What will be the administrative effect of the department’s reorganization?

The Plan of Organization for the proposed School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies attempts to merge the widely different administrative cultures of the current programs into a new structure that will serve both disciplines, streamline our committee work, and enhance the collaborative atmosphere that is the hallmark of both programs.

The attached “Organizational Chart” and Committee Assignment sheets detail a unique alignment of faculty resources that will ensure balanced representation among the fields of theatre and dance, while streamlining overall faculty workload, and increasing opportunities for collegial engagement. The “cluster” structure we propose transcends narrow disciplinary boundaries and recognizes the significant overlap in areas of study, methodology, and pedagogy among our respective fields. The merger of two programs into a School with a larger vision and mission mandates the creation of an intricate committee structure to support its activities. The committee structure outlined in the attached Plan of Organization will be vital in managing two undergraduate majors, three MFA programs, an MA/PhD program, and two separate but related production programs. Nevertheless, while we believe that this level of structure and oversight will be important in the preliminary years of the School’s operation, we consider this to be a transitional organization that will evolve over time as the two departments develop a new collective culture. We see our plan as a “living” document – one that guides our daily operations, but that needs to be flexible, transparent, and open to change as we define new sets of best practices that will lead to efficient, effective, and collaborative work among our disparate areas.

We will continue to seek ways to consolidate assignments when possible. Conscious of the need not to overburden our faculty, we project that several of these committees will meet only once per semester (or in some cases once per year), and that much of their business may be conducted via email or ELMS.

We expect to actively seek opportunities to embed students into our committee structures. This is not only an important part of shared governance at the University of Maryland, but also an opportunity for further professional development of our students. There are, however, multiple issues that need careful consideration and discussion in the faculty before decisions are reached about student involvement on committees, including: discipline specificity (most School committees have equal representation of Theatre and Dance faculty – will this also be the case with students?); voting or non-voting status; method of selection/appointment of student members; and term of service, among others.

We will also continue to re-imagine the roles that staff play on the School’s committees. Our goal in the proposed committee structure for the new School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies is to strike a balance in the representation among the two disciplines. In Theatre, staff currently occupy significant roles on the PCC Committee, the Undergraduate Committee, the Technology Committee, the Honors and Awards Committee, and the Committee of the Whole. In Dance, staff serves only on the Faculty
Council (committee of the whole). The revised administrative structure for the School challenges us to re-think logical assignments of committee work that will ensure representation without creating an undue burden or an imbalance in any area. As we move forward in the first year or two of the School’s existence, and we will continue to seek staff feedback on those committees on which they feel their presence could be most helpful or is most necessary.