

INPUT ON POSSIBLE COLLEGIATE RESTRUCTURING Department of Communication Arts and Sciences

Executive Summary

The proposed realignment into either a 5- or 7-college structure would have substantially different implications for Communication Studies and Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences (SLHS), the two programs which make up the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences (CAS). Though our current structural is unusual—we are one of only nine departments in the United States that currently offer undergraduate degrees in both programs—we function well together. In fact, one of CAS's strategic initiatives has been to strengthen the connections between each program. Such collaboration makes sense under the current College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The proposed realignment, however, would effectively isolate SLHS from every other science and health profession, rendering the current structure of CAS untenable.

Communication Studies would likely see little to no difference between the current CLAS and realignment into the 5-college structure. The 7-college model, however, misplaces Communication Studies—an interdisciplinary social science—within the College of Arts and Humanities. The program would better be able to serve its students and accomplish its strategic goals if grouped with the other departments in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

For SLHS, however, the proposed realignment is devastating. In addition to the natural affinities between SLHS and Communication Studies, the current CLAS alignment positions SLHS in a college with other sciences like biology and psychology. Both realignment models effectively isolate SLHS; all other sciences and health professions will be located in a different administrative unit in either the 5- or 7-college model. This isolation will negatively impact SLHS's credibility, ability to collaborate, and fundraising potential. We are gravely concerned about SLHS's ability to serve its students and fulfill its mission under the proposed realignment.

Communication Arts and Sciences recognizes that the purpose of reorganization is to figure out how MSU Denver's departments as currently configured might best be aligned. Until this proposal was on the table, we had no internal conversations about whether or not we could better serve our students as separate departments. The proposal on the table, however, forces us to consider that question because the implications for each program are so distinct. SLHS cannot thrive isolated from other programs in the sciences and health professions, and Communication Studies would be similarly disadvantaged if it were placed in a college with those programs and departments.

In short, if MSU Denver were to realign along the lines represented by the graphic, each CAS program would need to be located in a different college in order to best serve its students. SLHS should be located within the College of Science, Health & Engineering in the 5-college structure, and within the College of Health Professions in the 7-college structure. Communication Studies would need to be located within the College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences in the 5-college structure, and within the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences in the 7-College structure.

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Communication Arts and Sciences is comprised of two distinct programs: Communication Studies and Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences. The current structure of CAS is uncommon (see Appendix). In the United States, only 17% of SLHS programs are housed in colleges of liberal arts and sciences, while only nine other programs are located in departments offering undergraduate degrees in both SLHS and communication studies.

Despite this unusual arrangement, our programs have a long and collaborative history. In fact, one of our department's current strategic initiatives is to deepen the connections between programs by developing a health communication concentration for the communication studies major. But there are significant and substantial differences between our programs as well. These differences make it exceedingly difficult—and in some cases impossible—to respond to the questions below as a whole department. There are substantial differences in how the 5- and 7-college versions as depicted on the graphic would affect each program. Accordingly, the answers we provide here focus more on how they would affect each program individually than they do on the department as a whole.

As a program, Communication Studies falls predominantly within the social sciences, though there are some elements of the program that take humanistic approaches to communication (e.g., rhetoric). Even before the conversation about reorganization began, the Communication Studies program has been misclassified as belonging in the Arts and Humanities academic subdivision of Faculty Senate and had been working towards being reclassified in the Social Sciences. While this misclassification has had marginal impact on the program under the current academic structure, the proposal to formally locate the program in a college representing a group classified as arts and humanities threatens to magnify those negative impacts. Were the program accurately grouped with other departments in the social and behavioral sciences, however, the proposed realignment could actively benefit the Communication Studies program.

The negative implications of the realignment proposed in the graphic would be disastrous for the Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences program, however. As a program, SLHS is a health science focused on interprofessional health practice in audiology and speech language pathology. Regardless of whether CAS were grouped in the College of Arts & Humanities or the College of Social & Behavioral Science, SLHS would be both the only science and the only health-oriented program in either model. The other departments and programs with which SLHS shares the most in common (e.g., biology, psychology, nutrition, health professions, nursing, and social work) would all be located in different colleges. The isolation of the SLHS program would be devastating.

