

Q1 - What do you see as priorities for the inaugural Director of the School of Critical and Creative Humanities in their first year?

(summary generated by Copilot, raw data follows)

Main Takeaways: Priorities for the Inaugural Director of the School of Critical & Creative Humanities (SCCH)

The responses converge strongly around **five overarching priority areas**. Below, each theme is summarized with the key ideas that appeared repeatedly across groups.

1. Build Cohesion, Trust, and a Shared Identity

This is the **single strongest and most consistent theme** across all respondent groups.

The Director is expected to:

- Rebuild relationships and repair damaged trust from the restructuring process.
- Foster a sense of belonging, respect, and collegiality across former departments.
- Create a unified School identity while also **preserving what is unique** in each program.
- Encourage open communication and transparency in all decisions.
- Support a positive, inclusive, equitable culture for faculty, staff, and students.

2. Establish Clear, Transparent Governance and Administrative Structures

Respondents see Year 1 as foundational.

Priorities include:

- Setting up governance processes that are **equitable, transparent, and consultative**.
- Creating consistent policies and procedures (many of which will set long-term precedent).
- Ensuring program-level expertise continues to guide academic decisions.
- Developing decision-making systems that protect disciplinary autonomy while enabling School-wide collaboration.
- Advocating effectively for the School's needs with senior administration.

3. Support Staff and Address Workload, Role Clarity, and Morale

Staff responses emphasize challenges created by the transition.

Key expectations:

- Supporting staff through organizational and workflow changes.
- Rebalancing workload, especially where staff have absorbed additional responsibilities.

- Building a strong relationship with Administrative Officer and staff teams.
- Ensuring clear communication about what is changing—and what is not.
- Providing stability, clarity, and recognition for staff contributions.

4. Develop a Shared Vision, Mission, and Strategic Direction

Faculty and staff highlight the need for strategic clarity and purpose.

The Director should:

- Create a shared vision/mission that is flexible, future-oriented, and meaningful.
- Articulate the value and role of the humanities at Waterloo and in society.
- Engage faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partners to define School goals.
- Strengthen the School’s profile both internally at Waterloo and externally.

5. Support Strong Academic Programs, Interdisciplinarity, and Student Experience

Community members expect the Director to uphold academic integrity while encouraging innovation.

Key priorities include:

- Maintaining disciplinary autonomy and ensuring programs remain robust.
- Supporting interdisciplinarity where it makes sense and has faculty buy-in.
- Leading curriculum and program development aligning with the School’s vision.
- Ensuring variety and quality of course offerings.
- Communicating clearly with students about the meaning and impact of restructuring.
- Addressing issues such as racism, LGBTQ+ safety, and student inclusion.
- Stabilizing programs to ensure no unit is overshadowed by former “larger” departments.

In One Sentence

The inaugural Director must **build trust, cohesion, and a shared identity; establish transparent governance; support staff; articulate a strong vision for the humanities; and ensure academic and student experience stability while fostering interdisciplinary opportunities.**

Raw Data

1) What do you see as priorities for the inaugural Director of the School of Critical and Creative Humanities in their first year?

- *Faculty responses*

- 1) Developing and implementing a shared vision (or goals) for the School that embodies agility and flexibility allowing the School to respond appropriately to changes in internal and external context. This vision (or goals) should also foster relationships with alumni, industry partners, and external agencies to secure funding and enhance reputation. Create a positive and collegiate environment that promotes and supports equality, fairness, diversity and inclusion and places emphasis on open communication, where all students, staff and Faculty are engaged and their contributions are encouraged and recognised.
Working on recruitment and retention strategies for students (for all the disciplines)
- 2) Developing a rationale and a place for humanities education at Waterloo specifically and in our society more broadly.
Creating a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration and cooperation.
Leading the development of curriculum and programming that supports the development of point 1.
- 3) Figuring out ways to keep program decisions based on the recommendations of faculty expertise--by faculty affiliated with those programs. The new org structure will be much more streamlined than it was previously, but the Director (and other administrators) will need to rely on and respect the expertise of those in each program area.
Many policies and procedures will need to be figured out very quickly and may set precedent for what the School's future practices will be. I would think a director's priority would be to make sure those decisions continue to be made consultatively and transparently.
- 4) Actually finding synergies and harmonies that exist between the departments since I'm not really convinced they were put together in the best groupings to align with similar fields, expertise, or student needs.
- 5) Supporting all programs, making sure both students and Faculty feel that they belong and have equal opportunities; Open communication;
Transparent decision making.
- making sure that all units have the necessary staff support
- 6) become familiar with the different priorities and contributions each school has historically valued; protect what is unique about the schools; create a sense of community and common purpose for faculty and staff through the transition
- 7) Bring together different departments and foster collaboration across disciplines and department cultures, craft a shared vision for the new school

