To: Connie Patterson, Chair, University Curriculum Committee Programs Committee

From: Joann Benigno (HSLS), Melissa Bowlby (PA), Gary Chleboun (PT), Kimberlee Orben (FNS), Sharon Perry (EXPH), Chad Starkey (AT and Interim Director for AHSW and RCS)

Date: January 29, 2024

Re: Dissolving the Schools of Applied Health Sciences and Wellness (AHSW) and the School of Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences (RCS) in the College of Health Sciences and Professions

**Purpose**

The purpose of this proposal is twofold:

1. To dissolve the School of Applied Health Sciences and Wellness (AHSW), comprised by the Divisions of Athletic Training (AT), Exercise Physiology (EXPH), and Food and Nutrition Sciences (FNS) and dissolve the School of Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences (RCS), comprised by the Divisions of Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences (HSLS), Physician Assistant (PA), and Physical Therapy (PT).
2. To elevate the Divisions of AT, EXPH, FNS, HSLS, PA and PT to department status with commensurate rights and responsibilities.

**Background**

In 2010, the then College of Health and Human Services underwent significant restructuring to create the College of Health Sciences and Professions (CHSP). This restructuring effort met its goal of providing our college with a singular focus on healthcare. However, over time, we – the faculty and programmatic leadership – have found that some aspects of the internal structure and function of CHSP could be optimized. There is no clear distinction between the programs in AHSW and RCS. For example, there are rehabilitation-focused Divisions in AHSW that are not in RCS and a Division in RCS is neither rehabilitation nor communication science-related. Students do not choose to enroll at Ohio University based on the School. Instead, they enroll because of the profession (Division).

In our current organizational configuration, academic disciplines (professions) are represented by “Divisions” – a term that is not recognized by the Ohio University Faculty Handbook as an academic unit – and overseen by a middle manager, the School Director. The two Schools have shared the same Director for approximately six of the past 10 years.

We maintain that the academic Divisions represented in this proposal are equivalent to Departments as each represents a defined profession that offers specialized coursework. The curriculum and course content are prescribed by six different specialized accreditors. Additionally, accreditation standards and/or Ohio state law requires that faculty in each profession must have specific degrees, credentials, and licenses (e.g., Physical Therapy faculty who teach clinical courses must be licensed physical therapists in the state of Ohio).

Per the Faculty Handbook, in our current organizational structure the School Director is responsible for the annual review of ALL faculty within the School and evaluates each for their suitability for tenure and/or promotion. Because of the number, specificity, and specialization of the faculty within each profession, this is a significant challenge. For example, the current School Director is expected to conduct an annual evaluation of over 60 faculty from six different professions. It is impractical for the School Director to have finite knowledge of each faculty’s contribution to their unit. The current Division Directors are much better positioned to provide a comprehensive review of the faculty within their unit. As Department Chairs these individuals would have the purview to conduct these evaluations and other responsibilities identified in the Faculty Handbook.

**Rationale and Benefits**

The rationale and benefits of this revised structure include:

1. **Autonomy**: Empowering each Department by providing a defined structure where the Department Chairs are the decision-makers for issues that are unique to their profession in which they and their faculty are the experts.
2. **Direct reporting line between the Chairs and the Dean**: Eliminating the middle manager (School Director) between the newly formed departments and the Dean.
3. **Recognition:** Removing the structural ambiguity of having “Divisions” which are not defined in the Faculty Handbook.
4. **Accreditation**: Each Department has programs that are – or soon will be – bound by specialized accreditors. Placing these Departments in a relatively autonomous position by elevating the Division Director to a Department Chair will be an asset during accreditation, especially regarding compliance with accreditation standards, budgetary input, and program planning.
5. **Accountability:** Allowing the Department Chair to directly evaluate the faculty within the department in accordance with University Policy.
6. **Representation:** Enhancing representation in College and University processes (e.g., College Curriculum Committee, Chairs and Director’s meetings).
7. **Education:** To differentiate program affiliation from interprofessional affiliations within the college.