While the current location of CAS within CLAS amplifies the affinities between our programs, the proposed structure would significantly magnify our dissimilarities in ways that could have substantial negative implications for how we serve our students. Before the issue of reorganization emerged, our department had had no conversations whatsoever about whether or not our current configuration as a department allows us to best serve our students. But the realignment proposal on the table has made painfully clear that is a conversation we need to be having.

The differences between each program's interests are manifest in the results of a departmental straw vote taken on the realignment plan proposed in the graphic:

- CAS voted unanimously (16-0) against the 7-college plan as depicted, with the department in some version of a College of Arts & Humanities.
- CAS voted in favor (12-4) of the 5-college plan; with Communication Studies faculty unanimously in favor and SLHS faculty unanimously opposed.
- CAS voted on an amended version of the 7-college plan, with the department located in a College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The vote here was 9 in favor, 6 opposed, with one abstention. Significantly, *all* SLHS faculty were opposed to such an amendment.
- SLHS faculty proposed instead an amendment that would house CAS in the College of Science, Health, & Engineering in a 5-college Structure. The vote here was 7 in favor (including all SLHS faculty), 7 opposed, and two abstentions.
- If the only two options in a 7-college structure were to house CAS within Arts & Humanities or Social & Behavioral Sciences, the faculty unanimously preferred being housed within Social & Behavioral Sciences.

As these votes suggest, there are substantially different interests for each program. Consequently, while we answer the questions below for CAS as currently configured when possible, we also often provide to quite distinct answers to each question to demonstrate how the proposal would likely affect each program differently.

- 1. How do you think an academic re-org, like the ones in the graphic, would impact your department – both positively and negatively – in terms of the following enrollment-related topics? Please explain.**

Student Recruitment

The proposed re-org, on balance, would have a negative effect on student recruitment for both programs.

For Communication Studies, the effect on student recruitment would likely be minimal in both the 5- and 7-College versions. Locating the program within Arts & Humanities would likely complicate efforts to accurately describe what a communication studies degree does, which could negatively impact recruitment. Communication Studies is trying to increase recognizability on campus as a program that does more than “just” public speaking. While public speaking is the program's largest contribution to the general studies curriculum,

communication studies focuses on a far broader range of knowledge and competencies that are most accurately located within the social and behavioral sciences.

For Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences, however, the negative effect would be substantial. The isolation of SLHS from other programs and departments in the sciences and the health professions would inevitably make it more difficult for students to find SLHS. Moreover, that isolation may make students suspicious about the nature and quality of the program—*why is this the only science or health profession not located with all of the others?*

In short, for Communication Studies, the realignment proposed in the graphic would, to some extent, exacerbate chronic problems with student recruitment stemming from misunderstandings about the nature of the program. For SLHS, the proposed realignment would create an acute problem by threatening both the visibility and the credibility of the program.

Student Retention

It is unclear if the proposed realignment would have any effect on student retention for Communication Studies. The 5-college structure would almost certainly have no effect on student retention, as the student-facing differences between that structure and the current CLAS would be minimal. A 7-college structure which placed Communication Studies in a College of Social & Behavioral Sciences would likely have a more positive effect than the proposed location with in Arts & Humanities, as there would be more room to collaborate with other departments in allied fields, such as Journalism and Technical Communication.

For similar reasons, SLHS anticipates that the effect on student retention under the proposed realignment would likely be negative—at least when compared to a model where the program was located with other sciences and health professions, creating greater opportunities for collaboration between similar programs and departments.

Student Graduation Rates

The effect on student graduation rates is likely to be similar to student retention, for both programs in all reorganization models.

- 2. How do you think an academic re-org, like the ones in the graphic, would impact your department – both positively and negatively – in terms of the following identity-related topics? Please explain.**

Professional Recognition

The proposal as presented does not accurately recognize Communication Arts and Sciences as a whole, nor does it recognize either program individually. The problem here is particularly severe for SLHS, which is program grounded in the sciences and health professions. Locating this program within either the 5- or 7-college model as defined by the graphic does not reflect the focus of this program, where the majority of students seek to obtain prerequisite coursework for graduate degrees in speech-language pathology, leading

to careers in schools, community clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and private practice.

For Communication Studies, the problem is present, but less significant. Despite the fact that communication studies, as a discipline, is largely located within the social sciences, the presence of some humanistic approaches means that some communication departments are, indeed, housed within the humanities. The proposal as is would not pose the kind of existential threat for Communication Studies as it would for SLHS.

