

August 19, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

FROM: Timothy P. Scott, Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Working Group Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Scott', written over the 'FROM' line.

SUBJECT: Implementation Memo – Working Group 1 – Structure & Focus of the Office of the Provost

Recommendation to be Implemented: Reorganize the Office of the Provost to allow greater focus on academic excellence. Modified to add: Position title to be Office of the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer

Strategic Considerations: The working group looked broadly at the new orientation and organization of the President's cabinet when starting their work. Specifically, there were new cabinet-level positions created which would require consideration and close evaluation of assisting the Office of the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer to focus on academic excellence. Once the remaining responsibilities of the Office were understood, the group discussed next steps with stakeholders, heard from other leaders on campus who would be impacted by this work, and engaged in dialogue regarding the definition of "academic excellence." The group discussed establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Office to measure how successful it was in reaching its goals of focusing on academic excellence for the university. In the end, however, the working group determined that KPIs should be established by the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer and the Office's leadership team based on emerging priorities and metrics for the university. As a result, the working group examined the responsibilities of the Office and produced a recommended administrative structure to carry out those responsibilities.

Logistical Issues Addressed: The work group focused on creating administrative structures with established job responsibilities. These positions were created independent of any consideration for individuals who may currently be occupying established or similar roles. Instead, the group focused on the appropriateness of clustering responsibilities to maximize the potential for academic excellence within the university by supporting faculty, staff, and students at various levels across the university. The group did recommend that there only be one vice provost. The administrator titles included in this memo have been developed as a baseline recommendation after careful consideration of the meeting minutes, the recommendation of a single vice provost, and analysis of the responsibilities each position would carry in their assigned role.

The group took seriously the charge to focus on academic excellence. As the Office is charged with this expectation, the group considered the many other areas of the university that contribute to academic excellence. The MGT report did not include a recommendation on moving Disability Resources out of Student Affairs. However, the working group identified Disability Resources as an area they strongly recommend report to the Office of the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer. Specifically, Disability Resources' posted mission statement reads "Disability Resources staff members interact and collaborate with faculty, staff, and students to achieve an equitable learning environment for students with disabilities at Texas A&M University." The working group felt strongly that the stated focus on achieving an equitable learning environment fits well with the academic excellence charge of the Office. Placing Disability Resources administratively in the Office of the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer clearly communicates the strong commitment to supporting faculty, students, and staff as they work together in pursuing equity, collaboration, and excellence.

Major Challenges Encountered and Resolutions: The working group started by building and considering the duties, responsibilities, and resources assigned to the Office after some of the immediate changes implemented with *The Path Forward*. This allowed the group to work with a clear understanding of their resources, expectations, and stakeholders. The two remaining issues that will need resolution include:

1. Confirmation or modification of titles and job descriptions for the individuals in each role on the attached organizational chart. This will be completed by the new Interim Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer in consultation with President Banks by September 30, 2022.
2. Transfer of Disability Resources from the Division of Student Affairs to the Office of the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer. This matter requires more study which will necessitate the formation of a small working group to make a final recommendation to President Banks.

The Vice President of Student Affairs and I have had discussions regarding the administrative placement of the Office of Disability Resources, which is currently located in the Division of Student Affairs. Despite the working group's recommendations that it be moved to the Office of the Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, we both believe it to be serving the university well in the Division of Student Affairs and should remain there. In light of the recommendations of this working group, a smaller, independent working group shall be tasked with evaluating the placement of Disability Resources. Co-chairs for this group shall be Kristie Orr (Director for Disability Resources) and me.

The charge for this group shall be to "examine the services provided by the Department of Disability Resources, the stakeholders who are served through these services, peer benchmarking, industry practice, and make a recommendation to President Banks through the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Interim Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer regarding the administrative placement of Disability Resources." This group's work will be completed by November 30, 2022 and include stakeholders appointed by the President and nominated from Disability Resources, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Office of the

Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, and the Vice President for Faculty Affairs. Membership will consist of faculty, staff, and students.

Key Logistical Issues to be Completed and Timeline: The organizational chart will require an updating of nearly all job descriptions of individuals who report directly to the Provost, which may include some discussion around reclassifications as appropriate. These job descriptions and reclassifications will be completed by November 1, 2022. No other logistical issues or documentation will need to be submitted or considered as part of these transitions.

Approved:



M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

September 10, 2022

Date

* Approved with the exception that another working group will be formed, as outlined above, to study and make final recommendations related to the placement of Disability Resources.