

Executive Summary of the Report from the Dartmouth Steering Committee:

**The Future of Arts and Sciences**

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*Our Mission: Dartmouth educates the most promising students and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge.*

Dartmouth offers a world-class residential liberal-arts undergraduate education. Through Dartmouth's teacher-scholar model, the Arts and Sciences faculty have crafted an undergraduate curriculum across the full breadth of the liberal arts, while leading their fields in the creation of new knowledge — often in partnership with graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, and with colleagues in the professional schools. Dedicated staff across campus deliver a broad and inclusive residential experience, offering a range of co-curricular and extracurricular programs that enrich the student experience and provide educational opportunities beyond the classroom. Taken together, Dartmouth provides an outstanding educational experience and produces cutting-edge scholarship.

And yet, it has become clear that the Arts and Sciences, long the core of Dartmouth's identity, is operating on an antiquated framework that limits its development. Dartmouth is organized today much as it was fifty years ago despite increases in scale and complexity. More broadly, the landscape of higher education has become more complex, more global, and more competitive. Dartmouth has no unit that delivers the whole of the Arts and Sciences mission and thus no point of leadership to manage resources or to collaborate, coordinate, prioritize, and innovate in support of that mission.

The *Future of Arts and Sciences Project*, launched over two years ago, has sought to understand the challenges of the current model and to propose a path forward for the Arts and Sciences. The project's goal is to propose a new structure that gives Arts and Sciences leadership strategic control over the holistic scholarly and educational mission of the Arts and Sciences; increased budgetary and operational agency; and expanded ability to pursue its aspirations. In short, the project seeks to design a rational structure tailored to support all that the Arts and Sciences can be in 2024 and for generations to come. This approach will result in a stronger, more innovative, more agile Arts and Sciences — one that integrates the curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular undergraduate experience, and better supports the research and creative endeavors of Arts and Sciences faculty. A stronger Arts and Sciences is a stronger Dartmouth.

The need for this project has become more apparent over time, as various groups addressed challenges in institutional priority--setting and budgeting under the current model. This culminated in a specific charge from President Hanlon to the Dean of Faculty in January 2022.

The resulting proposal outlines recommendations drawn from more than two years of work by the Steering Committees, Task Groups, Working Groups, and the Executive Committee. These groups contained faculty, staff, and administrators drawn from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Division of Student Affairs, Thayer School of Engineering, central Finance and Administration, Admissions, Advancement, Athletics and Recreation, and the graduate and professional schools.

To inform their recommendations, these groups evaluated several organizational and budget models, carefully considered the trade-offs involved, studied comparable peer institutions, and identified opportunities appropriate for Dartmouth. The Steering Committee and its Task Groups appreciate the many comments, questions, and thoughtful suggestions that helped shape the proposal through an iterative process of consultations and feedback from faculty committees, staff groups, student leaders, and meetings large and small.

The Steering Committee proposes that **Dartmouth create a new, unified school of Arts and Sciences with the structure and budgetary agency to more effectively advance teaching and scholarship in the context of an outstanding residential experience, and with the agility to innovate and pursue its aspirations.**<sup>1</sup>

### Problems to be Solved

The full proposal outlines four top-level problems with the current framework and details proposed solutions; we summarize them here and encourage readers to explore the full proposal.

**Problem 1: There is no unified leadership team that is solely dedicated to (and responsible for) the whole Arts and Sciences mission.** In the current structure, the President and the Provost are responsible for setting Arts and Sciences priorities and budgets, and for overseeing the Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of the College. They are simultaneously responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the institution as a whole. These simultaneous and parallel responsibilities distance the President and the Provost from the day-to-day operations of Arts and Sciences faculty, students, and staff.

**Problem 2: The current leadership structure for Arts and Sciences does not form a cohesive unit;** the Dean of Faculty reports to the President, and the Dean of College reports to the Provost. The structure of these units does not encourage or enable effective coordination in support of the mission. Where coordination is effective, it is largely due to the informal efforts of individual faculty and staff who build *ad hoc* relationships to bridge gaps. Those efforts, in turn, consume time and energy — faculty and staff talent and capacity that could be better used on scholarship, teaching, and student-advicing in a more focused and effective structure.