Department Reputation/Image

One of the image challenges Communication Studies faces is its strong association with public speaking. Public speaking is, clearly a central component of Communication Studies contribution to the university, and one the program is proud of. However, this association, bolstered by the department's previous name as Speech Communication, means that Communication Studies is frequently seen as about vocal performance, full stop. But Communication Studies covers the entire range of human communication experience, cutting across modalities (written, verbal, nonverbal, computer-mediated) and contexts (interpersonal, group, organizational, public, mediated). While the 5-college structure would not be substantially different from CLAS in this regard, locating the program within Arts and Humanities in the 7-college model would entrench the image of our contributions as about vocal performance. An amended 7-college model which located Communication Studies within Social and Behavioral Science would help the program to promote a more accurate understanding of what it does.

Once again, however, the challenges that this proposal poses for SLHS are more severe. Not only does the location in either the 5- or 7-college structure not accurately reflect the nature of the program, but the fact that SLHS would be the *only* science or health profession not located with other similar programs could raise fundamental questions about its legitimacy. Is SLHS somehow not as scientific? Not a "real" health profession? The proposal as depicted poses a substantial threat to SLHS's credibility, reputation, and image.

Department Revenue

The inaccurate placement of both programs would likely have a negative effect on efforts to generate revenue, particularly through grant writing. For Communication Studies, the 5-college model would likely have no effect on revenue. In the 7-college model, Communication Studies would be better able to position itself to generate revenue in a College of Social & Behavioral Sciences than it would in its current location in Arts & Humanities. The current location for SLHS in either model would be detrimental, particularly in terms of its ability to secure revenue through grants. A location within a college with other sciences and health professions might substantially enhance SLHS's ability to generate revenue compared to the current CLAS structure, however.

Program Accreditation

As a department we do not currently have any accredited programs. It is hard to imagine a scenario where Communication Studies ever has to deal with accreditation issues. However, SLHS is actively pursuing a Master's in Speech Language Pathology. This graduate program would need to be accredited by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. ASHA's Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) explicitly examines administrative structures and governance as a part of the accreditation process. And while an administrative location removed from the other sciences and health professions would likely not be a dispositive factor preventing accreditation, we anticipate that it would be very likely to unnecessarily complicate the already-cumbersome accreditation process.

3. How do you think an academic re-org, like the ones in the graphic, would impact your department in terms of the following internal university topics? Please explain.

Voting Representation (such as on Faculty Senate and Council of Chairs & Directors)

There would be no real change in terms of voting representation. Under the current configuration, CAS is already inaccurately classified in the Arts & Humanities academic subdivision for Faculty Senate committees. However, if SLHS were to move with other sciences and health professions, and CAS were to be located with other social and behavioral sciences, the representation structure for both programs would more accurately reflect programs interests.

Collaboration with other Departments

Both of our programs thrive on collaboration. Communication Studies is, at its heart, an interdisciplinary social science that draws from a diverse range of fields. While the proposal as represented in the graphic would not necessarily inhibit Communication Studies' ability to collaborate with other departments, an amended version that placed the Communication Studies in a College of Social and Behavioral Sciences would be more conducive to inter-departmental collaboration than one placing the program in a College of Arts & Humanities.

For SLHS, however, the proposal would have a substantially negative effect on collaboration. The current proposal effectively isolates SLHS from the other sciences and health professions, which would make it extremely difficult for the program to sustain high-level collaboration. For example, in the current structure, CAS—specifically SLHS—is one of the four current CLAS departments actively participating in the Health Institute. Under both the 5-college and 7-college proposal, all but SLHS would be housed in the same college. As the only science or health profession not located with other like programs and departments, it would be easy for SLHS to be simply left out from collaborative conversations.

4. Are there current projects or projects in the planning stages that you feel would be disrupted by an academic re-org? Please explain.

Because the proposed reorganization actively calls into question the structure of CAS as currently configured, the realignment conversation has already disrupted departmental projects in the planning stage.

First, as mentioned above, SLHS and Communication Studies have been working to strengthen the connection between each program. To that end, we are currently in the process of developing a health communication concentration for the Communication Studies major. This year, Drs. Jessica Rossi-Katz (SLHS) and Brenden Kendall (Communication Studies) collaborated to create a new course in health communication that would serve as a foundation for a future concentration. Additionally, CAS has requested a health communication hire through the Faculty Senate Minority Post-Doc program to support the development of this concentration. Should realignment necessitate that our programs no longer be housed in the same department, however, it is not clear that developing a health communication concentration would remain the best use of either program's resources. As a result, our efforts to develop this concentration are currently on hold.

