College of Built Environments Organizational Review

Summary Report

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Contents

About the Summary Report

The Summary Report (the Report) contains the findings of the organizational review commissioned by Dean Renée Cheng for the College of Built Environments (the College).

The Report is divided into the following sections:

- The Overview provides a brief summary of the report.

- Section 1 provides the context, scope and approach of the Review.

- Section 2 and 3 discusses the key themes in terms of the College's Strengths and Opportunities.

- Section 4 provides recommendations based on the review results.

- Section 5 contains the contact information of the Consultant for further information about this report.

Best practice uses of reports such as this include:

- Use the Report as a starting point to engage and further deepen dialogue and understanding of the current "state" of the whole College

- Help guide future organizational planning and decision-making

- Guide leaders in managing organizational change

Overview

The College of Built Environments partnered with an external consultant, Julius Erolin (the Consultant), to conduct a brief college-wide organizational review (the Review). The goal of the Review is to gather perspectives across the College on the current strengths, challenges and opportunities of the College. It is not intended as a "fact-finding" exercise. It is a process of understanding how various stakeholders "see" and experience the College.

The Review is part of the "Dean's Dialogue", a larger and longer process of listening, learning and planning for Dean Renée Cheng. Given the larger dialogue engaging the broader College community, the Review was designed to be narrow in scope. It is focused on gathering perspectives from faculty and staff, and student and PAC leaders.

The Consultant collected information from individual interviews, focus groups, a survey and review of relevant documents. 105 individuals participated in seven focus groups, 134 completed the survey, and 11 were interviewed. Information from the concurrent "visioning" sessions were also used for this Review. 109 individuals participated in six visioning sessions. Participation in the data collection process was very high among faculty and staff, and more limited with student leaders and external community members. This report summarizes the findings and conclusions from those sources. It also includes recommendations based on the Review results.

The following themes from the Review are arranged in terms of Strengths (what the College is doing well) and Opportunities (what the College can improve), in order of prevalence in the data sources.

<u>Strengths</u>

1. **"A good place to work":** Staff and faculty appreciate and enjoy the collegial, welcoming and "can do" atmosphere of the College. Collegiality, high job satisfaction, feelings of being valued by colleagues and supervisors, and high commitment to the success of the College contribute to theme of the College as a "good place to work".

2. **Talented and dedicated people:** Respondents are proud of the high calibre quality of the faculty, staff, students, alumni and professional community. Individuals spoke of the "tremendous staff", the "great individual work" of the faculty, and the engaged talented professional community. The quality and engagement of students are what most respondents highlighted in the survey.

3. **Diversity of disciplines, programs, research and courses:** The variety of disciplines and expertise housed in five departments within one college is seen as unique and a particular strength by respondents.

4. **Collaboration and interdisciplinary work:** Respondents highlighted the growing collaboration across disciplines and departments in research, curriculum and administration. Staff work across departments and units to solve problems. Faculty reach across disciplines on scholarship and initiatives. Although this is an area that was also identified as needing support and improvement, respondent feel that individuals "on the ground" have the freedom to initiate and foster collaboration and interdisciplinary work.

5. **High potential:** Respondents consistently emphasized the high potential of the College to be a leader in developing students, generating "useful and excellent" scholarship, and having positive impact in the local, regional and global communities.

Opportunities

1. **College as a leader:** Respondents agree that the College has an immense opportunity to be a leader in the region, nationally and internationally. By increasing its visibility, further engaging with community partners and issues, and fully leveraging and developing its talent and resources, respondents feel that the College can make greater positive impact with students, communities and local and global issues.

2. **Collaboration and interdisciplinary work:** The diversity of disciplines, programs, research, resources and talents across the College is viewed by many respondents as underutilized. Although collaboration and interdisciplinary work has increased in the past years, it has usually been initiated and sustained by individuals at a "local" level. A college-wide system of support and communication would facilitate impactful and sustainable collaboration across disciplines and departments. A strategic and coordinated approach would also help focus efforts, make better use of resources, and have greater impact.

3. **Shared purpose, vision and goals**: Respondents agree that what is needed to leverage the diverse talents, disciplines and resources is a common purpose, vision and goals shared and agreed upon across the College. The start of the new Dean is seen as a great opportunity to develop a shared vision and a strategic plan.

4. **Internal and external communications:** A key theme that is embedded in all the opportunities and areas of improvement identified by respondents is effective internal and external communications. Respondents highlighted the need for increasing coordinated, accessible and transparent communications.

5. **College systems and processes:** Respondents identified the need for more coordinated and streamlined systems and processes to increase efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. Although many staff and faculty often find ways to navigate the varying systems, the lack of clarity and integration can be time-consuming and challenging particularly for students.

6. **Research and grant support:** Respondents highlighted the need for greater college support to help develop, streamline and sustain research/scholarship and grants. A separate analysis and a strategic planning process have already been initiated by the Associate Dean for Research, Professor Marina Alberti.

7. **Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI):** Many respondents recognized and highlighted the positive intent and efforts by individuals and departments to further equity, diversity and inclusion in the College. However, many respondents identified the need for "more action" and "walking the talk". A college-wide strategic and action-oriented approach is viewed as needed to further EDI.

8. **Use of College spaces:** Many respondents emphasized the untapped potential of College spaces to build community, enhance student learning and facilitate collaboration across departments. Respondents identified the need to review and plan for better use of College spaces, and to make decision-making on use of College spaces more transparent and inclusive.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is evident from the information gathered in the Review and the high engagement of the College community in the Review process that respondents deeply value the College, enjoy and appreciate their colleagues and the students, and are committed to the success of the College. There is a general sense that the College is stable and functioning fairly well. However, there is a strong belief and desire that the College can be much more, have immense untapped potential, and that a vision, direction and a cohesive approach are needed. There is excitement and high expectations that the new Dean can help facilitate this process and help the College build "synergy" and reach its potential.