**Students, Faculty, and Staff Involved**

These six units offer five undergraduate majors with six tracks, nine master’s degree programs, two residencies, three clinical doctorates, two PhD programs, six certificates, and several minors (Appendix A). Following is a delineation of students, faculty, and staff by Division:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Fall 2023 Data** | | | | |
| **Division** | **UG Students** | **Grad Students** | **Total Students** | **Faculty** | **Adm Staff** |
| Athletic Training | 0\* | 58 | 58 | 6 | 0.3 |
| Exercise Physiology | 493 | 11 | 504 | 10 | 0.3 |
| Food and Nutrition Sciences | 112 | 37 | 149 | 8.5 | 0.3 |
| Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences | 203 | 103 | 306 | 20 | 1.3 |
| Physician Assistant | 0 | 64 | 64 | 8€ | 4 |
| Physical Therapy | 0\* | 135 | 135 | 13 | 2 |
| **Total** | **808** | **408** | **1216** | **65.5** | **8.2** |

\* These programs have tracks in the undergraduate exercise physiology major (AT = 91; PT = 256)  
€ Includes one open faculty line

A description of program faculty by classification and rank is presented below. A current list of the faculty in these Divisions is presented in Appendix B.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **AT** | **EXPH** | **FNS** | **HSLS** | **PA** | **PT** | **TOTAL** |
| **Full Professor** | 1 |  | 1 | 3 |  | 2 | **7** |
| **Associate Professor** | 2 | 2 |  | 3 |  |  | **7** |
| **Assistant Professor** |  | 2 |  | 2 |  | 3 | **7** |
| **Full Professor of Instruction** |  | 1 |  |  |  | 1 | **2** |
| **Assoc Professor of Instruction** |  | 2 |  | 3 |  |  | **5** |
| **Asst Professor of Instruction** |  | 1 | 4.5 | 4 |  |  | **9.5** |
| **Full Clinical Professor** | 1 |  |  |  |  | 1 | **2** |
| **Associate Clinical Professor** | 1 |  | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | **11** |
| **Assistant Clinical Professor** | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5€ | 2 | **15** |
| **TOTAL** | **6** | **10** | **8.5** | **20** | **8** | **13** | **65.5** |

€ Open position  
 Excludes one emeriti faculty

No faculty or staff lines would be lost during this transition. The School Director for AHSW and RCS currently also serves as the AT Division Director and would presumably serve as the department chair for AT. Those programs in Applied Health Sciences and Wellness (AT, EXPH, FNS) and the School Director are all currently served by only one Administrative Specialist. With time we hope that the administrative support for those units will increase (note: this is an existing problem that is unrelated to any structural change in the college).

**Administrative Processes**

The Department Chairs will be empowered to fulfill the roles and responsibilities identified in the faculty handbook and appointed following the handbook’s guidelines. The current division director is equipped to handle Chair level tasks, roles, and responsibilities detailed in this document and in the Faculty Handbook. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to annual faculty reviews, budgetary oversight, department curriculum approvals, faculty hiring and negotiations, faculty workload, FlexWork approvals, LEO approvals, overload approvals, promotion and/or tenure letters, and Workforce approvals.

As appropriate, the Department Chair will make committee assignments for representation on College committees.

**Promotion and Tenure**

An information flow and management problem could arise from having six department-level tenure and/or promotion documents for each of the three ranks (tenure track, instructional, clinical), yielding a total of 18 different documents. As such, five of these six departments would share common promotion and tenure documents. HSLS has the critical mass of faculty to have specific department-level promotion and tenure guidelines and will develop their own guidelines. Note that currently Schools tend to “borrow” faculty from each of the divisions to appropriately staff these committees. We propose that this will continue.

**Budget**

Currently, each Division has a unique budget based on the organization code, easily allowing the transition to the newly created departments. As noted, AT, EXPH, and FNS currently share the same Admin, the 3-9’s will for these three units be assigned to the Admin.

**Curricular Changes**

There would be no effect on course curricula, delivery modes, and/or location. Departments will work collaboratively to meet the needs of the college such as collaboration with interprofessional areas of focus.

