

Chicana and Chicano Faculty Responses to Questions

10-10-2018

Questions for Academic Departments: Limited information to make such complex decisions is almost impossible. Chicana/o Studies teaches humanities and social sciences due to its interdisciplinary nature. How will the proposed system deal with inter-disciplinary disciplines and classes that cannot be easily assigned? Will there be a process to cross over? We possess a strong social justice orientation that is not necessarily reflected in institutional disciplines. The CHS discipline is rooted in community, with strong relationships with a variety of organizations in the community.

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.

- a. Student recruitment

Via the realignment, there are some disciplines that we cross list classes with that might cause administrative problems or cause difficulty and stress for students to access such as Music, English, Philosophy, Social Work and Human Services.

Therefore, our departmental mission and vision might be left out of the analyses. A positive response might be the concentration of disciplines that are more connected than others.

- b. Student retention

Latina/o students from many of the disciplines within this institution receive support from Chicana/o Studies faculty and staff. The supportive roles that CHS faculty play cannot be measured through the current structure. The CHS Department is seen as a safe place, especially with students that may be encountering microaggressions. The change may be unsettling unless it is managed correctly. Many students access this department to seek assistance, sometimes where trust is an issue and with particular circumstances that require cultural intervention. These types of experiences, if not handled properly, could affect student retention.

- c. Student graduation rates

There will be less resources available to develop innovative approaches, which could decrease interest in the discipline, especially at a time when American society seems to both be resistive regarding racial healing and clamoring for assistance. The testimony and data that the department scholars have provided the Colorado State Legislature regarding the Multicultural Bill argues that

students that experience Ethnic Studies stay in school, increase grade point averages and eventually graduate. With the advent of the many requests we have recently received from high schools, such as North, South, Thomas Jefferson, West and Hinkley, to teach concurrent enrollment classes attests to the importance of Chicana/o Studies and graduation.

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.

a. Professional recognition

Within the CHS Department, there are many faculty members that are recognized for their scholarship, community service and advising that serve as role models for disenfranchised groups. This should never be compromised. The CHS Department would never want to lose the respect and added value that we bring to the university. Faculty have been called upon to give testimony to the many students that we serve and the role we play at MSU Denver. The Chair was recently invited by CSU in Pueblo to provide insight into the importance of Ethnic Studies, especially with the current political climate in American society.

b. Department reputation/image

If the department is integrated into a structure that is not accustomed to interdisciplinary disciplines, it could have a negative impact. We are the only Chicana/o Studies Department in the State of Colorado that offers a major, minor and certification for various concentration areas. This department is called upon to provide testimony on the success of the department within the State of Colorado. Our department is the conduit to many Latina/o and Chicana/o nonprofit and public sector organizations that serve the community. Our image would be tarnished.

c. Department revenue

Depending on if summer funds continue, the change could have a negative impact on this department. Would our opportunities be limited, particularly with summer revenues that has increased our professional development opportunities; thus offering more opportunities to students? A reduction in summer funds would decrease the professional opportunities that have enhanced our ability to serve Chicana/o communities. Our collaborations with other institutions could be severely limited. I believe that with the advent of the concurrent enrollment classes, our FTE will grow; this providing more funds to the university, value to the

high schools that are participating; and in the final analysis move the group from invisibility to visibility in State of Colorado.

d. Program accreditation

N/A

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.

a. Voting representation (such as on Faculty Senate and Council of Chairs & Directors)

From a systems theory perspective, that is, when one part of a system is altered there both intended consequences and serendipitous ones that emerge as the system makes a transition. It is difficult to determine how a change in structure will affect the total organization. It is very possible that representation on decision making committees will be affected? It would raise questions about equal representation on faculty senate? How would this move affect RTP and other college level committees with respect to form and function? We certainly would not like to lose our position as a department within the decision making bodies at this institution; nor would we want to lose space and place, visibility and ultimately decision-making power. A change might further marginalize the group and the department.

b. Collaboration with other departments

There might have to be a re-building process wherein CHS would have to become a boundary spanner for our school or college in order to build and enhance relationships with other departments.

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

What would happen to the Director of the Family Literacy Program who has traditionally been supervised by the LAS Dean? Would this program remain in the Chicana/o Studies Department? A change might have an impact on recruitment for adult learners and potentially recruitment for their children that could essentially attend MSU Denver. The Journey Through Our Heritage Program could be affected even though it has achieved institutional status. Will the newly developed concurrent enrollment program be affected through this change?

5. Are there specific policies or procedures that your department uses that reference or use the current school/college structure?

Access to the decision making bodies via the current structure is critical for equal opportunity to dialogue with, vet issues, and provide perspectives that are often left out of the process. We believe that the multicultural requirement should be increased to 6 credit hours. This would enhance student's cultural competencies, skills and knowledge bases. It is unreal to expect students to serve multicultural communities, something that is on the horizon, with a 3 credit requirement.

How would they be impacted by an academic re-org?

This is a difficult question to respond to, especially since there is scant information regarding a structural change. Would the department lose some of its voice and/or power with such a change? As it currently stands with small departments, we occupy one seat in faculty senate.

6. Does your *department* currently engage in external fundraising?

Dr. Adriann Wycoff has raised millions of dollars for the Family Literacy Program. The Journey Through Our Heritage Program raises small amounts of additional dollars to augment its programmatic services.

Do you think an academic re-org into smaller colleges (such as the 7 shown in the graphic) would impact fundraising for your department?

I don't think this question can be answered until more detail is provided. Would role would the fund development arm of the university play in this process? Would departments be allowed to raise funds, independent of the fund raising arm currently in place? How would the system manage internal competition?

How about for your college?

I think this is an issue that needs to be vetted with other departments.

7. Using the graphic re-org as a point of discussion, how would your department feel about being in the 5-college version?

If change is imminent, we would recommend a new “College of Social Transformation,” with a Dean and enough resources to accomplish a new vision and mission. We would also recommend the development of a Native American Studies Program that would eventually matriculate into a Department.

In the 7-college version?

I believe we would still like to develop the same structure as mentioned above, obviously with more departments involved.

Should MSU Denver continue down the path of collegiate restructuring, where do *you* think your department belongs? [Remember, these are being put forward as models to promote discussion. They are not finalized plans being voted on.

The CHS Department voted not to make any structural changes. I believe the information provided above responds to issues and concerns. Again, if restructuring is inevitable, a school or college with 5-7 disciplines, well structured, with resources and fund-raising policies that allow flexibility would work.