity to function successfully in the joint Associate Provost/Dean role.

Recommendations on the Organization of University College

Attracting, retaining and educating nontraditional, nonresidential students (heretofore called “nontraditional students”) is different from attracting, retaining, and educating traditional residential students. Additionally, developments in technology and instructional design allow the university to serve place-bound Iowans and extend its educational reach nationally and internationally. A new sub-unit is needed to fully understand the nontraditional student, quantify existing markets, discover new opportunities for growth, and work with other colleges and UC units (advising, instructional design, online learning, marketing) to develop and implement new programs, instructional models, and student support services based on these findings. While focused on the nontraditional student, entrepreneurial developments may also serve the local student population and drive innovation on campus. We propose that all units reporting to Associate Provost Moeller, including the newly merged Division of Continuing Education, be put under the umbrella of the University College. New branding and marketing for the identity of the new University College will be needed.

- The newly organized University College is composed of three major divisions:¹
 - Success @ UI should contain the student success units currently contained by the University College. We propose that this division be led by Associate Dean Beckett.
 - The Division of Professional Education should contain the units currently under the Division of Continuing Education. We proposed that this division is led by Associate Dean Zalenski. In addition, a new subdivision should be created that consists of new programs and capacities for the nontraditional market.
 - Recognizing that attracting, retaining and educating nontraditional, nonresidential students is different from attracting, retaining, and educating traditional residential students, this new subdivision should focus specifically on developing the capacities to help these nontraditional students succeed. These capacities will include market research, business

¹ Again, we were shown two models of the possible reporting lines within University College. Both appeared reasonable to us, and we believe University College Leadership should determine the details.

example, could be on helping create the vision, goals and targets for the new University College, provide support for the new marketing and branding activities, and provide accountability and benchmarking on the established targets and goals.

- Members should be appointed to three-year terms that can be renewed. This helps prevent board “inertia.”
- One or two students should be appointed, providing voice for traditional and nontraditional students.

Recommendations to Establish Cross Collaborations within University College

- We already noted the need for marketing and branding to (re)introduce the new University College to UI and to its external stakeholders. Given its new status and mission, and its core significance to UI’s mission for student success, we recommend not skimping on internal and external communications.
- In addition to marketing, as above, that will strengthen the identity for those working within University College, we make the following recommendations to stimulate cross-divisional and cross-disciplinary activity, communication, and familiarity within University College:
 - Create opportunities for brown bags and other informal/social mixing across all of the new University College.
 - Create explicit project teams that bring people together who engage in similar activities (i.e., for those doing advising, even if everyone is not called an advisor; for those doing instructional design, even if not everyone is called an instructional designer; etc.).
 - Create a University College-specific budget model that incentivizes growth/new markets for new Division of Professional Education and growth/impact on student success for Student Success unit.
 - Create a University College-wide vision that helps establish targets for enrollment, revenue, retention.
- Our interviews revealed the need for standardized academic policies and practices across schools and colleges that impact students. College-specific policies and practices are not easily found, let alone gathered in one place for students. We recommend that the University College, which is inherently cross-collegiate, be tasked with identifying the list of policies and practices that need institutional standards, and further be tasked with overseeing the development of the standard policies and practices. We further

recommend that UI determine how these standard policies and practices can best be stored and presented to students (via websites, etc.).

- Many conversations revealed lack of concrete goals and targets, along with a real yearning for more direction from above (targets for enrollment, revenue, retention, grad rates). Additionally, many people identified the absence of a concrete visions for the Kirkwood Center and the Des Moines presence, and how the two work together.
 - With the new UI strategic plan unveiled, this becomes an opportunity to now go to next level of detail and set these visions, goals, and targets.
 - Likewise, there is a need for a strategic plan for the role of University College, including its own targets and goals, which would provide clarity for the units within it.
- Discussions echoed the view that the balance of power is too heavily weighted towards schools and colleges. Local control is important, but it also creates a “wild west” attitude where every college is out for itself, underemphasizing central administration’s responsibilities and authority. Additionally, more standardized policies and practices impacting students should exist across schools and colleges (like drop deadlines and petition processes). We recognize that UI’s mission as an R1 goes beyond its educational mission. However, for the purposes of this review of University College which is an educationally-focused service unit:
 - Our recommendation is to view institution’s educational goals, policies and practices through narrow lens of what is good for students as changes are made
 - Likewise, developing new programs for new students (such as those for nontraditional students) need also to be viewed narrowly through the lens of understanding who nontraditional students are and what they need educationally.