The following recommendations are based on current strengths and opportunities identified in the Review:

1. **Continue and expand the "Dean's Dialogue" process:** Continue the "Dean's Dialogue" process by engaging students, the professional community and affiliates.

2. **Develop a College strategic plan:** Begin to develop a college-wide strategic plan with a clear purpose, vision and strategic goals. The planning process should be as inclusive as possible, gathering perspectives across the College as well as external communities. This planning process should build upon the "visioning" sessions facilitated by Dean Cheng and Trevor Miller, as well as the research strategic planning process facilitated Associate Dean Alberti. Given some tendencies of many organizations around strategic plans and the College's own planning history, particular attention should be placed on timelines, measures and accountabilities.

3. **Map and evaluate common systems and processes.** Begin a mapping and evaluation process of the common systems/processes, as well as roles and responsibilities, across the College. The goal is to build shared understanding of these systems in order to find ways to increase efficiencies and effectiveness

4. **Develop a college-wide communications plan:** Review current communication structures, systems and plans, and develop a strategic plan to support the college-wide opportunities.

5. **Develop and implement a strategic plan on equity, diversity and inclusion.**

6. **Provide and/or embed learning and development on conflict skills in the dialogue and planning processes.** The College wants to embark on a process of increasing group synergy, innovation, creativity and collaboration. Conflict is a natural and necessary part of that process. The key to success is to ensure that conflicts are constructive rather than destructive. This will require individuals, to work well with conflict, to have the ability to interact, engage and manage conflict in intentional and effective ways.

7. **Integrate the research strategic planning process with the college-wide strategic planning process**.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the College community members who actively engaged in the Review and sharing their valuable time and perspectives. Individuals responded positively and were willing to discuss both strengths and areas for development. This creates a strong platform for future improvements. Particular appreciation is extended to the Associate Deans and the staff in the Dean's Office.

Should you wish to discuss this review's conclusions further, or have questions please contact me at the details provided in this report.

1 Context, Scope and Approach

1.1 Context

The College of Built Environments partnered with an external consultant, Julius Erolin (the Consultant), to conduct a brief college-wide organizational review (the Review). The goal is to take a "snap shot" of the current strengths, challenges and opportunities of the College. The Review is part of the "Dean's Dialogue", a larger and longer process of listening, learning and planning for Dean Renée Cheng. The Dean's Dialogue has included facilitated "visioning" sessions, informal small group meetings and individual meetings.

The specific aims of the Review are to:

- Capture and analyze the current strengths, challenges and opportunities of the College, and

- Provide recommendations moving forward.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

The Review was limited in scope. The focus was on gathering information voluntarily provided by individuals across the College and external community members. The Consultant sought to obtain quantitative and qualitative information in the form of individual and groups experiences of stakeholders. These experiences and perspectives were obtained through a survey, individual interviews, focus groups, and review of relevant documents. Participants of the Review were invited to participate and were thus self-selecting. This may limit the generalizability of the results. However, broad participation across departments, faculty and staff helps mitigate this limitation.

1.2.1 ABOUT THE SURVEY

A survey was conducted to gather perspectives on the strengths, challenges and opportunities for the College. The 30-item survey along with 10 demographic questions was intended to focus on five main areas:

1. General job/role satisfaction of individuals in the College.

2. Knowledge and understanding of College goals and priorities.

3. Experience of College structures, systems and processes.

4. General "culture" of the College.

5. Perspectives on what is going well and what can be improved in the College.

The survey resulted in the following:

- 46% (111 out of 242) of all permanent and temporary staff and faculty completed the survey. This is within the average for similar surveys (40-50%).

- 79% of permanent faculty and 63% of permanent and temporary staff completed the survey. 22% of affiliates and/or temporary faculty completed the survey.

- 17 student leaders and 6 Professional Advisory Council (PAC) members completed the survey.

- There is wide distribution across demographic groups such as departments, job roles, age, years of service, gender, and race and ethnicity. College data is not available to determine whether survey participation across demographic groups is representative of those groups.

- Respondents provided a total of 1,270 separate comments in the "free" text boxes with less than 3% of those categorized as "non-substantive", e.g. answering "don't know" or "n/a". Many of the comments, particularly in the open-ended questions, were extensive, detailed and specific.

With the exception of faculty and staff, there was insufficient data and/or low numbers to make comparisons of results across demographic groups. The Report will specifically note if there was significant difference in results between faculty and staff.

1.2.2   FOCUS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The interviews and focus group were semi-structured discussions focusing on what the College is doing well and what can be improved.

A total of 105 individuals participated in the focus groups. Participants were invited and/or choose between the following seven focus groups: faculty (3), CBE leadership (2), and Staff (2). Information from the concurrent "visioning" focus groups facilitated by the Dean was also analyzed for this report. 109 participants participated in six focus groups for the visioning sessions.

Eleven (11) individual interviews were conducted with key leaders/stakeholders and individuals preferring individual interviews. Each interview was approximately 60 minutes in length and participants were provided an opportunity to provide follow-up information via email.

1.2.3   ANALYTICAL APPROACH - 7-S FRAMEWORK

The Review used the 7-S Framework[1] as an analytical approach to gather and analyze data. The framework looks at seven elements of a group or organization:

- Shared Values/Vision/Purpose: Core values of the organization that are evidenced in the group's vision, mission and ways of working (e.g. culture).

- Strategy: The objectives, goals and action plans devised to achieve group priorities and internal and external challenges.

- Structure: The structures, procedures and processes that divide tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities.

- Systems: The policies and procedures, both formal and informal, for carrying out tasks.

- Staff (People): The people in the group or organization and their demographics, motivations, attitudes and behaviors.

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[1] Adapted from McKinsey 7-S Model; McKinsey and Company; Corporate Leadership Council Research.

- Skills: The knowledge, competencies, skills and approaches of the individuals to accomplish goals and objectives.

- Style: The work styles and preferences of all individuals, particularly leaders and key individuals.

