

**Guiding Framework: Academic Affairs Reorganization Efforts**  
**Academic Affairs Administration Recommendations**  
2024-2025

This document was co-created by the Academic Deans and VPAA represents a set of recommendations for faculty to consider that could guide the future of our reorganization efforts. Our librarians conducted a [literature review](#) that highlights some of the challenges and strategies and the VPAA and Deans have reviewed the literature and recommendations.

*Setting the Foundation: Purpose, Scope and Guiding Principles*

In the last 10 years, GCC has experienced significant change, yet our organizational structures have remained largely unchanged. Specifically, Guided Pathways (2016-2020) required the organization of our curriculum into pathways and grouped these pathways into nine Fields of Interest (FOI) while promising changes to the student experience and increased completion rates. Between the 2014-2015 and 2023-2024 academic years, GCC's headcount has decreased by 8,616 or 29% in that 10 year period, with the pandemic only accelerating that decline. In the same time period, GCC has experienced instability in many executive leadership positions, making it difficult to create and sustain a future-oriented vision that incorporated strategic direction. In a very real way, our college, and specifically Academic Affairs, has needed to focus on maintaining our daily business operations amidst internal and external flux. This type of focus was necessary but also reinforces comfort in familiarity and established routines.

Source: [Dashboard: Maricopa Trends- Headcount by Demographic 10-year Trend](#)

The **vision** for a reorganization of Academic Affairs aligns with our culture of assessment. Assessment is crucial not only for student learning and programs but also for organizational structures. It helps identify areas for improvement, optimize operations, and ensures that the structure aligns with strategic goals. By highlighting strengths, weaknesses, and potential bottlenecks in how roles, responsibilities, and communication channels are distributed, assessment enables better decision-making and enhances overall efficiency. With the stabilization of key executive positions and a fully executed Shared Governance model and Council since 2022, Academic Affairs has an opportunity to respond to the change experienced in the last 10 years with a more intentional, collaborative, and strategically focused examination of our current organizational structures and consider 'what could we become'? With continued change on the horizon through *Reimagine AGECE*, a maintenance approach will not get us different results from what we have seen over the past 10 years. Our current fall-to-fall retention rate is 44%, meaning 44% of the students who started in Fall 2023 enrolled in Fall 2024. We have the opportunity to embrace future change in a transformative way that can have long-lasting positive impacts on our colleagues and our students.

Our efforts to examine the organizational structures also align within our new strategic plan, [Elevate 2028](#).

**Indicator 2: Excellence in Teaching and Learning.** GCC commits to improving instructional excellence by developing an Academic Plan that informs the development and enhancement of GCC's education programs and academic support services, with a focus on improving student learning outcomes, by September 15, 2026.

The **purpose** of an Academic Affairs reorganization effort is not to address a single problem or improve one specific metric. Instead, it aims to foster a culturally relevant learning environment with innovative curricula that encourage faculty collaboration across disciplines. This effort seeks to optimize resources, rebuild capacity, and position the college to grow and serve students in new and impactful ways.

To clarify **optimizing resources**, an academic reorganization is not an attempt to cut the academic affairs budget, but we should strive to be fiscally resourceful and responsible in our work as we are stewards of public dollars. Kotter (2012) discusses the importance of using resources optimally in the context of effective change management. Resources are considered people, time, space, and money. Therefore, the following aspects contextually define resource optimization:

- Efficiency- reducing redundancy in processes or resource utilization
- Alignment- ensuring resources are appropriately allocated to strategic goals and priorities
- Flexibility- having resources available to meet changing needs and demands in curriculum and the workforce

It is important for Academic Affairs to be agile in order to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences in an ever evolving environment. Our current organizational structure does not reinforce agility or flexibility for growth.

The **scope** of this work should include all academic departments. The scope of this work would not include academic support areas or space considerations at this time. Upon successful implementation of this change, a secondary phase could explore academic support areas and/or physical space interests. Any changes to academic departments would precipitate realignment of Academic Dean responsibilities.

The **guiding principles** that encompass this work and influence the recommendations include:

1. Student-centric
2. Collaborative and inclusive
3. Strengthens curricular alignment
4. Complimentary to Guiding Pathways
5. Optimizes resources
6. Focuses on common interests and acknowledges the importance of compromise
7. Strives for equity across academic departments
8. Build institutional capacity for growth and innovation
9. Focuses on collective interests and not preferences or positions

The **timeline** of this work should reflect an appropriate amount of time to investigate and brainstorm ideas, review data, collect and review stakeholder feedback, socialize recommendations and project status, and finalize potential recommendations for change. Recognizing that implementation of changes in our enterprise systems (SIS, HCM, FMS) should be accomplished during the least disruptive time for business operations, ideally summer session.