**Problem 3: Arts and Sciences is not currently empowered to advocate for its unified priorities;** units that are important for the success of a unified Arts and Sciences, such as Advancement, Admissions, and Communications, operate separately from the leadership executing the day-to-day unified Arts and Sciences mission and have limited incentives to coordinate with Arts and Sciences leadership.<sup>2</sup> Within those units, the Dean of the Faculty and

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, we use the term “school of Arts and Sciences” to refer to the new, unified unit that draws together the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Division of Student Affairs. The name of this unit — perhaps ‘School’ or ‘College’ — has yet to be determined.

<sup>2</sup> The current structure is another reflection of the President and the Provost currently being responsible for the vision and priorities for Arts and Sciences.

the Dean of the College have no dedicated teams, no control over the important work in these units, and no well-defined processes to promote Arts and Sciences priorities.

**Problem 4: The budgets of Student Affairs and of the Dean of Faculty are managed independently, and neither is transparently connected to the revenues derived from the Arts and Sciences mission.** Both units receive ‘subvention’ (an allowance) from Central, with any increments (or decrements) to that allowance determined by Central decisions, which are based on managerial discretion removed from day-to-day Arts and Sciences operations and made in the context of competing demands for resources across the institution.

### **Proposed Solutions: Leadership and Unified Structure**

To address these problems, the Steering Committee proposes the establishment of a new school of Arts and Sciences with a leader (the Dean of Arts and Sciences) and leadership team that is solely responsible for and focused on the unified Arts and Sciences mission. This leadership will be best positioned to make informed decisions about Arts and Sciences priorities, strategic vision, and budgets. This new school will be comprised of functions and personnel currently in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Division and the Division of Student Affairs.

The new Dean of Arts and Sciences will be a tenured member of the faculty with a demonstrated record of distinction as a scholar and teacher. The Dean will report directly to the President (with a dotted line to the Provost), exactly as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences does today.

This new school will formalize collaboration among faculty and professional staff on behalf of students, especially in areas such as advising and student support. The newly formed Arts and Sciences leadership team will be better able to form cross-institution collaborations with the graduate and professional schools.

The Dean will work closely with a Dean of Faculty (responsible for faculty recruitment, retention, development, and tenure and promotion, and for the undergraduate curriculum), a Dean of Undergraduate Student Affairs (comprising Residential Life, Community Life and Inclusivity, and Student Life functions and offices from the current Division of Student Affairs), and a Dean of Undergraduate Education (integrating the offices and functions at the intersection of undergraduate students’ curricular and co-curricular experience, drawing together offices such as Academic Advising, Undergraduate Research and Scholar Programs, Student Support Services, and the Guarini Institute for International Education).

### **Proposed Solution: Increased Agency**

The new Arts and Sciences structure will increase agency for Arts and Sciences by dedicating teams from Advancement, Admissions, and Communications in specific support of Arts and Sciences, in ways that are not available today to the Dean of Faculty or Dean of the College. For example, Arts and Sciences will have a dedicated development team, new fundraising agency for the Dean of Arts and Sciences to directly identify priorities and pursue donors, a process to elevate the highest Arts and Sciences priorities to institutional priorities, and a board of advisors who can act as champions for the Arts and Sciences to a variety of constituents in the Dartmouth community and beyond. The Dean of Arts and Sciences will be able to leverage a dedicated Arts

and Sciences communications team in support of its priorities. The Dean's cabinet will include leaders of the Arts and Sciences teams in admissions, communications, development, and finance, enabling them to collectively develop strategy, set priorities, align the Arts and Sciences budget with those priorities, and pursue new revenues through philanthropy and innovative new programs. Each of these leaders will be closely integrated with Central offices to coordinate Arts and Sciences efforts with broader Dartmouth strategy and priorities, recognizing the interconnection of Arts and Sciences with Dartmouth's international reputation.

Under this new leadership structure, a unified Arts and Sciences will have increased agency to invest in faculty scholarship and in an outstanding undergraduate experience, to seek new philanthropic contributions and launch new programs that generate revenue in support of those investments, and to explore creative partnerships with the graduate and professional schools.

### **Proposed Solutions: Budget Model**

In the new budget model, Arts and Sciences will benefit directly from its revenues, especially the revenues generated from its Arts and Sciences undergraduate mission, and will be responsible for managing many of its costs. This approach will give Arts and Sciences increased agency and financial insight, enabling well-informed decisions closer to day-to-day operations than is possible today. This model provides the agency and incentives for Arts and Sciences leadership to allocate and grow revenues and to manage expenses in a manner consistent with the Arts and Sciences mission and its priorities.

