
Restructure the UW-Madison Arts Institute and Change its Name to the UW-Madison Division of the Arts

The UW-Madison Arts Institute requests to change its name to the “UW-Madison Division of the Arts” as of July 1, 2018, and to establish that its day-to-day affairs will be managed by division staff rather than by faculty governance. Evolutionary changes in the status of the division date back to the founding of the Arts Consortium in 1975 as a cross-departmental committee. The current divisional structure was first proposed by campus leadership in 2013 and approved by the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) in December 2013. This 2017 proposal to rename and restructure the division has been overwhelmingly supported by the Arts Institute’s partners. There will be no changes in the division’s curricular oversight, which will continue to be provided through a governance committee of division affiliates and by the School of Education. (The Arts Institute has been, in practical terms, increasingly operating as a division since 2014. Integrated Arts courses are designed to supplement the offerings of the arts departments and were approved by the UAPC on Thursday, March 17, 2016.) These proposed changes have no budgetary or academic implications.

The Arts Institute Executive Committee approved this plan on May 2, 2017. The UAPC discussed the name change on November 16, 2017, and approved it, considering the strong letters of support from 8 arts partners (School of Education (its former administrative home), College of Letters & Science, School of Human Ecology, Wisconsin School of Business, Division of Continuing Studies, Graduate School, International Division, and the Nelson Institute).

These proposed changes stem from the conviction that the Division of the Arts should possess the authority, visibility, autonomy, and resources commensurate with its role as the chief unit within the Office of the Provost responsible for connecting the arts within a vital and vibrant research university. In line with other divisions in the Provost’s Office, the Arts Institute will be renamed the “UW-Madison Division of the Arts.” The name also reflects the division’s centrality as a coordinator or sponsor of arts research, collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching/learning, and outreach/service on campus and on a national and global scale. It also provides a sense of continuity while eliminating the ongoing confusion of the Arts Institute with the Art Institute of Chicago.

There will be changes to the structure of the new division to fully realize its status as a Division of the Arts, structurally independent from the arts departments and colleges, reporting to the Provost. The Director and division staff (Senior Management Team) will manage the day-to-day affairs and varied programs of the division. A Transition Committee will move the division to its new structure and will define a single governance body to provide oversight of the Integrated Arts course subject listing, new Integrated Arts course requests, and the Interdisciplinary Arts Residency Program. Membership of this body will be at least two-thirds faculty, include staff and student representatives, and foster representation of the major areas of study and activity in the arts on campus. Stakeholders will engage with and support the Division of the Arts by becoming Affiliates or by joining an External Advisory Board; affiliates will connect through a flexible structure of Interest Groups.