The framework works from the assumption that shared values and vision underpin all organizations, and levels of organizational and team performance is determined by how well all elements are aligned and mutually reinforcing. The framework is useful in assessing organizational strengths and gaps while ensuring that interventions in certain parts of the organization are linked to shared values/vision and supported by other elements (S's) of the organization.

MCKINSEY'S 7-S MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
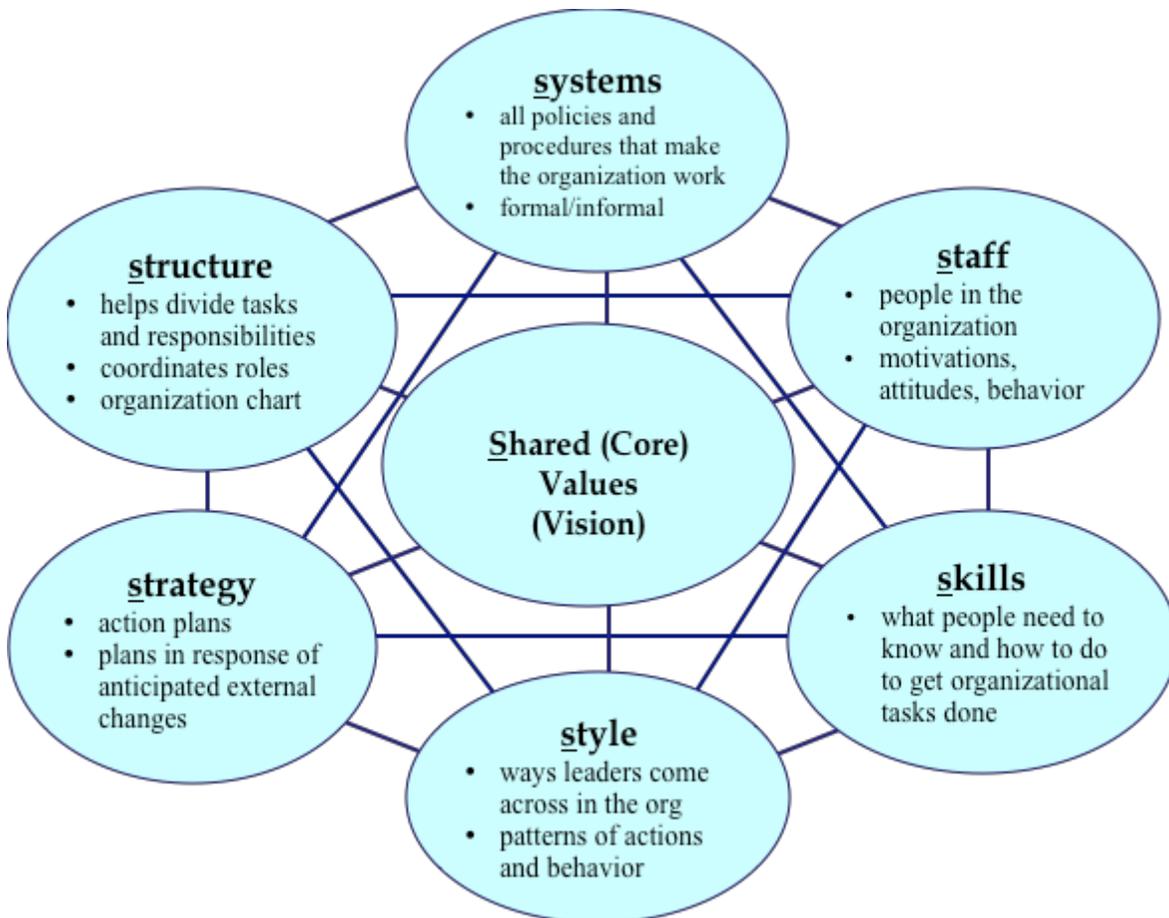
1.2.4 DETERMINING STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Data from the survey, individual interviews, and focus group were analyzed to determine strengths (what the College is doing well) and opportunities (areas that can be improved.

In the survey, the ratings scale questions used a 5-point scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). "Don't Know".

An average score 4 or above (that is, between "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") is likely to lead to a more effective and successful organization. A higher average score indicates stronger feeling of agreement with a survey statement. This generally translates into higher respondents' feelings of job or role satisfaction and engagement; knowledge and/or understanding of College goals and priorities; and, satisfaction of the effectiveness of College strategies, structures, systems, and culture.

2 Themes - Strengths

2.1 "A good place to work"

Staff and faculty appreciate and enjoy the collegial, welcoming and "can do" atmosphere of the College. Collegiality, high job satisfaction, feelings of being valued by colleagues and supervisors, and high commitment to the success of the College contribute to theme of the College as a "good place to work".

Collegiality is one of the most mentioned "strength" in the focus groups and interviews. About 70% of survey respondents feel valued by their colleagues and supervisors, and individuals point to "a fair degree of trust". Many respondents note that this "collegiality" is a marked departure from what used to be a more "fractured" atmosphere in the College that has slowly changed in the past five years.

In response to the survey question, "What are you most proud of in the College? What's going well?", collegiality received the fourth most mention. Examples of the comments include:

> *I like the collegiality with my co-workers, chair, and faculty. . . . I feel respected and acknowledged for the work that I do. My chair puts a lot of trust in me and that goes a long way.*

> *The environment here feels collegial and friendly. The students have a lot of passion and I feel that the faculty genuinely care about excelling in their roles as educators.*

> *The staff across the CBE departments and IT office are great. It's a very collegial environment and we often turn to our colleagues in other departments for support or advice.*

The theme of "a good place to work" is further reflected in the high number of individuals satisfied with their jobs and/or roles. 82% of survey respondents are satisfied with their jobs, 72% feel they have input in the decisions affecting their work, and about 70% feel they have opportunities to learn and grow. Many respondents highlight the "can do" and problem-solving attitude of staff despite staffing and resource limitations.

Long tenure at the College also seems to be common with 54% of all respondents employed at the College for more than eight years. Long tenure may be additional evidence of job satisfaction.

2.2 Talented and dedicated people

Respondents are proud of the high calibre quality and commitment of the faculty, staff, students, alumni and professional community.

Of the 99 respondents who answered the open survey question, "What are you most proud of in the College? What's going well?", more than half highlighted students, staff, faculty and the professional

community. Students are particularly mentioned in the survey as "high quality and engaged". Examples of the comments include:

> *The college is composed of many dedicated people, and it seems that everyone is passionate about teaching and following their own research agendas.*

> *I am most proud of the people who make this college what it is. I feel lucky to work among so many intelligent and talented staff, students and faculty. In particular, I am proud of our staff. The staff in this college support each other and are a (mostly) united team.*

> *We have a wonderful cohort of students and alumni making a real difference in the community and built environment professions. I think the support students get from advisers, scholarships, and mentorships through the college are working well. We have a very committed staff and faculty who genuinely care about what they do and helping students to succeed.*

> *I think we have world class faculty - many doing very interesting work that is being celebrated within their very specific realms of expertise.*

The focus groups and individual interviews also generated the theme of "talented and dedicated people" in the College community. Respondents spoke of "strong faculty" and talented faculty doing a lot of "great individual work". Individuals highlighted the "tremendous staff", the "great individual work" of the faculty, and the engaged talented professional community.

2.3 Diversity of disciplines, programs, research and courses

The variety of disciplines and expertise housed in five departments within one college is seen as unique and a particular strength by respondents. This was highlighted in many of the focus groups and interviews as well as the survey comments. The following are examples of survey answers to the question of what respondents are most proud of or what's working well in the College:

> *. . . We contribute to the society through multiple venues. Research both at more basic and applied levels collectively progress our understanding of the issues in built environment and provide solutions to problems. We have a wide spectrum of expertise and ability.*

> *That it brings together the main disciplines focused on developing, managing, adapting the built environment.*

> *Diversity (in terms of research agenda) of faculty.*

> *I'm proud of the disciplines that are housed within our college and the many outstanding faculty represented. I feel welcomed and appreciated by many*

*colleagues outside my department and have had the opportunity to
collaborate with them.*

*I think that CBE has excellent combination of departments. We should be one
of the leading colleges in the world.*

*The fact that students have several opportunities - and are encouraged to -
explore courses and studio from the different department within the College
and are being exposed to various disciplinary fields.*

2.4 Collaboration and interdisciplinary work

Respondents underscored the growing collaboration across disciplines and departments in research, curriculum and administration. Staff "reach out" and work across departments and units to solve problems. Faculty reach across disciplines on scholarship and initiatives. Although this is an area that has also been identified as needing support and improvement, respondent feel that individuals "on the ground" have the freedom to initiate and foster collaboration and interdisciplinary work.

Specific collaborations and interdisciplinary work were highlighted in the focus groups and individual interviews. This theme is also frequently mentioned in the survey answer to the question of what respondents are most proud of. Examples of comments are:

*We are beginning to teach and research in more interdisciplinary ways, and
to consider our mission in the CBE a collaborative one.*

*. . . Research outreach among colleagues of different departments;
willingness of faculty with similar interests to mentor across departments at
various ranks; interdisciplinary courses which bring faculty together from
different departments; staff helpfulness across departments.*

*I'm also proud of the work many of the research labs generate and their
collaboration with practitioners.*

*I am proud of the BE studios as a College-wide invitation to bring together
interested faculty and students in a collaborative learning context.*

*. . . many cross- department collaborations. Some of the Centers are doing
really interesting work . . . .*

*. . . the opportunities for multi-disciplinary courses, especially the BE and
McKinley studios. It is critical our students have opportunities to work with
students of other departments.*

*People overall seem very supportive and collaborative in solving problems
when they arise.*

2.5 High Potential of the College

Across the College community, respondents consistently emphasized the high potential of the College to be a leader in developing students, generating "useful and excellent" scholarship, and having positive impact in the local, regional and global communities.

The potential of the College was the most recurring theme in the focus groups, interviews and survey. One leader interviewed noted that the "right ingredients are all there". Examples of survey comments include:

> *This College has the chance to be at the forefront of design schools in the country as well as a contributor to regional and statewide solutions.*

> *There is a huge potential for the college to be a leading voice for the region in design thinking, sustainability, housing, transit, and equity issues in the built environment.*

> *My sense is that the College has functioned for quite a while as a collection of departments with a related context, but limited shared vision or awareness of the potential synergies that could emerge.*

> *Seattle's phenomenal growth is changing the region's built environment. There are good opportunities for CBE to enhance the level of visibility, and engage conversation with the larger public.*

> *Our expressed desires in the former Strategic Plan to find concurrencies and efficiencies in interdisciplinary teaching at the beginning level haven't yet been realized.*

> *The college has enormous opportunities to work with the city and region to address the challenges it faces.*

> *The areas of opportunity I think are mostly ones that already exist and are vital but that can get stronger and more visible. It is not always just about funding (everyone is always asking for money!!) but about being creative in terms of forging a stronger image and greater visibility of what we are already doing. The infrastructure exists- and great things are going on.*

3 Themes - Opportunities

3.1 College as a leader

Respondents agree that the College has an immense opportunity to be a leader in the region, nationally and internationally. Respondents feel that the College can make greater positive impact with students, communities and local and global issues by further engaging with community partners and issues, and fully leveraging and developing its talent and resources, thus increasing its visibility. Given the strengths of the College and its high potential, respondents noted that the College "should" lead and "be better known" regionally and globally as a leader. This theme is one of the most frequent answer to the survey question, "What are areas of opportunity?" Examples of answers include:

> *Significance in the community could be stronger. Visible impact on climate change, housing affordability, resilience. Higher media profile. More applied/grant research and interdisciplinary convenings. Support for student led work in high impact areas - the outside world is hungry for next gen leadership/ideas.*