- 8) Bringing everyone together.
Assist with repairing the relationships with the staff. These relationships have been severely damaged through the long and hard birth of the School.
- 9) building cohesion across areas, trust amongst colleagues around judgment and capacity to work together, and respect
- 10) Collaboration and communication.
- 11) Create cohesiveness within the school; get to know how the various (previous) departments "work" and where there are significant overlaps/differences due to various factors; promote and advocate for the school to the Dean's office (for things like resourcing, hiring, etc.)
- 12) Creating synergy between the different unit of the college
- 13) ensuring staff are well supported and given opportunities to thrive in new school, put them where they are going to be most valued;
minimizing impacts on faculty in terms of the major components of their jobs: course assignments, scheduling, performance evaluation and promotions; where possible maintain subject area autonomy over these components
-ensure that the additional service labour that is increasingly not reimbursed with course release/pay is adequately evaluated/valued in FPRs
- 14) Ensuring that the best practises and processes developed over time within each academic unit are preserved as far as possible, so that all this acquired knowledge will not be lost in a process of centralization
- 15) ensuring the expertise of the existing departments is respected, and that their knowledge of their programs and various components is not lost
- 16) establishing a basic organizational culture and basic practices for decision-making and collegial governance, getting buy-in from faculty and staff for this new administrative model.
- 17) Establishing administrative structures.
Working to create cultural norms.
- 18) Establishing and maintaining equitable governance and policies
- 19) Establishing structure and protocols for the new school
- 20) Figuring out some best practices for the school in terms of communication through the org chart. Handling unforeseen challenges.
- 21) fostering dialogue among different disciplines; establishing fair and productive systems and structures; securing resources

- 22) Getting a majority of people in the school on board with the task of creating the School, with perceiving it as a positive undertaking, and with being appreciative of everyone in the new School and their contributions.
- 23) Helping set policies and structures in place to govern the School in the long term.
- 24) I believe that we face change that we can drive, or we will be driven by. Listening, talking, and committing to action are necessary to shape the way forward. It is not going to be easy.
- 25) Inclusion of and collaboration among all former departments. It is essential to make each faculty and staff that they belong and are part of the new School, not only former large departments.
- 26) Leadership, collaboration, and advocacy skills.
- 27) not imploding or exploding! Kind of joking but also not joking as this first year will be a huge struggle just to ensure that the new faculty and staff admin structure supports students, teaching, and research
- 28) Outward facing coherence, inward focus on cohesion
- 29) Several years experience as department chair, university committee member.
- 30) Sort out specifics for the organization, governance, and administration of the school, create a collegial culture where people feel like their views count and where they want to participate, find ways to advocate for the needs of the new school on the faculty and university levels.
- 31) The ability to lead a diverse group of educators and researchers, with a clear understanding of the different strengths that each department brings to the school.
- 32) The first priority will be to manage the chaos of the first year in this new system. The second will be to ensure that all former departments feel that they have an equal voice and share in the new system and that former "large" departments don't dominate in the future vision(s) of the School.
- 33) To connect members of the new school (faculty, students), to identify points of connection between existing programs, to support existing/emerging efforts to establish new cross-disciplinary programs in the school (e.g., the new linguistics minor)
- 34) To re-establish the collegial conversations interrupted by the arrival of the breakup of the Faculty of Arts.
- 35) To stabilize the activity of all units quickly so that previous units perceive a strong transition and long-term sustainability of the new School. This will include distributing activity in ways that preserve the integrity of individual members' work in their previous

units while allowing the new structure to accommodate necessary adjustments for long-term stability.

