

**Report of the Structure and Organization of the School Committee to the  
Policy Council  
December 15, 2003**

On October 2, 2003, Dean Gonzalez announced the formation of a committee to examine the organization of the School of Education at IUB. This committee has subsequently come to be called the "Structure and Organization of the School Committee". The members are Don Cunningham (chair), Tom Brush, Jack Cummins, Paulette Dilworth, Jerry Harste, David Mank, Andrea Walton, Genevieve Manset-Williamson and Sari Pascoe.

The committee has met together four times. In these meetings we have discussed issues, heard reports from members and planned activities. The committee held an open forum for faculty, students and staff to explain the committee charge and the process it intended to follow. Cunningham also made a brief presentation at the faculty retreat, attended a meeting of department chairs and attended two department meetings. Individual members of the committee consulted with their departments and reported back. Several members of the committee attended meetings with smaller groups to facilitate discussions about possible reorganizations. The committee defined its role as one of facilitating conversations about possible reorganization rather than making specific recommendations for any particular version.

Two specific issues seemed to drive the concern over reorganization: 1) finding a home for the new program in Learning Science (LS), and 2) the small size of the departments of Language Education (LE) and Instructional Systems Technology (IST). In addition, there had been (and continue to be) discussions between the Social Studies program within the department of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) and LE about forming a new department. While the large size of C&I was mentioned occasionally, this did not seem to be an important consideration in the move to consider reorganization. The current departments of Counseling and Educational Psychology (CEP) and Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) were not seen as candidates for reorganization.

Specifically we were asked to consider the following four questions and provide recommendation by the end of the Fall semester. The results of our activities and deliberations are listed under each question.

**1. Can we better align our programs to promote greater collaboration and success?**

Based upon last year's report from the long range planning committee, input from faculty, students and staff, and from committee deliberations, we are prepared to assert that there is no way to answer this question in the abstract. We were able to think of multiple possibilities where faculty across current departments could profit from more contact and opportunities to collaborate. It is not clear, however, that such collaboration requires that

faculty be in the same department or even housed nearby. Opportunities for and willingness to collaborate seem not to be particularly related to departmental assignment - indeed there are some significant advantages to cross departmental collaborations. The organizational unit of most importance for collaboration seems to be the program area. It is at that level where faculty share teaching, doctoral students, qualifying examinations, curricular interests, disciplinary identity, and so on. Beyond the program area level, opportunity to collaborate by itself seems a weak rationale at best for reorganization. We heard no sentiment to reorganize program areas. We recognize, however, that faculty groups might themselves determine that a new structure could facilitate potential collaboration and/or create a more visible presence within the school or to external constituencies. In such a case, departmental reorganization may be justified. For a time it appeared that a new department might be formed from the current Language Education department and Social Studies program area within C&I. As of this writing, the Social Studies program area prefers to remain within C&I, but conversations continue between Language Education and individual faculty from C&I who may wish to participate in an a new department emphasizing language, culture and social justice.

## **2. Are the departments the right size and configuration or can we achieve greater balance?**

Here again we have no a priori basis for judging how big or how small a department can be and continue to prosper. The question assumes that there is a "right" size but we would argue that size is less important than unity of mission. The question also assumes that roughly equal size departments will help ensure "balance". But balance could be achieved by having multiple small units (such as program areas) or several very large but unified departments with their own unique administrative structures.

The principal arguments against small departments include the lack of personnel to carry out the department's responsibilities to the School, lack of mentors for junior faculty, higher potential for disruptive personality conflicts, lack of choice for students in teachers or advisors, narrow perspectives on promotion and tenure, disproportionate representation in administrative decision making, etc. The principal arguments against large departments include potential loss of individual and program area identity, complex administrative structures, dilution of a common mission, inequities in administrative responsibility compared with smaller departments, etc. In spite of these arguments for and against, we believe that both very small and very large departments could, in principle, be effective.

Two departments, LE (n=11) and IST (n=8 assuming the loss of three faculty to LS) are small relative to the other three. Neither department has expressed any enthusiasm for joining with any of the existing departments. The options therefore seem to be: 1) they remain as two separate small departments, or 2) they are administratively combined as autonomous entities with a department of, say, Language Education and Instructional Systems Technology. Perhaps there are other options as well.

## **3. Where should the new Learning Sciences program be housed?**

The Learning Sciences program has formed out of faculty from the current departments of IST and CEP. Everyone involved in discussions about the “home” for LS agrees that the existing departments of IST and CEP must not be damaged in any way by its creation. Three IST faculty and four faculty from CEP, the Learning, Cognition and Instruction (LCI) program area, will be the “founding” faculty in Learning Sciences, enhanced in future years by the hiring of six new faculty. The IST group will leave the IST department while the LCI group will continue to be affiliated with the Educational Psychology group within CEP (teach courses, chair doctoral committees, supervise AIs, etc.). The LCI faculty participate in an active Educational Psychology group within CEP and collaborate with colleagues in School Psychology and Counseling Psychology on curricular efforts (courses that all CEP graduate students take), doctoral supervision, promotion/tenure/merit review, AI training/supervision, APA accreditation, and so forth. An Educational Psychology program could not exist without a strong learning group. Aligning LS with the current Educational Psychology group within CEP seems logical and is endorsed by the faculty involved. In addition, Educational Psychology faculty in human development and inquiry see strong potential for collaboration with LS faculty. This alignment would minimize any disruption to CEP as a whole and Educational Psychology in particular.

Such is not the case with IST however. The loss of three faculty is a serious blow to IST and certainly makes it more difficult for it to maintain its national/international reputation and perform the necessary functions to support its graduate and undergraduate programs. Discussions were held with the Chairs of CEP & IST, committee members representing those departments, the Dean’s office and the committee chair to explore the possibility of IST joining CEP. Opportunities for collaboration and sharing of teaching, doctoral committee supervision, etc. were offered as potential advantages for moving IST administratively into CEP. As of this writing, IST prefers to stand alone (see Tom Brush’s memo attached).

The arguments offered by IST to stand alone are sound and should be respected in any further considerations to reorganize. The committee itself is split on the issue, but we are unanimous in our concern about the decision to move three faculty from IST to Learning Sciences. This loss of lines will leave an already small but distinguished department vulnerable. This appears to counter the stated purpose of the Commitment to Excellence program, which is to “build on our past achievements to secure our future.” In addition, moving these faculty has the potential to create a need to fill additional lines in IST at a time when resources for new faculty across the school are limited. Other departments, some of whom have had unmet faculty needs for some time, will now be forced to compete with IST for new faculty lines.

#### **4. Is there a way to reduce administrative structure and improve efficiency?**

Our committee was not convinced that any particular cost savings or efficiency gains are associated with any of the departmental reorganizations currently being discussed. A

faculty the size of ours requires certain administrative support structures and we doubt that those costs vary significantly across our current departmental organization or would change very much under any likely new structure. We have been presented with no numbers that would contradict our conclusion.

### **Conclusion**

We offer no concrete recommendations for a new departmental structure because we do not find sufficient justification for one structure over another. All along we defined our role as facilitating conversations about reorganization among faculty, staff and students and in this we believe we have been successful. Without exception, all of the departments have come to a better understanding of and appreciation for their current departments and the possibilities for modifications within or liaisons across departments. The Learning Sciences group has found an administrative home within CEP. Our one lingering concern is the impact of the loss of three faculty by IST on the IST program in particular and the School of Education as a whole.