> *There is a huge potential for the college to be a leading voice for the region in design thinking, sustainability, housing, transit, and equity issues in the built environment.*

> *I think that the previous dean stabilized the College. But the College could be more visible in/outside the University. Seattle's phenomenal growth is changing the region's built environment. There are good opportunities for CBE to enhance the level of visibility, and engage conversation with the larger public. I think that Seattle's good image attracts global attention. CBE can articulate that and capture the opportunity to grow.*

> *The college has enormous opportunities to work with the city and region to address the challenges it faces. However, we are often not seen as a resource.*

> *We live in one of the most vibrant, exciting and dynamic cities in the country and we need to figure out ways to leverage the opportunities that our city and region have to offer to become a top tier destination for graduate school.*

> *We have alumni working all over the world applying their degrees to all kinds of betterment. I do not think we do a good job at leveraging our alumni network -- keeping track of when they graduated, what they are doing now, how they can help promote or support the goals of the college.*

This theme was also predominant in the visioning sessions facilitated by the Dean. For example, in two groups on research attended by almost 50 people, most participants felt that the College "should have a larger presence and a bigger role in the community; moving forward critical conversations

and efforts – ranging from homelessness to tackling a variety of "wicked problems" (including those that cities like Seattle face)".[2]

3.2 Collaboration and interdisciplinary work

The diversity of disciplines, programs, research, resources and talents across the College is viewed by many respondents as underutilized. Although collaboration and interdisciplinary work has increased in the past years, it has usually been initiated and sustained by individuals at a "local" level. Some respondents stated that staff collaborate "all the time" across departments and units, while others viewed the collaboration as "dependent on the specific individuals". Respondents generally agree that a college-wide system of support and communication would amplify individual efforts and facilitate impactful and sustainable collaboration across disciplines and departments. Many also suggest a strategic and coordinated approach that would help focus efforts, make better use of resources, and have greater impact.

The need to increase, improve and support collaboration and interdisciplinary work was a consistent theme in many of the focus groups particularly the faculty focus groups. In the survey, only 35% of respondents agreed with the statement, "We collaborate effectively across the College", with only 3% strongly agreeing with the statement. Slightly higher percentages agreed when it comes to collaborating with partners outside the College. About 40% of the survey respondents provided additional comments on both questions. The three most frequent comments were (1) "more needed", (2) "only some areas" or "some individuals" collaborate, and (3) "needs to be more strategic" or "more coordination".

Among the areas frequently identified by respondents that can benefit from college-wide collaboration are:

- Curriculum and teaching
- Research
- Centers and programs
- Marketing and advancement
- Internal and external communications
- Outreach and recruitment.

A related issue raised by some respondents is the use of college spaces, and how a more effective design and use of college spaces would facilitate collaboration and interdisciplinary work. Many respondents view the start of the new Dean as a timely opportunity to leverage the College energy around collaboration. As one survey respondent noted:

> *I look forward to future initiatives from the new Dean to advance a more cohesive and mutually supportive College. My sense is that "we" are very effective as a collection of five departments, with limited opportunities or incentives for collaboration across departments.*

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[2] From summary notes of the "visioning" sessions facilitated by Dean Renée Cheng and external consultant, Trevor Miller [hereinafter Visioning Notes].

Collaboration was also a prevalent theme in the Dean's visioning sessions. In the session for PAC leaders attended by 17 individuals, "all talked about the desire for students within all of the programs to have stronger relationships, working knowledge, and experiences with other disciplines and the professional community; 'more integrated studios,' 'better reflection of the industry,' and 'pursue projects together as teams.' That extended to the PAC groups themselves wanting to have more of a role of working together to benefit the whole – not just the individual departments they represent."[3]

3.3 Shared purpose, vision and goals

Respondents agree that what is needed to leverage the diverse talents, disciplines and resources is a common purpose, vision and goals shared and agreed upon across the College. The start of the new Dean is seen by many respondents as a great opportunity to develop a shared vision and strategic plan.

Focus groups respondents and interviewees stressed that individuals throughout the College and individual departments are doing "a lot of good work". However, respondents generally agree that the lack of shared direction and strategy limits the effectiveness and impact of the individual efforts.

The survey results reflect this lack of clear unified purpose, vision and goals.

- 37% agreed with the statement "I understand the goals of the College", with less than 2% strongly agreeing with the statement. This is compared to the more than 65% who agreed that they understood the goals of their department or unit.

- 25% agreed with the statement "I understand the priorities of the College", with less than 1% strongly agreeing with the statement.

- Less than 10% agree with the statement "The priorities of the College are clear to everyone in the College and its partners", with 0% strongly agreeing with the statement.

The following survey comments are reflective of the vast majority of perspectives on this theme:

Five departments = five tribes . . .

As a College, CBE appears directionless to me.

Not sure I do understand their goals.

There has not been great transparency about this with staff.

. . . A more comprehensive vision is needed so we all understand the mission, vision, and goals of the College so we can work together to achieve them.

[W]e don't really have shared goals beyond doing what we have always done

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[3] Visioning Notes

Beyond the important-but-anodyne "we're here for the students," along with the occasional statement about the built environment, it doesn't seem to me that the College as an entity has goals.

It is not so much that I don't understand the goals of the college as much as it is unclear what the goals of the college actually are. These need to be articulated and ideally they would be developed with participation of members of the college.

. . . It seems the college does not have shared goals that go beyond the general objectives for running an academic unit and the larger ethic goals of our professions. The college needs better defined forward-looking goals!

Respondents highlighted two key areas requiring unified vision and goals: College advancement/marketing and use of space. Many respondents, particularly in the individual interviews identified the opportunity to develop a college-wide strategic approach to advancement and marketing that would benefit all departments. Although some highlighted improvements and efforts in this area as well as capacity limitations, many highlighted missed opportunities and inefficiencies:

Advancement . . . we need to capitalize on the recent boom times.

