

Subject: Shared Services Organizational Structure and Next Steps

Dear Faculty and Staff,

Thank you for your continued engagement in the shared services process. Over the past months, your insights – shared through listening sessions, surveys, town halls and direct feedback – have been invaluable in shaping our understanding of the opportunities and challenges ahead. We deeply appreciate the time, thought and effort you have contributed to this important dialogue.

After careful consideration of all feedback received, we have decided to move forward with a shared services model that will encompass the College of Science, College of Humanities, College of Social and Behavioral Science and the School for Cultural and Social Transformation, collectively referred to as the U's **Colleges and Schools of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS)**. It is important to emphasize that these colleges will not be merged. Each college will maintain its autonomy, with deans continuing to lead their academic units, set strategic visions, oversee curriculum management and manage faculty-related responsibilities such as appointments, promotions and tenure processes. We know this decision will be welcomed by some and raise concerns for others, and we want to address those concerns directly while emphasizing why this approach is essential for the university's future.

Why Shared Services?

As presented during December's town hall, our university is facing significant external pressures, including increasing demands for efficiency and student outcomes, even as funding grows increasingly constrained. At the same time, disparities in resources and operational silos across our university hinder the ability of some departments to thrive. Shared services are a critical step in addressing these challenges.

By pooling expertise and resources, we can create stronger systems of support for all units, ensuring that all have the resources they need to excel. This approach is designed to address long-standing issues such as gaps in training and onboarding, operational silos and barriers to career progression for staff, among others, while maintaining the autonomy and unique identities of each college.

Including the College of Science in the shared services model ensures that challenges can be addressed holistically and that every unit, regardless of size or discipline, benefits from the efficiencies and support systems we build. Furthermore, integrating Science with other disciplines fosters opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration that reflect the realities of today's most pressing research and academic challenges. Many of the challenges our society faces require the combined strengths of the sciences, social sciences and humanities. A shared services model allows us to foster greater interdisciplinary efforts.

We want to acknowledge the concerns many of you have raised about service quality, workloads and the potential impact on morale. These concerns are valid, and we are committed to designing a system that preserves local expertise, ensures equitable support and provides the flexibility to meet the unique needs of each academic unit.

Next Steps

To ensure that shared services are designed thoughtfully and collaboratively, we will launch an internal search in January for a **vice provost and senior dean** to oversee this effort, with the aim of appointing the new leader by the end of February. After carefully considering the input we've received, we have finalized the title and job description for this role to reflect the importance of leadership in fostering collaboration across colleges while preserving their unique identities. (View the position description [online](#).) Once appointed, the vice provost and senior dean will work closely with faculty, staff and department leadership to design a process for planning and implementing shared services. Their work will be guided by the findings from the data collection process conducted this fall, as well as continued feedback from faculty and staff, with phased implementation to start in the 2025-26 academic year.

We want to emphasize that no final decisions have been made about the specifics of shared services. The vice provost and senior dean will guide this design process, working deliberately and inclusively to ensure the system reflects the realities of your work and the needs of your departments.

Looking Ahead

We understand that change of this magnitude can feel challenging, and we are mindful of the concerns and uncertainties this process may bring. However, we truly believe that shared services are a necessary step to build a more connected, equitable and resilient university – one that is prepared to meet the challenges of today while advancing our academic mission.

Your feedback has been, and will continue to be, critical to this effort. We encourage you to share any additional thoughts through the project webpage's online [feedback form](#) or by emailing SVPA@utah.edu. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to this process and for the vital role you play in our university's success.

Together, we can create a stronger foundation for the future of the U.

Sincerely,

Taylor Randall
President

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Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost