Comments on School of Communication and Creative Arts

To: Faculty Assembly
From: Priorities and Planning Council
Re: Formation of School of Communication and Creative Arts
Date: September 17, 2007

Priorities and Planning Council met several times last spring and this fall to discuss the formation of a new School of Communication and Creative Arts (SCCA) which would be split from the existing College of Arts and Sciences.

We see two benefits of this new school. One would be the opportunity to seek specific donations to support the areas within the new school. Several donors are interested in donating to this new school; however no dollar amounts are available. It was pointed out that any gift to any department (or school) helps offset costs, which then frees up monies on campus to be used for other purposes. No matter what or where the donation goes, everyone benefits. These donations would have to exceed the added yearly administrative costs of about $200,000.

The second benefit would be to strengthen existing and new programs within the new school. A full-blown school, as distinguished from a program nestled, or, more negatively, hidden, within a larger unit, gains immediately a visibility, and potentially in the future, a prestige, that should encourage a larger and stronger pool of applicants--better prepared and more focused students committed to a particular course of study.

The proposal for the new school, written by the chairs of Communications, Theater, Music and Art, articulates many more examples of the potential benefits a unified, integral SCCA brings to the entirety of SUNY Oswego. Moreover, the document registers a set of ambitions and aspirations it has traditionally been the nature of SUNY Oswego to nurture and support.

While the Priorities and Planning Council acknowledges, then, the many benefits promised in the proposal for a SCCA, we would also like to represent some of the concerns raised by individual members.

First, better interconnections and collaborations within the new school are listed as values in the Mission and Goals of the new school. However, interdisciplinary activities and inter-connections within and between the departments currently exist. We question why a separate school is needed to foster these activities. If interdisciplinarity remains the primary focus, does this harmonize with the desire for an autonomous, integral, intramural entity like a new school?

We are also told that the formation of the new SCCA would be an opportunity for Arts and Sciences to, as would the new school, ‘find its identity’. This supposes similarities between A&S and SCCA that may simply not be the case. SCCA may have more in common with the schools of Business and Education, whose educational horizon is