Second, with the process for proposing new graduate programs opening up again in Spring 2019, SLHS intends to propose a new graduate program in Speech Language Pathology. This effort enjoys the support of the entire CAS department. While we hope for institutional support and intend to engage in external fundraising as well, we anticipate that we will need to dedicate departmental resources from summer revenues to get such a program off the ground. The problem we face is that those summer revenues are generated almost entirely by the Communication Studies program. And while Communication Studies is happy to share those resources with SLHS to support a CAS departmental initiative such as a graduate program, the prospect of SLHS immediately moving to another department or college makes the wisdom of investing summer revenues in such a program an open question.

Third, CAS retained the space formerly dedicated to the broadcasting program when that program was moved to Journalism and Technical Communication. That space represents a vital shared resource to support both the proposed SLHS graduate program and the professional communication center Communication Studies plans on developing and proposing. In the short term, the space needs for each initiative are similar enough that they overlap. For instance, we can fashion the same space to serve both the clinical needs of SLHS and practice spaces for interviewing and public speaking in the professional communication center. However, if our programs were to be housed in separate departments, we would refashion these spaces differently to serve single-purpose rather than multipurpose needs.

In short, even the conversation about realignment has significantly complicated three of four strategic initiatives CAS is currently pursuing (the fourth, an online path through the Communication Studies degree, is unaffected).

- 5. Are there specific policies or procedures that your department uses that reference or use the current school/college structure? How would they be impacted by an academic re-org?**

There are two primary concerns we have regarding policies and procedures from the restructure, both pertaining to SLHS. First, under the proposed structure, SLHS would be the only science or health profession under either the 5- or 7-college model, which could pose challenges for the RTP review guidelines and processes. For instance, in order to supervise beginning clinical experiences, SLHS faculty must maintain their professional certification through continued professional development (30 certification maintenance hours every 3 years). Whereas these requirements are standard for faculty in pre-service clinical programs, how they would align under arts and humanities is not clear.

Second, we have concerns that in either proposed structure, SLHS would be removed from other academic programs that require the application of health-related policies such as data privacy and infection-control procedures.

- 6. Does your *department* currently engage in external fundraising? Do you think an academic re-org into smaller colleges (such as the 7 shown in the graphic) would impact fundraising for your department? How about for your college?**

CAS does not currently engage in external fundraising, though we have imminent plans to begin fundraising in support of both the SHLS graduate program and the Communication Studies professional communication center.

Communication Studies would be better positioned to raise funding for the center if it were located in a College of Social and Behavioral Sciences rather than a College of Arts and Humanities, because such a location would be a more accurate representation of the program and would likely make the program more credible to external funders.

The current proposal would have a substantially negative effect on SLHS's ability to fundraise. Not only would the isolation from other sciences and health professions likely inhibit collaborative fundraising opportunities with allied programs and departments, that isolation would also pose a significant threat to SLHS credibility, raising the question of why it is not located with other, similar programs.

- 7. Using the graphic re-org as a point of discussion, how would your department feel about being in the 5-college version? In the 7-college version? Should MSU Denver continue down the path of collegiate restructuring, where do you think your department belongs?**

As currently configured, CAS does not belong in either version. Our current proximity within CLAS to psychology and biology makes the current configuration work, but both the 5- and 7-college versions depicted here are untenable for SLHS because they isolate that program from every other science and health profession. Communication Studies would be similarly disadvantaged if it were to be placed with the sciences and health fields in either version.

Considered separately, Communication Studies would notice little difference between its current position within CLAS and the 5-college version of the proposal. The current 7-college version would disadvantage Communication Studies by placing it within a College of Arts & Humanities, exacerbating misunderstandings of the discipline and making collaboration with other social sciences and allied fields more challenging. A 7-college structure that placed Communication Studies within Social & Behavioral Sciences, however, may provide a net benefit to the program when compared to the current structure.

Given the configurations represented in the graphic, however, SLHS would need to be housed in a college separate from Communication Studies in order to best serve its students. In the 5-college version, SLHS would fit within what is currently labeled as the College of Science, Health, & Engineering. In the 7-college configuration, SLHS would be best located in the College of Health Professions.

