



Feb. 3, 2025

William Jewell College Reimagines Future, Creates 5 Academic Divisions

On Jan. 22, the William Jewell College Board of Trustees unanimously approved recommendations shared by the Financial Exigency Management Committee (FEMC) as the College works to [Reimagine Jewell](#) for the future.

The filing of financial exigency in December marked an intentional step toward creating financial stability and a strategic roadmap for the College. In doing so, the Board deployed an important tool enabling reallocation of resources, restructuring of programs and reductions in force.

A committee comprised of faculty and members of the Board of Trustees was tasked with evaluating programs, departments and corresponding instructional needs. Recommendations were made with a strategic focus on ensuring relevance and maintaining excellence for students, employers and the community.

The approved plan creates five new academic divisions for majors offered by the College, including 1) Business and Communication, 2) Behavioral and Natural Sciences, 3) Analytical Science, 4) Community Engagement and Applied Arts and 5) Culture, Society and Justice.

“On behalf of the Board, we commend the work of this team in identifying a viable path forward for Jewell that will serve students long into the future,” said Bill Gautreaux, Chair of the Board of Trustees for William Jewell College. “This plan creates a more agile curriculum that ensures Jewell’s relevance in the marketplace and aligns with students’ needs and interests.”

In creating the five academic divisions, the financial committee evaluated departments, programs and majors in the context of marketplace demands and needs of today’s prospective students. The move empowers the College and faculty to continue work expanding relevant programs or developing new ones to meet market opportunities. The College plans to build new programs with existing resources inspired by the early success of Computer Science, Cybersecurity, Entrepreneurial MBA, Collegiate Nursing Academy and the Cyber Internship Program for High School Education Readiness (CIPHER), all launched within the last 18 months.

Beginning with the 2025-26 academic year, the following majors will be phased out: Nonprofit Leadership, Healthcare Leadership, Integrated Healthcare, Theatre and Musical Theatre. Non-major programs that will be phased out include the Honors Institute, Cardinal Sound band and French language courses. Other curricula are being streamlined, resulting in students having more choices to earn credits. Despite savings from unfilled positions and 13 retirements and resignations, a reduction in force of 14 faculty and 18 staff was necessary as part of the reorganization of work college wide.

“While these actions were strategic and necessary to restore the fiscal integrity of our institution, it means a difficult and painful parting of several dedicated Jewell faculty members and staff,” said Interim President Susan Chambers. “We offer our deep and abiding gratitude for their contributions over the years.”

Athletics are an integral part of the fabric of the institution. Coaches are recruiting new student-athletes for fall with a revised scholarship budget that will improve tuition revenue for 2025-26. Additional work is underway with a Board-led athletic taskforce to reimagine athletic operations.

Following full implementation of the FEMC recommendations, Jewell will achieve 95 percent of the expense reduction goal for academic operations, then 100 percent of the expense reduction goal by fall 2026. Work continues on athletic and administrative operations to achieve the overall reduction target ahead of the 2025-26 year.

“We are working diligently to Reimagine Jewell for the future and continue creating pathways to success for students,” said Chambers. “This process has required much work and discussion, and we are grateful to faculty for engaging in meaningful ways in this process to ensure Jewell’s relevance as a leading higher education institution. We appreciate the support and patience of our students, families and community as we work to sustain Jewell’s mission.”

In the coming months, the College will launch its Reimagine Jewell initiative with a goal to raise \$25 million over the next four years to underwrite operations, including student scholarships.

As a fixture of the Kansas City metropolitan region, William Jewell College recently celebrated its 175th anniversary and serves as an economic driver in the community. Approximately three quarters of new graduates are employed in the Kansas City region, using their critical thinking skills to contribute to the success of local businesses and organizations.

Jewell graduates are highly valued by employers across the Kansas City region and beyond. They complete a rigorous critical thinking curriculum designed to develop leaders—setting them apart from other candidates and creating more career opportunities.

#

Media Contact:
Kelly Cooper
kcooper@parriscommunications.com