The new budgetary model centers on a new structure — the Net Revenue Pool — that directly receives all revenue from undergraduate tuition and fees, from the Dartmouth College Fund, and distributions from endowments for financial aid, less expenses for financial aid. Over 60 percent of the school of Arts and Sciences revenue will derive from this source. This revenue will flow automatically, through a formula, to the school of Arts and Sciences and the Thayer School of Engineering, in relative proportion to the number of students enrolling and majoring in each school — plus a share to Central in support of Undergraduate Admissions and Athletics. This approach creates long-term stability and transparency of the Arts and Sciences budget, ensuring that the Arts and Sciences budget is no longer simply based on the managerial discretion of the Provost and the President. It ensures that the Arts and Sciences directly benefits from increased revenues resulting from its mission, and that the revenues raised by the Arts and Sciences can be directly invested in Arts and Sciences priorities. This budget model also aligns incentives across all three units for increasing the net revenue pool, for example, through fundraising for financial aid.<sup>3</sup> Arts and Sciences will be responsible for its expenses, including compensation, space, and services provided by Central or other units.

### **Additional Discussion**

It is worth noting explicitly what will **not** change with the Future of Arts and Sciences Project. First, the undergraduate Arts and Sciences curriculum will remain the purview of the Arts and

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<sup>3</sup> For example, all three would benefit from increases in funds raised in the annual Dartmouth College Fund. In addition, Arts and Sciences will receive all direct and indirect revenues from endowments, gifts, or grants directed specifically to Arts and Sciences faculty and student programs.

Sciences faculty. Second, this project is not an effort to reduce cost or cut budgets. While the new budget model will not significantly increase Arts and Sciences funding in the very short term, the goal is to ensure that Arts and Sciences is well-positioned to succeed in the longer run. To that end, Central has added \$1 million to the Faculty of the Arts and Sciences in FY25 (resulting in 15 new staff FTE) and the proposed budget model includes an additional \$4 million to the annual budget for the new school of Arts and Sciences to cover anticipated incremental positions and costs.

The proposed school will not diminish the unique and central role Arts and Sciences plays at Dartmouth. The proposal accounts for the inherent interdependence of Arts and Sciences with other units across campus, most notably, Admissions, Athletics, Advancement, Communications, Health and Wellness, as well as with the graduate and professional schools.

In particular, Arts and Sciences is intricately connected with the Thayer School of Engineering, given their shared commitment to undergraduate education at Dartmouth. As such, the Dean of Arts and Sciences and their team will work closely with the Dean of Thayer and their team. Students in Thayer's undergraduate BE program will have access to all support services offered to undergraduate AB students.

Arts and Sciences is also closely woven with the Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, with Arts and Sciences faculty teaching and mentoring graduate students, and Guarini students acting as teaching assistants and mentors to undergraduate students in Arts and Sciences. The Dean of Arts and Sciences will partner with the Dean of the Faculty and the Dean of Guarini to continue their collaboration on matters related to graduate programs involving Arts and Sciences faculty.

The school of Arts and Sciences will have a Board of Advisors like those at the graduate and professional schools. The Board's charge is to provide strategic and high-level advice to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and their leadership team.

### **Future Steps**

There will be a variety of opportunities for the Dartmouth community to learn more, ask questions, and offer comments on the proposal during the Spring term. The Arts and Sciences Faculty, as a governing body, may choose to take an advisory vote on the proposal to establish an Arts and Sciences unit, which we anticipate would happen in the second half of May. The proposal will then go to the president, who will consider the Arts and Sciences deliberations and advisory vote together with comments and suggestions from other schools before making her final recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Pending Board approval, the Steering Committee will map out an implementation process, to enable a phased implementation to begin in AY25. It will take some time to effect a transition from the current state to the proposed new state. During that transition, many details will need to be finalized regarding governance, budget, personnel, and communication, but interim leadership in the roles of Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Undergraduate Student Affairs, and Dean of Undergraduate Education will be essential until permanent candidates can be selected.

**Conclusion**

After more than two years of careful study, detailed research about Dartmouth, extensive consultation with committees and groups across campus, and review of approaches at peer institutions, the Steering Committee respectfully submits the attached proposal. The Steering Committee has heard clearly from many across the community that the current structure is antiquated and about the need for a school of Arts and Sciences. The Steering Committee believes that Arts and Sciences can and should be stronger, and that a stronger Arts and Sciences is critical to a stronger Dartmouth. The proposed new model provides the foundation for Dartmouth Arts and Sciences to thrive, with greater agency to set its own priorities and invest in its future.