**Interprofessional Education**

This new alignment will be used to promote interprofessional activities (teaching, research, and clinical) within the College of Health Sciences and Professions using the Communities of Practice matrix model. Although still in development, the CHSP Communities of Practice matrix would entail the following aspects of classroom, clinical, and research interactions:[[1]](#footnote-2)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE** | | | | |
| **Unit** | **Aging** | **Pediatrics** | **Population Health** | **Rural Health** | **Sports Medicine Sport Performance** |
| Athletic Training |  | X |  | X | X |
| Exercise Physiology | X |  |  | X | X |
| Food Nutrition Sci | X | X | X | X | X |
| HSLS | X | X |  | X |  |
| Nursing | X | X |  | X |  |
| Physician Assistant | X |  |  | X |  |
| Physical Therapy | X | X |  | X | X |
| Public Health | X |  | X | X |  |
| Nursing | X | X | X | X |  |

**Auxiliary Units**

The units involved with this proposal sponsor several auxiliary units that support interprofessional education and the Communities of Practice. In these settings students and faculty clinicians from various professions work in real-world settings to prepare our students for professional practice.

The **Hearing, Speech and Language Clinic** (HSLC), a part of HSLS, includes: (1) the HSLC Clinic Coordinator; (2) a full-time clinical supervisor who also serves as the Director of Clinical Education for the master’s program in Speech-Language Pathology (SLP); (3) a full-time business manager; and (4) and a records management specialist (.70 FTE). The records management specialist also supports the admissions processes (.30 FTE) for both professional programs (AuD and MA SLP).

**Ohio University Therapy Associates**, although technically one entity, has separate budgets for the organizational structure for the Hearing, Speech and Language Clinic (and contracts) and the rest of OUTA which is part of Physical Therapy and contracts for rehabilitation services with OhioHealth O’Bleness, Campus Care, Athletics and miscellaneous contracts. Therefore, the HSL Clinic and its associated contracts would remain with HSLS and all other OUTA contracts would remain with Physical Therapy as is the current structure.

**Approval Process**

The goal of this approval process is to formalize the proposed structure of dissolving the Schools and elevating each Division to Department status. Discussions were first held between the Dean and Division Directors who developed this document. The Directors then met with their respective faculty to discuss the pros and cons of the proposed reorganization. Faculty concerns were compiled, and the Directors and Dean developed a document that responded to these concerns. The CHSP Dean also met with large groups of faculty on two occasions.

A Qualtrics survey was developed and distributed to each faculty and staff members in each of the six divisions. The survey asked the respondent to identify the Division they are affiliated with, whether they support, oppose, have no preference for the proposal (or abstain). A comment box was also provided to submit feedback if desired (Appendix C).

With an 84% response rate, the results of the vote were:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Division** | **Support** | **Oppose** | **Abstain** | **No Preference** |
| Administrative (all units) | 8 |  |  |  |
| Athletic Training | 4 |  | 1 |  |
| Exercise Physiology | 4 |  |  | 3 |
| Food and Nutrition Sciences | 3 | 3 |  |  |
| Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences | 20 |  |  |  |
| Physician Assistant | 7 |  |  |  |
| Physical Therapy | 8 |  |  |  |
| **Total** | 54 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

The results indicate that 54 (89%) of the 61 responding faculty supported the resolutions, three opposed (5%), 3 (5%) had no preference, with one person abstaining. All Divisions except for Food and Nutrition Sciences were unanimous in their support. FNS was evenly split with one-third supporting the proposal, one-third opposing, and one-third not voting. Following the formal vote, FNS as a unit opted to seek department status.

**ACTION ITEMS**

The faculty in the Divisions of Athletic Training, Exercise Physiology, Food and Nutrition Sciences, Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences, Physician Assistant Practice, and Physical Therapy hereby request that the University Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, Provost, and Board of Trustees:

1. Dissolve the current School of Applied Health Sciences and Wellness (AHSW) and the School of Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences.
2. Elevate the Divisions of AT, EXPH, FNS, HSLS, PA and PT to department status with commensurate rights and responsibilities.

