

Department of Recreation, Sport Pedagogy, and Consumer Sciences
Summary of Merger Rationale, Timeline, and Faculty Engagement
March 15, 2021

March 3, 2020

Dean Middleton initially discussed the possibility of merging the department of Human and Consumer Sciences (HCS) and the Department of Recreation and Sport Pedagogy (RSP) with the chairs of each department. Dean Middleton's motivation for initiating discussion of a departmental merger was based on the need to achieve greater operational efficiencies in the Patton College in light of looming budget shortfalls at the university. However, the proposed merger had already been entertained among faculty members from both departments in previous years as a way to create greater opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and curricular innovation among programs in the two departments.

Although perhaps not readily evident, all of the programs in these two departments share areas of common disciplinary interest. There are innumerable examples that could be highlighted to illustrate the intersection of these disciplines, most of which are rooted in the experience economy. One of the most notable such examples is the Olympic Games. The following disciplines are clearly incorporated in supporting this biennial event: Retail and Fashion Merchandizing (RFM); Restaurant, Hotel, and Tourism (RHT); Coaching, Health, and Physical Education (CHPE) (particularly sport coaching); Parks, Recreation and Leisure Studies (PRLS) (particularly outdoor recreation and adventure sport). This is just one of the most prominent examples of the intersection of these disciplines in the experience economy. Many others could be highlighted.

The following are two specific examples of how aligning these programs in the proposed department can help foster greater interdisciplinary collaboration and curricular innovation among them:

- The development of a disciplinary niche focused on sport apparel development through collaboration of the RFM, CHPE and PRLS programs.
- The development of a disciplinary niche focused on rural tourism development through collaboration of the RHT and PRLS programs.

Initiatives such as these can help position these programs to become industry leaders in their respective disciplines and gain a competitive advantage against peer programs at other universities in Ohio and elsewhere.

April 22, 2020

Dean Middleton met with the HCS and RSP department chairs to further discuss the merits of the proposed departmental merger.

April 30, 2020

Dean Middleton met with the HCS and RSP department chairs to announce the decision to merge the two departments and to discuss plans to facilitate the merger.

May 6, 2020

After initial meetings with faculty in their respective departments, Dean Middleton convened a joint meeting of faculty from HCS and RSP to formally announce the decision to merge the two departments and to provide a rationale for doing so. In addition, the Dean and chairs offered an overview of the process that would be used to facilitate the merger. The process entailed the following steps:

- The formation of faculty workgroups to facilitate various aspects of the departmental merger.
- The identification of a new department chair.
- A joint faculty retreat to identify a name, mission and vision statement, and statement of shared values for the new department.

Faculty members were invited to ask questions and offer comments on the decision during this meeting.

July/August 2020

The HCS and RSP department chairs met on several occasions to brainstorm processes for developing and overseeing departmental merger workgroups and determining the scope of work for each of these groups. With input from faculty members, the following workgroups were established:

- Shared Governance
- Promotion and Tenure
- Marketing and Recruitment
- Community Outreach
- Building Positive Relationships

Faculty members from each department were asked to serve on one of the workgroups and were assigned to different workgroups based on their stated preferences (rank ordered). Each workgroup is comprised of four to five members with at least two faculty members from each department serving on each of the workgroups.

September 2020

Initial meetings of each of the departmental merger workgroups were held with both department chairs in attendance. The first order of business at each of these meetings was to identify workgroup leaders and to outline the charge for each workgroup. Subsequent workgroup meetings have been held throughout the fall and spring semesters of AY2020/2021 under the

leadership of the workgroup leaders. Department chairs have participated in subsequent meetings when requested to do so. Workgroup leaders/members have provided monthly reports of progress in fulfilling workgroup charges at monthly departmental faculty meetings. Joint meetings of faculty members from both departments have been held periodically to review and gain feedback on the work that the workgroups are completing. Documentation of these meetings and the efforts of these workgroups in fulfilling their charges can be provided if needed.

October/November 2020

In consultation with faculty members from both departments, the department chairs developed guidelines for nominating and electing a chair for the new department (written election guidelines can be provided if necessary). The election was overseen by two faculty members (one from each department) and the Director of the Patton College Data Analytics and Academic Technology Center. The following is the election timeline:

- October 16, 2020 – Deadline for making nominations
- October 27, 2020 – Candidate forum (10 minute presentations by each candidate followed by questions from faculty)
- November 3-10, 2020 – Election period
- November 20, 2020 – Deadline for recommending new chair to the Dean

The election was successfully held and a new chair identified.

February 26, 2021

The faculty members from both departments held a joint faculty retreat conducted by a neutral facilitator on Friday, February 26, 2021 to develop a new department name, along with a new mission statement, vision statement, and statement of shared values for the department. The new department name that emerged from the faculty retreat is the Department of Recreation, Sport Pedagogy, and Consumer Sciences. A formal report on the retreat proceedings can be provided if necessary.

March 12, 2021

The Marketing and Recruitment workgroup leader and the department chair elect met with representatives from University Communications and Marketing to initiate the development of a new departmental webpage.

March/April 2021

Faculty from both departments will review/approve new departmental committee structure and new policies and procedures under which faculty will engage in shared governance in the department, including the review and approval of new promotion and tenure policies for tenure track and instructional faculty members in the department.

If all proceeds according to plan, the departmental merger will take effect on July 1, 2021.