

Response to “Senate Report on Dissolution of College of Professional Studies”

Ron Elsenbaumer, Chancellor

Carl Drummond, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Chancellor Elsenbaumer and Vice Chancellor Drummond discussed the status of the College of Professional Studies (CPS) for more than a year before the decision was made to pursue a reorganization. Specific factors animating this discussion were:

- A perception among superintendents and other officials in Fort Wayne and across northeast Indiana that Purdue Fort Wayne’s School of Education has been largely invisible and its impact on K-12 not evident from their perspective.
- Significant concern with declining enrollments in CPS in excess of what is being witnessed across the rest of the university:

<i>Academic Unit</i>	<i>Fall 2018</i>	<i>Fall 2019</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>	<i>Fall 2020</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
COAS	2,409	2,285	-124	-5.1%	2,160	-125	-5.5%
DSB	970	1,010	40	4.1%	1,062	52	5.1%
ETCS	1,761	1,772	11	0.6%	1,667	-105	-5.9%
CPS	1,309	1,219	-90	-6.9%	1,123	-96	-7.9%
VPA	587	631	44	7.5%	657	26	4.1%
HTM	80	62	-18	-22.5%	51	-11	-17.7%
HSRV	223	201	-22	-9.9%	195	-6	-3.0%
CJPA	233	216	-17	-7.3%	194	-22	-10.2%
EDU	773	740	-33	-4.3%	683	-57	-7.7%

- Concern that the structure and leadership of the college were not conducive to addressing and sustaining the specific growth needs of each program, especially given that there was no clear evidence of synergies among the units in the college.
- While recognizing that programmatic realignment creates short-term disruptions, a belief that elevating the School of Education into a standalone unit and finding new institutional homes for Criminal Justice and Public Affairs, Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Human Services would create opportunities for new programmatic collaborations, curricular synergies, enhanced new-student recruitment efforts, more meaningful and enhanced community engagement, and meaningfully improved positions from which to grow and improve student and faculty outcomes.

The decision, [endorsed by the Fort Wayne Senate in April 2020](#), to divide the College of Arts and Sciences (COAS) into a College of Liberal Arts and a College of Science necessitated expediting a decision to restructure the College of Professional Studies. The division of COAS represented a budgeting challenge that would need to be addressed before the proposal could be brought to the Purdue University Board of Trustees for approval. Specifically, given recent enrollment and financial trends at Purdue Fort Wayne, the Board of Trustees would not respond favorably to a proposal to add new administrative overhead expenses in the form of a new college administration without also identifying offsets to make the COAS reorganization cost and administration neutral. The proposed reorganization of CPS allows for these offsets in addition to much needed program enhancements.

The understandable desire of COAS faculty to launch Dean searches on a reasonable timeline to be completed during the Spring 2021 semester meant that Board of Trustees approval for the reorganization would need to be secured by February 2021 at the latest. Achieving this timeline for approval required submitting a proposal to the Purdue West Lafayette Provost in October 2020.

Once the decision was made to pursue a reorganization of the College of Professional Studies, Chancellor Elsenbaumer and Vice Chancellor Drummond met with Dean Burg and Vice Chancellor Drummond met with the CPS department chairs and the director of the School of Education to discuss the rationale for the change and to make clear that the departments would each have the opportunity to determine the institutional home that would make the most sense for them. Suggestions were provided based on research into organizational structures for similar programs at other colleges and universities, but final decision-making was left up to the departments.

Chancellor Elsenbaumer met with the faculty and staff of the College of Professional Studies on September 30, 2020, to address the questions they posed in the memo presented as appendix B in the Senate's report, as well as others raised by the participants in the meeting. The Chancellor emphasized that the realignment being pursued was motivated by a desire to address significant enrollment challenges faced by the CPS departments and to create new opportunities for long-term program growth and sustainability that we simply did not believe were possible within the current administrative structure.

While there were understandably questions asked and concerns raised about how the reorganization process would play out, department and school leaders have since indicated their full support for the structural changes that are being pursued. In doing its due diligence to evaluate the restructuring proposal submitted to Purdue University, the Purdue Senate's Academic Organization Committee (AOC) interviewed the director of the School of Education and the chairs of the other three CPS departments and offered the following assessment:

It was confirmed that the initial decision to eliminate the CPS was made entirely by the upper administration with no input from the faculty. However, the director/chairs all agreed that the faculty have been significantly involved in the process of moving forward with the reorganization and that the faculty concerns have been taken seriously by the administration and have been largely addressed. The COE [School of Education] is a large program and they are confident that they can sustain the school independently; in addition, an informal survey of the faculty showed that the majority of faculty felt that the COE becoming an independent unit would be beneficial overall to the school. The chairs of the three programs who would be displaced by the elimination of the CPS confirmed that while they were initially concerned after hearing of the decision, they are now very comfortable with the new homes for their programs and are overall quite excited about the potential benefits moving forward. The chairs of these programs also confirmed that there would be no negative impacts on students currently in the programs nor on the P&T process.

With a unanimous vote, the AOC closed its report by noting that it "supports the [restructuring] proposal and recommends that it be accepted."

The [Constitution of the Faculty of Purdue University Fort Wayne](#) establishes that the "Voting Faculty shall possess and exercise, collectively, the power and responsibility . . . to make recommendations

concerning . . . changes in academic organization.” Such recommendations, developed in consultation and collaboration with the administration, have been offered on at least two prior occasions:

- [Senate Document SD 19-25](#): Splitting the College of Arts and Sciences (the proposal to create the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science)
- [Senate Document SD 16-39](#): Academic Reorganization Proposal (the proposal to create the College of Professional Studies)

In each of these cases, the administration largely accepted these recommendations. In other instances, both before and since, structural changes at the program, department, school, and college level have been pursued without the involvement or recommendation of the Fort Wayne Senate. Nonetheless, it is important to this administration that the faculty in the affected units be fully engaged in and support the changes. That was the case for both COAS and CPS.