In summary, the new units will be:

Department of Athletic Training (AT subject)

Department of Exercise Physiology (EXPH subject)

Department of Food and Nutrition Sciences (NUTR subject)

Department of Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences (HSLS subject)

Department of Physician Assistant Practice (PA subject)

Department of Physical Therapy (PT subject)

**Inquiries from the Registrar’s office:**

T3 4310 goes to Department of Food and Nutrition Sciences

AHSW courses:

* Those with a T should be double listed as both EXPH and NUTR since there's two different tracks under translational health.
* Those with an H should also be double listed for the same reason.

We would like to retain the following, now with a NUTR designation:

4902H Seminar

4945H Reading

4946H Research

4947H Thesis

**APPENDIX A**

**Programs Offered by Division**

**Athletic Training**

Master of Science Athletic Training

Doctor of Athletic Training

Athletic Training Pediatric Residency

Performing Arts Health and Wellness Certificate

**Exercise Physiology**

Exercise Physiology

Exercise Physiology Pre-Physical Therapy

Exercise Physiology Pre-Athletic Training

Human Performance Master of Science

Clinical Exercise Physiology Master of Science

Exercise Physiology Research Master of Science

**Food and Nutrition Sciences**

Applied Nutrition (UG)

Dietetics Track

Culinary Nutrition Track

Environmental Nutrition Track

Applied Nutrition Minor (UG)

Nutrition Science (UG)

Master of Science – Dietetics Internship

Master of Science – Food and Nutrition Science

Master of Science – Food and Nutrition Science (online)

Diabetes Certificate (UG & Grad)

Sports Nutrition Certificate (UG)

**Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences**

Bachelor of Science in Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences (BS5389)

Minor in Hearing, Speech and Language Sciences (OR5389)

Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology (MA5326)

Clinical Doctorate of Audiology (AU5317)

PhD Program in Speech-Language Science (PH5324)

PhD Program in Hearing Science (PH5325)

Undergraduate Certificate Programs: Professional Deaf Resources Liaison Certificate (CPTDRU) and Experimental Study of Language (CTEXPE)

Graduate Certificate Program: Child Language and Literacy (CTX46G)

**Physician Assistant**

Master of Physician Assistant Practice

**Physical Therapy**

Doctor of Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy Residency

**APPENDIX B**  
**Faculty by Department**

**Athletic Training**

Andrea Bender, EdD, Assistant Clinical Professor

Kristine Ensign, PhD, Associate Clinical Professor

Laura Harris, PhD, Clinical Professor

Jeffrey A. Russell, PhD, Associate Professor

Janet Simon, PhD, Associate Professor

Chad Starkey, PhD, Professor [Division Director/Interim School Director AHSW & RCS]

**Exercise Physiology**

Melissa Anderson, PhD, Assistant Professor

Marcus W. Barr, MS, Associate Professor of Instruction

Trina Bookman, MSPE, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Anna Brooks, MS, Associate Professor of Instruction

Josh Christen, MS, Assistant Clinical Professor

Michael W. Clevidence, MS, Professor of Instruction

Nicholas Fiolo, PhD, Assistant Clinical Professor

Roger Gilders PhD, Professor (early retiree)

Angela Hillman, PhD, Assistant Professor

Cheryl Howe, PhD, Associate Professor

Sharon Perry, PhD, Associate Professor [Division Director]

One position is currently open

**Food and Nutrition Sciences**

Jessica Arquette, MS, RD, LD, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Angela Bohyer, MAHE, RD, LD, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Robert G. Brannan, PhD, Professor

Jana Hovland, PhD, RD, LD, Assistant Clinical Professor

Vatsala Maitin, PhD, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Kimberlee Orben, MS, RD, LD, Associate Clinical Professor [Division Director]

Dane Salabak, MS, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Amber Sheeks, MPH, RD, LD, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Christine Zachrich, MS, RD, LD, Associate Clinical Professor