Marketing and Development are areas that need to be more coordinated.

We have alumni working all over the world applying their degrees to all kinds of betterment. I do not think we do a good job at leveraging our alumni network . . .

Our faculty staff and students do great work but we're largely unnoticed in the rest of the UW. Marketing and showcasing our work needs increased.

The theme of the use of college spaces is discussed in Section 3.8 below.

Many respondents believe that conversations and decisions on shared vision and values are necessary for the College to build a strong identity, which some feel will facilitate student success, increase innovation and creativity, and promote College visibility, credibility and leadership.

3.4 Internal and external communications

A key theme that is embedded in all the opportunities and areas of improvement identified by respondents is effective internal and external communications. Respondents highlighted the need for increasing coordinated, accessible, transparent and strategic communications.

Some in the focus groups noted that internal and external communications are one of the "most frustrating" issues in the College. Respondents stated that it is hard to know "what is going on", "we don't know what each other are doing", "individuals in departments communicate with each other but

not much communication college-wide", and external communications seem insufficient and ineffective. The predominant perspectives shared by respondents were on the negative impact on:

- The College's ability to build its reputation, credibility, leadership, and to "tell its story"

- Opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary work

- Engagement of students across disciplines

- Clarity and transparency of internal roles and responsibilities, budgets and funding

Some of the challenges on communication were attributed to a College "culture" of "modesty and humility" and of "Seattle nice". But most respondents identified the need for more systemic and coordinated communication from the College. Survey comments include:

> *Communication of the great things that are happening inside the College with the outside world.*

> *I got a lot out of the listening sessions and one of the topics I agree with is how do we as departments and the college make ourselves known in the community?*

> *There is so much phenomenal research coming out of faculty and students in the college, and there is no real way to know about it . . .*

> *There is general disorganization at the College level around communications. . . . We work in departmental silos . . . .*

> *The college is cut off from the community and its associated professionals. . .*

> *. . .The ways and effectiveness of communicating about existing or potential research programs and findings with other faculty and students . . .*

3.5 College systems and processes

Respondents identified the need for more coordinated and streamlined systems and processes to increase efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. Although many staff and faculty often find ways to navigate the varying systems, respondents note that the lack of clarity and integration can be challenging particularly for students.

Survey results on questions related to College systems and processes show that only about a third of respondents feel that the structures/systems/processes are effective.

The College has adequate mechanisms to run effectively.

- Agree, 33.58%
- Strongly Agree, 0.75%
- Not Applicable or No Answer, 6.72%
- Strongly Disagree, 4.48%
- Disagree, 18.66%
- Neutral, 35.82%
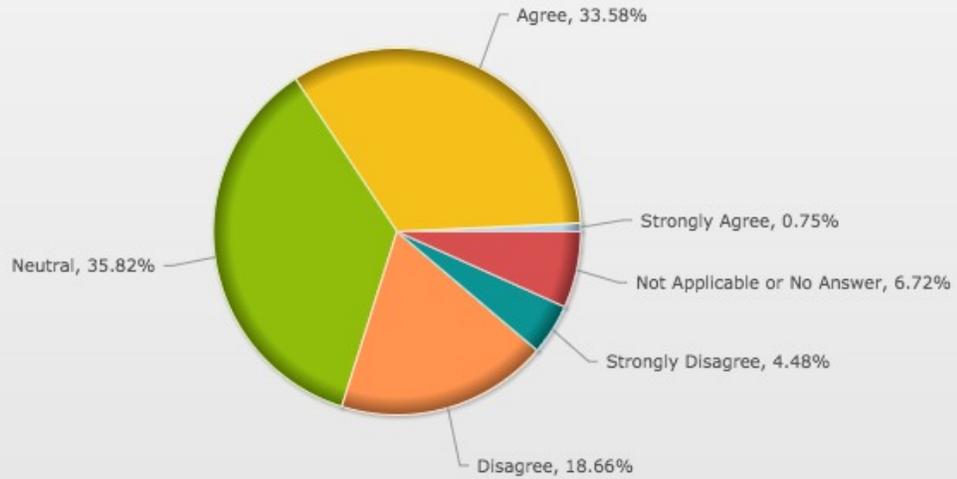
College policies and procedures are very helpful to me.

- Agree, 30.6%
- Strongly Agree, 0%
- Not Applicable or No Answer, 8.96%
- Strongly Disagree, 2.99%
- Disagree, 16.42%
- Neutral, 41.04%
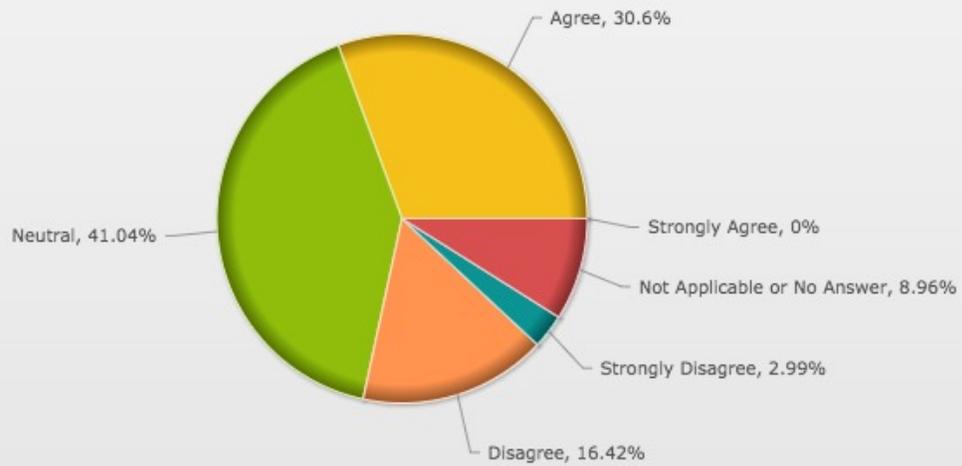
How jobs and tasks are divided make sense to me.

