



NORTHEASTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE *of the* PRESIDENT

March 27, 2025

Dr. Brandon Tatum, CEO
Regional University System of Oklahoma
305 N.W. 5th #407
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Dear Chair McDermott:

Please accept this letter notifying RUSO of a request for a new academic department within the College of Liberal Arts, the Department of Social Sciences, along with a name change for NSU's Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology to the Department of Criminal Justice. The complete justification is attached for your consideration and approval.

The proposed reorganization within the College of Liberal Arts aims to consolidate the traditional social sciences programs into fewer departments for enhanced efficiency and collaboration. As a result, the existing three departments will be restructured into two: the Department of Criminal Justice, which will focus on programs such as Cybersecurity and Homeland Security, and the newly established Department of Social Sciences, which will house the traditional social science programs. This restructuring is scheduled to begin on July 1, 2025.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Carla Swearingen, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Sincerely,

Rodney S. Hanley, Ph.D.
President

Encl: Proposal and Justification for a New Academic Department

Cc: Dr. Carla Swearingen, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Audell Shelburne, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Jane McDermott, Chair RUSO Board
Connie Reilly, Chair RUSO Educational Excellence Committee

Northeastern State University
College of Liberal Arts

Proposal for New Academic Department

Following the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education policy on Approval of Changes in Academic Structure and Nomenclature (Academic Policy 3.8.2), Northeastern State University (NSU) is proposing a change to the organizational structure that will result in a new department in the College of Liberal Arts. The specifics of the modified structure are included below. After approval by the Board of Regents of the Regional University System of Oklahoma (RUSO), the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) will be notified of this change, effective July 1, 2025.

Proposed Modifications:

The proposed modification is to reunite the programs related to the traditional social sciences in one department.

Currently, programs in social sciences are housed in three separate departments within the College of Liberal Arts, including

- (1) Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology with 12 full-time faculty members
- (2) Department of Geography and Political Science with 7 full-time faculty members
- (3) Department of History with five full-time faculty members

The proposed modifications include merging the Department of Geography and Political Science with the Department of History and shifting Sociology into the new Department of Social Sciences.

If this proposal is approved, these three departments will become two departments:

- (1) The Department of Criminal Justice, home of degree programs in Cybersecurity, Criminal Justice, Homeland Security, and Legal Studies, and related minors, with nine full-time faculty members.
- (2) The Department of Social Sciences, home of degree programs in Geography, History, Political Science, Social Studies Education, Sociology, and other interdisciplinary degree programs and social science minors, with 15 full-time faculty members.

Rationale:

Currently, the Department of Criminal Justice and Sociology offers programs and degrees that are not philosophically compatible. For instance, the interdisciplinary social science bachelor's degrees and related social science minors do not fit easily within the Criminal Justice framework, which focuses on cybersecurity, law enforcement, homeland security, and legal studies. Merging programs that are part of the traditional social sciences into a single department will offer opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. Ultimately, the reorganization will enhance educational opportunities for students in both departments by providing an environment to foster their work.

Benefits & Potential Difficulties:

The reorganization is anticipated to enhance the function of both departments for faculty, staff, and students. The benefits include the potential for collaborative efforts in the social sciences, including support of the interdisciplinary degrees, research projects, and curriculum development, and the increased focus on areas related to criminal justice, especially the potential growth in cybersecurity. The realignment should allow for more efficiency related to department administrative duties. No significant difficulties are anticipated with this change beyond minor internal documentation and process adjustments.

Cost and Resource Estimates:

Individual programs, faculty, staff, offices, and classrooms will remain unchanged in the proposed realignment and will continue to operate out of the existing space in Tahlequah and Broken Arrow. The realignment will result in one fewer chairperson in the college. Associated costs for reassigned time for department chairs may decline by 3 hours due to the sizes of the new department. Other than the cost of replacing any printed promotional materials and the time invested in digital marketing, the proposed modification should require no additional investments.

Proposed Start Date for Reorganization: July 1, 2025