III. Engagement

The following recommendations are assumptively based and are aligned with two key factors:

- 1) The University Administration develops and articulates a directive or plan (aligned with new UI Strategic Plan) that provides overarching direction for the work of University College (UC) and the Division of Continuing Education (DCE)
- 2) University College is organizationally structured with leadership that can effectively administer the University directive (e.g. has the authority to influence and administer programming, has a mechanism to effectively engage and reward faculty, and has a clear set of measurable outcomes).

We underscore that these recommendations reinforce the suggestion made earlier that the positions held by Andrew Beckett and Anne Zalenski be elevated to Associate Dean positions equal to those in other UI Schools and Colleges. Similarly, this recommendation again emphasizes the idea that they be granted appropriate administrative control over these offices.

Essential Shifts in Strategic Thinking

- Realign the thinking regarding how learners are served. Recognize that engagement with a nontraditional audience serves Iowans but can also extend nationally and internationally.
- Develop a modality-agnostic approach. The thinking here should be based on those approaches to teaching and learning that can effectively deliver solutions to the identified audiences. Once an effective learning design and approach is developed, the various tools for delivery can be applied to the solution.
- Market Intelligence. A sustained approach to understanding market need (whether local, regional, national or global) should be developed (see Organizational Structure portion of this report).
- Shift from a service-oriented, reactive unit to one that balances service with proactive, entrepreneurial direction that capitalizes on cross-school opportunities

Areas of Focus

On-campus

Engagement of students participating in learning opportunities on UI's campus should leverage the current value-added and effective assets of UC and DCE. Assuming a focus on delivering the best possible learning experiences to the various learner bases, UC and DCE are well positioned to help guide the thinking and deliver the programming and services necessary to deliver best-in-breed services to all learners. This includes degree seekers, professional and leisure learners. For example, UC and DCE can support open-major and part-time students in continuing their progress toward a degree while finding another major.

Off-campus/In-State Physical Locations

Currently, the two off-campus sites located in Des Moines (ICHE, Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center) are devoid of an overall and aligned University strategy and are fiscally suspect. A University-wide strategic directive that includes mission, goals, outcomes and implementation strategy for these sites is imperative. A clear performance horizon should be articulated and transparently shared. If a measurable approach for how these sites can be effective is not implemented, they will continue to founder and squander valuable resources that could be redirected into other initiatives. If a market need for onsite programming in Des Moines is not identified, the Des Moines physical presence should be significantly reduced and resources should be redirected into statewide and national opportunities identified and developed by a new unit or subunit (see Iowa & Beyond, below).

The Kirkwood Regional Center, while a much smaller venture, suffers from a similar lack of clear mission. Resources should be adequate to meet expectations.

Iowa & Beyond

Significant opportunities for the University of Iowa to align research and educational/academic strengths appears to be present. In UC, there appears to be limited capacity to advance existing opportunities, or understand additional opportunities that align with the university's strategic plan. For example, a detailed external review of UC's BAS and BLS degrees from August, 2016, contains significant recommendations to address existing challenges and create online degree programs attractive to a state and national audience. Most of these are not attainable without influential leadership and resources.

Development of a formal unit or sub-unit within the UC to explore additional opportunities could provide a mechanism for the University of Iowa to leapfrog from an innovation perspective. Engagement with existing Colleges and faculty is a key element but so is the discovery and development of opportunities. Initial seed-funding for this operation would need to be provided with a likely scope of 3-5 years with a graduated-decline of internal support until unit could be self-supporting (or at least partially self-supporting).

We note that this unit is essentially the same as the subdivision within the newly planned Division of Professional Education. This section expands upon the first description, adding a conceptual framework to the specific educational/instructional models outlined earlier.

