

Comments on the proposed structure of The Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education

General Comment: the current proposal does not align well with either the administrative governance structure or the faculty governance structure. If there were to be a desire to proceed with this initiative, adjustments would need to be made if this were to have any hope of passing muster internally with the faculty and externally with our accreditors.

Specific Critiques

1. While the Executive Summary is generally OK, it should be noted that there has been considerable controversy nationally re: the “great books” approach to the curriculum.
2. The “Rationale” section is not helpful. It lays out a conservative agenda to influence the curriculum that may not be well received.
3. Comparison with Arizona State is not helpful. That school often takes a high-handed approach to academic reorganization, curriculum, and instituting new programs (often with a short shelf life). Need I say more?
4. No academic units report to the President and/or the Board of Trustees. They all report to a senior academic leader, usually a dean or the provost. This is the case with the Center for Latin American Studies. It is noteworthy that the Center almost never makes appointments independent of the other colleges; it does so most often in collaboration with other colleges. Also, it is relatively rare that faculty are tenured or tenure track in the Center. They are often tenured in other colleges with their work effort being assigned to the Center. This is because the Centers are usually quite small, and there is not a critical mass of faculty to evaluate tenure solely within the Center. To exceptionally change the process in this instance to have the units report to the President and/or the BOT would raise alarm in the Faculty Senate and with our accreditor.
5. In the “Recruitment of Faculty ...” section and implementing legislation sections that follow: an external board of advisors makes a list of recommended hires to the President and the BOT, from which the selections are made. Currently, the BOT hires no one but the President. The President does not hire faculty members, and Directors of Centers do not report to the President. This process would be perceived as political and would raise alarm at the Faculty Senate and the accreditor.
6. Curriculum and creation of degree programs follows a process that includes Faculty Senate approval. That approval cannot be circumvented, or you will face problems with the accreditor.

Potential Fixes

1. “Fix” the current proposal.
 - a. Carefully rewrite the Executive Summary.
 - b. In consultation with the deans and the Faculty Senate, establish a Center that reports to the Provost.
 - c. Search for the founding director and faculty members with a committee of internal and external members. Recommendations are made to the Provost, who makes the final selections.
 - d. The Center faculty propose courses and degrees through the standard curriculum vetting procedure.

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2. Offer an alternative proposal. E.g. the Legislature could direct an appropriation to the BOG that distributes funds on a competitive basis to universities that wish to create and offer courses in response to the goals of the Executive Summary.