

In response to changing shifting student enrollment patterns and subsequent reductions in faculty complement, restructuring has been occurring at KU in our colleges over recent years. These efforts work to bring about greater efficiency, relieve faculty workload in small departments, achieve appropriate scheduling for student need, and create new synergies that bring additional support to departmental operations and programs. Such program array initiatives also reflect efforts to achieve greater sustainability at the system level, as well as President Hawkinson's directives to address mismatches between student enrollment and faculty complement.

For a group of programs that did not meet system benchmarks, but were not as far from them as some that were moved into moratorium in 2023, a two-year process was undertaken to discuss how the valuable education offered in them might be preserved through recombining, restructuring, etc. Over this time, many conversations were held with faculty and administration on our campus, as well as system peers. They include both structural plans for the departments and involved faculty, and curricular plans for the programs.

Structural Plans

1. The departments of History, Modern Language Studies, Geography, and Anthropology & Sociology will be combined into one new department (name to be determined), effective January 2026. Space relocations are planned to occur in summer 2026, with the department likely located in Old Main.
2. These changes will reduce the number of departments that have or will have too few faculty for the critical mass needed to perform basic departmental functions; capitalize on synergy between these connected areas to support majors and minors; mitigate expertise gaps that may occur as faculty are reduced through attrition; and avoid problematic isolation effects for faculty in very small departments.

Curricular Plans

1. A Letter of Intent to develop a new program is currently in review at the system level. Final details of the curriculum will be developed once the LOI is approved. The new program, likely named Earth and Marine Sciences, will be a Bachelor of Science program including a program core and four possible tracks for students to select among: Geology, Geography, Marine Biology, and Oceanography. The program will be housed in the Department of Physical Sciences.
2. An anthropology track will be added to the B.A. History program, given the alignment between those areas of study. Cross-listing and other strategies may be utilized expose students in the B.A. in Sociology to Anthropology offerings.
3. A geography (cultural/human focus) track will be added to the B.A. History program, given the alignment between those areas of study. Geography tracks already exist in the Environmental Science and Data Sciences majors.
4. After the new curriculum is approved, it is likely that the stand-alone majors for Anthropology, Marine Science, Geology, and Geography will be placed into moratorium, with appropriate teach-out available for all students who wish to remain in the programs.

Minors in Anthropology, Geography, Geology, Marine Science, German Communication and Culture, PA German Studies, Spanish, Philosophy, and Public Administration will remain available to all undergraduate students. Geology will retain a track in Environmental Science. Geography will retain tracks in Environmental Science and Data Science. Other possible minors or concentrations continue to be under discussion.

We believe that these changes will contribute to a more fiscally responsible and sustainable program array, provide an organizational structure that meets the needs of faculty and students, and position us for future changes that may be necessary as student demographics and interests continue to shift. While such change can be challenging for the affected faculty, staff, and students, we are confident that the valuable learning that occurs various disciplinary areas can be sustained within these new programmatic and organizational structures.

Laurie McMillan, Dean, LAS

Lorin Basden Arnold, Provost

Kenneth S. Hawkinson, President