

# **Social Sciences Implementation Committee Interim Report: Considering School and College Structures for Public Policy at Cornell November, 2019**

**(Pages 1-3)**

## **Preliminary Thoughts**

This document is meant to provide the university community with the current state of the Implementation Committee's (hereafter "The Committee") thinking around public policy at Cornell. This document represents our second communication around this topic, with our vision statement on public policy being the first. This interim report is not meant to be interpreted as our final word on the subject, as our thinking is likely to evolve based on internal conversations within the Committee and the various listening sessions happening over roughly the next month.

## **Interpretation of Our Charge and Information in this Interim Update**

The Committee has been charged by President Pollack and Provost Kotlikoff with making recommendations about how the university could best be restructured to create an academic unit that would elevate research, teaching, and outreach around public policy. The Committee was specifically tasked with reviewing the merits of two alternate options for doing so: (1) a cross-college school of public policy situated between the College of Arts and Sciences (hereafter "CAS") and the College of Human Ecology (hereafter "CHE") and (2) a college model in which CHE was focused and strengthened around public policy<sup>1</sup>.

Although the Committee intends to recommend which option will be best for public policy by the end of this semester, our committee, in consultation with the provost, has decided that it is beyond the scope of the Committee's mandate to make any recommendation around which of these options Cornell ultimately should pursue. This final decision has dimensions beyond strengthening public policy at Cornell, and therefore would require additional conversations and decisions beyond this committee among the trustees, president, provost, and CHE college leadership concerning the future of CHE. That said, we intend to highlight in our report possible implications for CHE and CAS and the broader university to provide context for their decision. We would like to emphasize however that we see these implications as a preliminary list that would need to be expanded, vetted, and discussed among the broader community of relevant stakeholders and leadership. We would also like to emphasize, as the provost has stressed in all of his discussions of the review, that neither of the models we outline here would result in job loss for faculty or staff.

In this interim update, we do three things. First, we outline general points of agreement among committee members around what any public policy entity, whether a cross-college school or a college, would need in order to be successful. Second, we provide an overview of a model for the best possible cross-college school of public policy. In this section, we highlight both advantages and challenges of this vision, as well as identifying

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<sup>1</sup> At the last decision point, the president and provost removed three options for a policy entity from the table: a virtual school; a school that was encompassed only in CHE; and a school that was encompassed only in CAS. As such, we do not consider these or other options for the policy entity throughout this document.

unresolved issues. Third, we provide an overview for the best possible College of Public Policy model and again highlight both advantages and challenges, as well as noting unresolved issues.

For each model, we focus on nine categories: (1) governance; (2) resources; (3) undergraduate training; (4) masters training; (5) doctoral training; (6) extension and outreach; (7) possible implications for CHE; (8) possible implications for CAS; and (9) implications for the university.

In this interim report, we have not attempted to provide exhaustive coverage in each area. Rather, we have tried to provide enough detail to make it possible for the university community to see some potential advantages and challenges for each model. Although this is not an exhaustive list of areas in which each of the models should be evaluated, the Committee felt that as combined they provide a clear idea of the possible implications and characteristics of each model.

The Committee was also charged with proposing models for super-departments in the disciplines of economics (involving the Policy Analysis and Management Department [hereafter “PAM”] in CHE and the Economics Department in CAS and School of Industrial and Labor Relations [hereafter “ILR”]), psychology (involving the Department of Human Development [hereafter “HD”] in CHE and the Psychology Department in CAS), and sociology (involving PAM in CHE and the Sociology Department in CAS). The existence of these super-departments would affect the structure, governance, and operation of each of the two possible policy entities. However, we are not yet far enough along in our committee work (in terms of the committee’s consultation with the respective departments) to make recommendations around super-departments. For the purposes of this update, we assume the existence of super-departments and will note issues around them where needed for each model.

We look forward to hearing feedback from the university community on these policy models. We want to emphasize again that this interim update is just that – it is not our final report and instead reflects our current thinking about these issues. As is evident, there are many unresolved issues that will require continued conversations. The main objective of the upcoming listening sessions and meetings is to hear feedback from faculty, students, and staff on these models and the advantages and challenges of each. We also hope to hear feedback on how we might propose addressing some of the unresolved issues we highlight. We will then be using that feedback to continue working on these issues through the middle of December, at which time we will make our final recommendation for a public policy entity.

### **Starting Points for An Excellent Policy Entity**

Before listing these general points of agreement, it is worth noting that we heard broad consensus in the university community (based on the feedback we have received) that the policy entity vision we articulated is strong and provides an outline for a bright future for Cornell in public policy. There were also some concerns and suggestions. We will address these along with other changes in the final report.

Additionally, we want to emphasize that either entity would unfold over a matter of years, and would depend on careful consideration by the stakeholders of all relevant issues.

The Committee agrees that any successful public policy entity, however it is implemented, must:

- Be a university-wide entity with true inclusion of faculty outside the units contributing most of the faculty lines (i.e., a core group of faculty from other colleges and schools should have non-zero percent-time appointments). For the “school” model, this would mean that a core group of faculty beyond CAS

and CHE would be included; for the “college” model, this would mean that a core group of faculty beyond the College of Public Policy (hereafter “CPP”) would be included. These affiliations need not be present right at the beginning, but could be added over the initial early years as the entity takes shape and is implemented<sup>2</sup>.

- Have an autonomous leadership model that includes its own Dean and leadership and control of its own resources and lines. Although this would be by default the case for the College model, the Committee does not believe that a cross-college School would be able to achieve excellence in public policy without its own Dean with control of resources<sup>3</sup>.

In the sections that follow, we provide more specific insight into the two models. After listing the possible advantages and challenges, we list unresolved issues that require additional consideration by the Implementation Committee and then, subsequently, by university and college leadership. The two models have some elements in common, particularly as they relate to undergraduate, masters, and doctoral teaching, programming, and training. As a result, there is some overlap in our analysis of the advantages, challenges, and unresolved issues in the Cross-college School and the College models.

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<sup>2</sup> The phasing of the development of the Policy Entity is a management decision versus this committee’s decision. Early stages of the entity will depend on faculty who want to be centrally involved in the extensive initial planning around hiring, governance, outreach, and graduate and undergraduate training and curricula.

<sup>3</sup> As we note below, it is an open question whether the School would need to be an admitting entity for undergraduates to succeed. (Any policy entity would be an admitting entity for Masters programming.)