- Agree, 31.34%
- Strongly Agree, 1.49%
- Not Applicable or No Answer, 13.43%
- Strongly Disagree, 5.22%
- Disagree, 16.42%
- Neutral, 32.09%
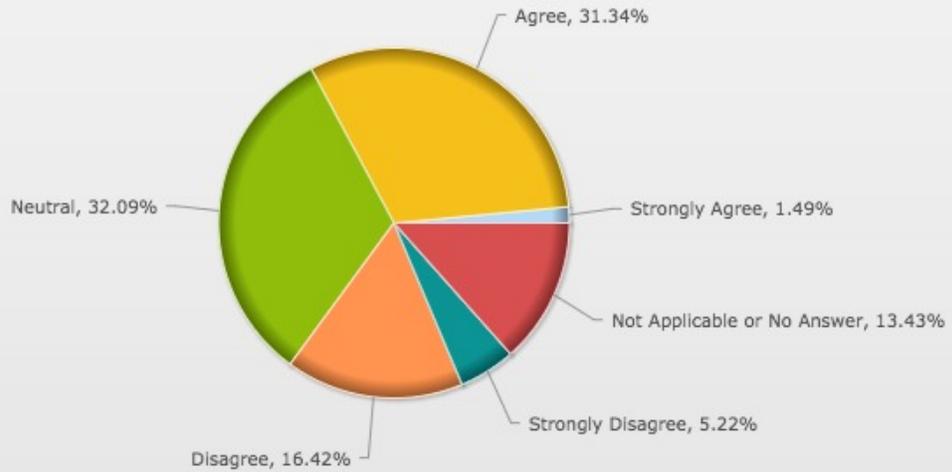
The structure of the College is well designed.

- Agree, 31.34%
- Strongly Agree, 2.99%
- Not Applicable or No Answer, 5.22%
- Strongly Disagree, 5.22%
- Disagree, 14.93%
- Neutral, 40.3%
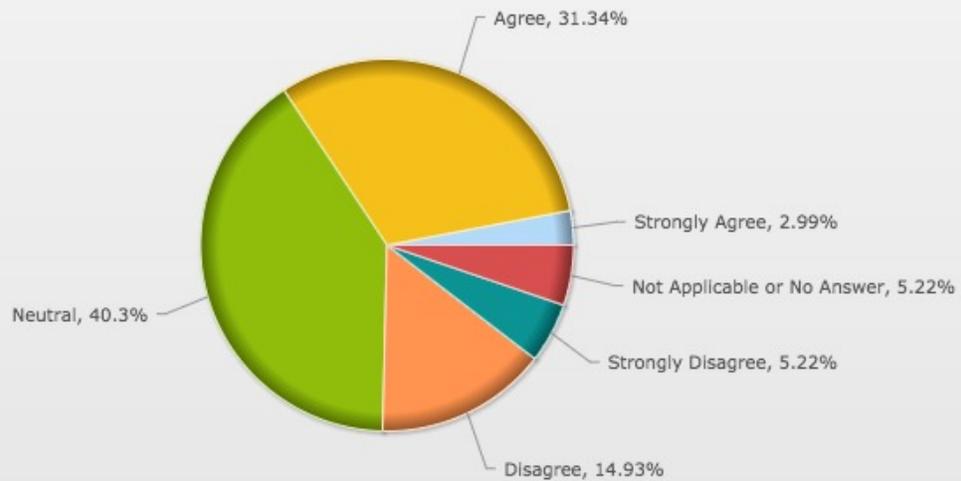
Examples of survey comments include:

> *The fact that this College has run as it has with the lack of proper resources,*
> *procedure, or structure is actually impressive. Imagine how much better it*
> *could be with a clear vision and the right structure to carry out its mission.*

> *Space allocation doesn't always run as effectively as it could.*

> *Budgeting could be more transparent*

> *Policies and procedures don't seem to be set up to help students do better,*
> *just keep the institutional machine running.*

> *It's confusing for students, faculty, and other staff to understand who does*
> *what for which department. Job titles aren't helpful in the least.*

Respondents from the focus groups and interviewees highlighted "overlaps and duplications", insufficient and inefficient support resulting in "faculty doing much more", "everyone struggling to fill the gap", and "no formal way to address issues that may arise". While the lack of uniform systems or as system of "adhocracy" is seen by some as "positive" and "less bureaucratic", most respondents stated that it was time-consuming, ineffective, lack transparency and inaccessible, particularly for students. This lack of alignment and consistency across departments was particularly highlighted in the visioning session for the Staff Council, attended by 10 members.[4] There was a general agreement in the Review process that a review and evaluation of key structures, systems and processes is important to the College moving forward.

3.6 Research and grant support

Respondents highlighted the need for greater college support to help develop, streamline and sustain research/scholarship and grants. A separate detailed analysis and a strategic planning process have already been initiated by the Associate Dean for Research, Professor Marina Alberti. As noted in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the Report, the research strategic planning process and results should be integrated in the College strategic planning.

3.7 Equity, diversity and inclusion

Many respondents recognized and highlighted the positive intent and efforts by individuals and departments to further equity, diversity and inclusion in the College. However, many respondents identified the need for "more action" and "walking the talk". A college-wide strategic and action-oriented approach is viewed as needed to further EDI.

Many survey respondents highlighted EDI as an opportunity. Examples of comments include:

> *. . . I have been impressed by how central this conversation is in the college.*
> *These conversations are important, but I would like to see more actually*

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[4] Visioning Notes

planning and discussion of how to recruit and support students from diverse communities and backgrounds. Translate the conceptual focus on diversity and equity to conversations about action.

The college could do a lot more to promote equity and inclusion within the faculty. There is a lot of discussion around increasing equity, diversity and inclusion for students, but that has no substance if we don't expect this within the faculty.