- **Staff responses**

- 1) Bring attention to rebalancing staff workload in relation to faculty coverage. Money and time resources may be limited... but staff *effort* is being overtaxed to account for absenteeism and apathy on the part of some faculty.
- 2) creating unity and vision for the school
- 3) Good communication, regular check ins and meetings with faculty and staff to see how things are going.
- 4) Helping shape collective identity for the School while ensuring individual programs retain their uniqueness; fostering a sense of community and collegiality within the faculty; working closely with staff to adjust to new processes; listening and responding to the needs and concerns of faculty, staff, students that come up during the transitional period.
- 5) Helping to educate the staff, faculty and students about the new org structure. Attempting to maintain fairness in division of assets, resources and administrative engagement amongst all programs.
- 6) In their first year, the inaugural Director of the School of Critical and Creative Humanities should focus on establishing a strong foundation for the new School. A key priority is building a cohesive community by fostering relationships and trust among members of the former departments now brought together under one structure. Creating a collegial and inclusive culture will be essential to the School's long-term success.
At the same time, the Director should establish effective governance and administrative structures that are transparent, functional, and clearly communicated. Closely related is the need to support and advocate for staff during the transition from departments into a single School, with particular attention to workload, role clarity, and fair, sustainable practices.
Another central task is to define the School's purpose, mission, vision, and values, providing a shared framework that guides academic, research, and strategic decisions. Building on this foundation, the Director should actively support innovative research, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration. Equally important is the promotion of innovative curricula that prepare students for today's rapidly changing society, including the thoughtful engagement with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.
Finally, the Director should work to increase the School's internal visibility within the

University of Waterloo and its external profile beyond the institution, highlighting the contributions of the School, the Faculty of Arts, and the humanities more broadly.

- 7) Interdisciplinary program review, establishing clear and transparent communication processes for faculty and staff, creating a sense of community and trust amongst academic units (faculty, staff and students)
- 8) Setting strategy, streamlining workflows, and improving morale for staff and faculty within the school.
- 9) Solid governance for each unit (department) and open, transparent and forthcoming communication. Well being of staff is paramount.
- 10) Someone with thorough knowledge of this process from start to finish.
- 11) Stabilize staff morale, build strong working relationship with Administrative Officer, build trust among faculty, staff and students, communicate transparently about what is and is not changing, assure students that programs remain stable, establish clear governance and representations structures, develop transparent and principled budget allocation model, clarify process and systems to support faculty, staff and students.
- 12) To unite the new SCCH into a cohesive collaborative unit, and to represent the Arts as an integral and under-serviced Faculty to the Executive and Senate.
- 13) Trying to understand the full scope of what the school does. For example with multiple programs rooted in physical media and making, Theater, Fine Arts, DAC it will be important for the Director to develop an understanding of this kind alternative approach to pedagogy.
- 14) We are looking for someone who is open, approachable, and willing to listen as we navigate this transition together. This individual should be able to understand workflow challenges, help find balanced solutions, and bring the new school together by encouraging collaboration and collegiality.
- 15) Working with Senior Administration/SCCH to establish and communicate clear timelines and goals as we move through the transition process. Director should also prioritize collaboration and interdisciplinary programming as this was key to the reorg itself.

- **Student responses, Graduate**

- 1) Do some needs assessment activities to understand what we need
- 2) Ensuring clear communication around the new rebranding and restructuring - what does this mean for us? Also, strategically ensuring the sustainability of finances and budgets.
- 3) The director will have to put everyone at ease and serve as a bridge builder between the people of the former departments. Additionally, they will have to ensure programs continue in the former departments and that they do not suffer because the bigger departments take over the others.

- **Student responses, Undergraduate**

- 1) anti- racism, and helping LGBTQ+ students feel safe 24/7
- 2) clear communication to students as to what it means
- 3) Ensure that all of the different departments are heard within the school, making sure that the concerns and worries from the student body are addressed directly, transparency on decision making and what the Director actually does etc.
- 4) Ensuring that we have a good variety of courses offered. Not the the same courses offered every term.
- 5) Figuring out how to revive program options and breadth impacted by losses produced by inadequate provincial funding and institutional neglect from the University of Waterloo in directing its efforts reactively toward AI, etc.
- 6) Getting students, staff, and faculty accustomed to the new changes and ensure that they are in the loop instead of finding things out last minute
- 7) I would want a director who prioritizes the autonomy of individual departments, even within the larger school.
- 8) Maintain the integrity of the each discipline, not watering them down and removing class options for budgetary reasons and ensuring these programs remain as robust as they were before the creation of the school.
- 9) Make sure you're keeping and making the taking of languages mandatory