Specific elements are outlined below:

- Creation of at least a director-level position that is inhabited by a tenured faculty member with experience in discovering/building entrepreneurial programming and solutions.
- The unit needs to function a bit like a Research/Development wing of the University. It will need an adequate level of autonomy while leveraging the existing mechanisms across the University and in academic areas where there are relationships with outside constituents. And, it will need the capacity to build its own relationships and have mechanisms to understand market opportunity (e.g. industry/association/government advisory boards). The unit must be empowered to coordinate teams of people with specific skills to deliver solutions (e.g. faculty, staff, consultants, short-term contractors, etc.).
- This unit should be nimble, innovative and opportunistic. It needs to be able to provide adequate incentives to current faculty to participate and have the authority to seek solutions if the University deems the project valuable. The unit needs to be allowed to fail fast and iterate alternative solutions. It has to be responsive to industry, government or whatever external set of stakeholders is represented as the client.

- The unit must have mechanisms to share what it is learning so as to inform the greater University (e.g. new learning programs that could be centralized, research and grant opportunities etc.). Its efforts should be quantifiable and valued as part of the ROI equation regarding how the unit “is supporting itself.”
- This unit should involve current UI students (e.g. work-study, internships, UG and graduate research projects etc.). Projects of this unit should provide practical and applied learning opportunities for existing UI students.
- This unit will need multiple and likely new ways of receiving outside support/funding (e.g. sponsorships, gifts, invoicing, payment plans, revenue-shares, co-development support etc.).

Iowa & Beyond - Sample Scenario/Approach

Iowa Summer Programs

Proposed new unit in UC creates and leads development of Iowa Summer Programs.

Focus areas:

- Pre-college programming focused on recruiting, preparing, and retaining minority and first generation students. Include current high school programs (Upward Bound, SSTP, BMS, CDE), and leverage UC student success units, leadership studies, diversity and inclusion
- Pre-matriculation programs including ESL courses and current bridge program
- Professional development for teachers
- Leveraging and expansion of current successful writing programs
- Online, on campus, and extended courses for current traditional UI students with a focus on bottleneck courses, lowering the 6-year graduation rate, and offering additional summer programming for at-risk students

-Additional professional development area from at least one identified opportunity:

- Develop and support a structure for delivery of Iowa Summer Programs across the identified focus areas.
- Test coordination with existing academic units and faculty.
- Test multiple delivery modalities: on-campus, online, Des Moines, on-site at organizations, retreats, etc.
- Design dynamic learning experiences across all-focus areas with help of DCE and other UC units.
- Test filling the instructional gaps via adjunct and project specific instruction.
- Identify staffing gaps and find short-term solutions that blend to sustained solutions.

Conclusion and General Recommendations

University College is valuable, high-performing unit that is effectively managing the merger with the Division of Continuing Education. Both UC and DCE are staffed with highly motivated colleagues devoted to ensuring student success. For the partnership to grow, however, more systematic planning and coordination need to take place, especially with respect to identifying learners in nontraditional markets. Focused curricular development would make university programming more attractive to first-generation students as well as those from other underrepresented groups. Leadership transitions on campus as well as the introduction of a new budget model create multiple opportunities for University College to innovate and to enhance its presence on campus. Specific means to achieve these objectives include:

- Developing a strategic plan that aligns with university plan; help staff in off-site locations understand their mission and role within this plan.
- Creating a market-based plan for Des Moines physical locations or greatly reduce their presence.
- Establishing a unit or subunit with director-level faculty to lead market research and guide implementation of new local, state and national outreach opportunities.
- Grant current leadership with sufficient authority to implement recommendations from BAS/BLS external review.
- Keeping the Division of Continuing Education and Student Success Initiatives in University College
- Adding a staff person to Supplemental Instruction to meet increased demand
- Creating a class on successful online learning
- Reconsidering the de facto coupling of Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Dean of University College positions
- Elevating the Associate Dean positions currently held in UC and DCE and investing them with more authority
- Giving the UC Executive Committee a greater role in determining and realizing the unit's goals
- Providing more opportunities for colleagues in UC and DCE to become acquainted and to collaborate
- Establishing unit-wide targets for enrollment, revenue, and persistence
- Leveraging distance education resources to develop U2G (undergraduate to graduate, or 3+2) programs
- Moving the Center for Teaching into University College

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