Diversify. . . students/staff/faculty

Can we better address issues of diversity and inclusivity? Students engaging actual community members on projects; the hiring of faculty that are not reflected in faces, genders, and sexual orientations that make up the overwhelming majority of all departments of CBE . . . .These are all great opportunities, from what I can see. There has been progress made, but it can certainly be improved and expanded upon.

The theme of EDI was particularly identified by students, PAC leaders and department chairs. The initial primary focus of the student leaders in their visioning session was diversity and "the lack of POC [people of colour] representation in faculty, staff, and students," the need for "stronger leadership from faculty . . . to create real change", for curriculum to "try and address diversity", and for "accountability and best practices". PAC members also "expressed a desire to find ways to learn and be more involved in instituting better practices within their own firms and by extension, finding ways to do the same in CBE."[5]

3.8 Use of College spaces

Many respondents emphasized the untapped potential of College spaces to build community, enhance student learning and facilitate collaboration across departments. Respondents identified the need to review and plan for better use of College spaces, and to make decision-making on use of College spaces more transparent and inclusive.

Many respondents highlighted specific and general opportunities for improved use of College spaces. Examples from the survey include:

Space usage - we are not in a space deficit; we do not use space efficiently

We will be surrounded by new campus developments over the next decade. We need to stake a claim on some of that space . . . .

Acknowledging that classroom space must be replaced and there is facilities cost, there is a transformational opportunity . . .

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[5] Visioning Notes

Enlarged fabrication & Design/Build spaces . . . allow experimental treatments for research . . . Gathering/cafe space on 2nd floor of Architecture Hall is a huge opportunity to create something as important for cohorts . . . .

The Gould Hall atrium is a truly wonderful social generator . . . there are too many times when the building seems under-used . . . .

4 Conclusions and recommendations

The Review process and results reveal widespread agreement about the strengths and opportunities of the College. It is evident from the information gathered in the Review and the high engagement to the Review process that respondents

- Deeply value working at the College

- Enjoy and appreciate their colleagues, the students, and the professional community; and

- Are committed to the success of the College.

There is a general sense that the College is stable and functioning fairly well. However, there is a strong belief and desire that the College can be "much more" and have immense untapped potential. There is agreement that a shared vision, direction and approach would guide the College towards reaching its potential.

The arrival of the new Dean has generated excitement and high expectations that she will lead a process of building College "synergy" and help achieve the College's potential. Many have expressed that the dialogue she initiated is an excellent start. Some respondents are eager for "action" but many more advised caution and advocate for a slow, deliberate and inclusive process to help ensure that the whole College is "on board".

The following recommendations are based on the current strengths and opportunities identified in the Review:

• Continue and expand the Dean's Dialogue process

The College wants to build a collaborative, inclusive and transparent culture. The Dean's Dialogue is an excellent vehicle to foster that culture, build shared understanding and agree on a way forward for the College. It is recommended that the dialogue be expanded in at least three ways:

1. Engage the students in a similar listening and learning process to gain in-depth understanding of their experience of the College and ways to improve that experience.

2. Engage the professional community and affiliates in a similar listening and learning process.

3. Conduct facilitated dialogues with faculty, staff, student leaders and PAC leader on the results of the Review.

- ## Develop a College strategic plan

  Begin to develop a college-wide strategic plan. The plan should develop a clear shared purpose, vision and values for the College as well as strategic goals and actions to achieve those goals. The planning process should be as inclusive as possible, gathering perspectives across the College as well as external communities. This planning process should build upon the "visioning" sessions facilitated by Dean Cheng and Trevor Miller, as well as the research strategic planning process facilitated by Associate Dean Alberti. Given some tendencies of many organizations around strategic plans (i.e. lots of planning and a lot less action or implementation), and the College's own strategic planning history, particular attention should be placed on timelines, measures and accountabilities.

- ## Map and evaluate common systems and processes

  Begin a mapping and evaluation process of the common systems/processes, as well as roles and responsibilities, across the College. The goal is to build shared understanding of these systems in order to find ways to increase efficiencies and effectiveness, as well as promote transparency and accessibility.

- ## Develop a college-wide communications plan

  Review current communication structures, systems and plans, and develop a strategic plan to support the college-wide opportunities.

- ## Develop and implement a strategic plan on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

  This recommendation builds upon the work and successes of some of the departments and the Equity Council. An in-depth analysis of the current efforts was not conducted for this Review. However, information gathered from the Review seems to point to efforts and programs based on opportunities without a coherent strategic approach and plan.

  Research and practice show that success around EDI requires an intentional, sustained and developmental approach. An EDI strategic plan should include a clear diversity statement, principles and goals, multi-year strategies and action plans to achieve those goals, as well as ways to measure progress. An EDI strategic plan will help build on the College's strengths, increase shared meaning and dialogue around EDI, and help embed EDI in the College's daily practice.

- ## Provide and/or embed learning and development on conflict skills in the dialogue and planning processes

The College wants to embark on a process of increasing group synergy, innovation, creativity and collaboration. Conflict is a natural and necessary part of that process. The key to success is to ensure that conflicts are constructive and not destructive. This will require individuals to work well with conflict - to have the ability to interact and engage with conflict in intentional and effective ways.

It is recommended that individuals across the College, particularly leaders, are provided the development and support necessary to be more adept with engaging and managing conflict. This is especially pertinent given

- The history of the College around conflict;
- The survey results showing only 17% feel that conflicts are handled effectively, and only 31% feel that the College is very open to change; and
- The stated "culture" of "Seattle nice" in the College which can lead to an overemphasis on "harmony" and an avoidance difficult conversations.

- ## Integrate the research strategic planning process with the college-wide strategic planning process.

A separate detailed analysis and a strategic planning process have been initiated by the Associate Dean for Research, Professor Marina Alberti. The research strategic planning process and results should be integrated in the College strategic planning process.

5 Further information

Should you wish to discuss this Review further, or have questions please contact us at the contact details below.

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