**Hearing, Speech & Language Sciences**

Joann Benigno, Associate Professor [Division Director]

Nicole Brandes, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Becky Brooks Munhall, Associate Professor of Instruction

Nicole Carlo, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Ann Feltis, Assistant Clinical Professor

Katherine Franklin, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Fuh-Cherng Jeng, Professor

Youngsun Kim, Associate Professor

Chao-Yang Lee, Associate Professor

Kalyn McDonald, Assistant Clinical Professor

Rebecca Meier, Associate Clinical Professor

James Montgomery, Professor

Chorong Oh, Assistant Professor

Karen Perta, Assistant Clinical Professor

Cheryl Prusinski, Associate Professor of Instruction

Kim Sutton, Assistant Professor of Instruction

Christina Tindall, Assistant Clinical Professor

Nilesh Washnik, Assistant Professor

Lori Woods, Associate Professor of Instruction

Li Xu, Professor

**Physician Assistant Program**

Melissa Bowlby, MHA, MSBS, PA-C, Associate Clinical Professor [Division Director]

James Cacchillo, DO, Assistant Clinical Professor

Ann Crickard, DO, Assistant Clinical Professor (Medical Director)

Jeffrey Fisher, DMSc, PA-C Assistant Clinical Professor

Cheryl Geng, MPAS, PA-C Associate Clinical Professor

Kristin Lugo, PharmD, Assistant Clinical Professor

Jeff Vasiloff, MD, MPH, Associate Clinical Professor

New faculty member

**Physical Therapy**

Gary S. Chleboun, PT, PhD, Professor [Division Director]

Rachel Bican, PT, PhD, Assistant Professor

Michele Courtney, PT, PhD, MBA, Associate Clinical Professor

Ashley Crow, DPT, Associate Clinical Professor

Paula DeLorm, DPT, Assistant Clinical Professor

Neil A. Evans, PT, PhD, Assistant Professor

Dustin Grooms, PhD, Professor

Janice Howman, MA, DPT, Clinical Professor

Nicholas Karayannis, PT, PhD, Assistant Professor

Andrew Krause, PhD, Professor of Instruction

James Odenthal, DPT, Associate Clinical Professor

Betty Sindelar, PT, PhD, Associate Professor (Emeritus)

Brooke Vaughan, DPT, Associate Clinical Professor

Robert Wayner, DPT, Assistant Clinical Professor

**Appendix C  
Feedback Received During the Vote**

I have no preference. The structure of the college will not resolve the current issues I see within our program. Structure will not provide more support to engage with students, create meaningful opportunities for them, nor provide the appropriate resources (time, staff, strategic plan) required to help our students achieve success beyond the classroom. I personally wish we would spend less time talking about "structure" and more time talking about a strategic plan to achieve goals within the college.

I'm for better organizational structure and workflow at the university in general. I'm hopeful "restructuring" is a step in that direction, but I'm not confident that it is. A lot of work still needs to be done to find solutions to administrative problems that "trickle down." I'm afraid restructuring alone doesn't generate solutions. Restructuring simply shifts the existing problems. Nonetheless, my vote is "yes." Compared to all other known options being a department holds the most promise going forward.

Thank you for your work on the restructuring proposal. Very much appreciated!

The survey is not confidential. There is a single tenure-track faculty in FNS, so it's going to be pretty easy to make a guess as to who it is, haha! Question #2 offers a binary choice to a non-binary question and does not offer a response that represents my position, which is "I am not against dissolving the current school structure, but I am against our division becoming its own Department." In my opinion, you will not be able to discern how those of us who feel this way voted and effectively will disenfranchise (or nullify?) those who do not clarify in this space.

The pay of director needs to be mutual agreed upon with each elected individual. And assessed every other year. Administrative staff needs to be appropriately assigned and assessed every other year. Pay to all staff needs evaluated.

[END OF PROPOSAL DOCUMENT]

1. Note: The Communities of Practices listed and the associated affiliations presented are for illustrative purposes only. This model is still in development. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)