In short, if MSU Denver were to continue down the path of restricting along the lines of the graphic currently on the table, it is hard to see how we could serve our students well without reconfiguring Communication Arts and Sciences. The proposal as represented would be devastating for SLHS. Splitting our programs into two separate departments is not something we have been looking for—but this proposal would necessitate such separation. SLHS would be far better positioned in a college with other sciences and health professions, and given the size differential between the two programs, any negative effects on Communication Studies would be minimal.

Appendix

The Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, as currently constituted, represents an atypical structure when compared to peer institutions. CAS is one of only 9 departments in the United States offering undergraduate degrees in both Communication Studies and SLHS¹. These 9 departments represent only 3% of the 269 departments identified by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association as offering undergraduate programs in Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences, and only .1% of the 812 departments offering undergraduate degrees in Communication Studies identified by the National Communication Association. CAS is an outlier in offering both undergraduate degree programs.

More important for the proposed realignment at MSU Denver, however, is the location of SLHS programs at the college or school level. Of the 269 undergraduate-serving programs in SLHS:

- 114 (42%) of SLHS departments are located in some form of a health college/school
- 45 (17%) are located in liberal arts colleges/schools similar to our own CLAS; of these 45, the vast majority 33 (73%) contain both of SLHS closest CLAS “neighbors”—biology and psychology
- 35 (13%) are located in colleges/schools of education
- 6 (2%) are located in colleges/schools of communication
- A variety of other schools make up small percentages of the total: social sciences (3, 1%), science (12, 5%), professional studies (5, 2%). 10 (4%) departments have no school or college. 1 department (.3%) is located in a college of arts and humanities.
- 38 (14%) of departments are located in colleges and schools which offer different combinations of the above focus areas (e.g., College of Health and Education).

If the “other” colleges and schools are classified according to named focus area, and added to the single-focus college/school totals above, SLHS programs are even more frequently located in administrative units with a health focus:

- 134 (49.8%) of SLHS programs located in colleges/schools with a named health focus
- 54 (20%) of programs located in colleges/schools with a named education focus
- 18 (7%) of programs located in colleges/schools with a named science focus
- 13 (5%) of programs located in colleges/schools with a named social science focus
- 10 (4%) of programs located in colleges/schools with a named communication focus
- 9 (3%) of programs located in colleges/schools with a named professional studies focus
- 2 (.7%) of programs located in colleges/schools with a named arts/humanities focus

¹ The other eight institutions are: California State University-Chico, College of Wooster, CUNY-Brooklyn College, Geneva College, Iona College, Louisiana Technical University, Rhode Island College, and St. Joseph’s University-Long Island.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO PROPOSED COLLEGIATE RESTRUCTURING
Department of Communication Arts and Sciences

Collegiate Structure	5-College Proposed	5-College Amended: CAS in CSHE	7-College Proposed	7-College Amended: CAS in CHP	7-College Amended: CAS in CSBS
Communication Arts and Sciences (Department)					
There was no configuration of the restructuring proposal, either as proposed or amended, that received majority support from the department as a whole without also receiving unanimous opposition from SLHS faculty. Accordingly, this table summarizes the position of each program separately. <i>If department realignment is not currently under consideration, CLAS as currently constituted better serves the needs of CAS as a whole.</i>					
Communication Studies (Program)					
Support?	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Ranking	2	4	3	5	1
Considerations	Minimal effect compared to current CLAS.	Poor fit. Program would be isolated from allied fields. Only connection would be with psychology.	Program misalignment; Communication Studies not located with other social and behavioral sciences.	Worst result. Program isolated from all allied fields. Courses and research substantially different from other programs in College.	Best result. Closest alignment with allied fields; best representation of program courses and research.
Speech, Language, Hearing Sciences (Program)					
Support?	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Ranking	4	2	5	1	3
Considerations	Isolated from all other programs in Health and the Sciences.	Ideal result, locating program with others in sciences and preserving connection to Communication Studies.	Worst result. SLHS courses and research substantially different from other programs in College.	Best result. 42% of SLHS programs nationally are located within some form of a health school/college.	Isolated from all other programs in Health and the Sciences. <i>If CAS must remain in its current form in the proposed restructuring, SLHS faculty prefer this amended configuration to the alternatives.</i>

CAS