

NASULGC 2003 Panel Presentation

Human Sciences Programs: Challenges and Opportunities *Presented to the Members of the Board on Human Sciences*

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The administrators, faculty, and constituents created the new College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska (UNL). This paper describes significant issues dealt with over two years, provides information regarding the process of **creating** a new college rather than merging two colleges, and illustrates the organizational structure of the College of Education and Human Sciences.

We enjoyed a good experience at UNL, reflecting our decision to be proactive in positioning the human science departments (in the former College of Human Resources and Family Sciences) for the future. There were three goals when we first began looking for allies across campus to help the human sciences remain vibrant in Nebraska:

1. We wanted to keep the departments intact;
2. We wanted to keep the human science units together in order to benefit from the synergy of the related content; and,
3. We decided to take the initiative in finding ways to expand our influence on campus and in the state. We wanted to remain a college. We were not threatened at UNL. However, we could see what was happening around the country to other smaller units such as ourselves and we knew UNL was going to experience significant budget reductions.

The partnership with (the former) Teachers College has helped us to achieve these aims. Both units focus on enhancing people's quality of life – just in different ways. The process started with the two deans talking about how to strengthen each college through increased projects. What we quickly realized was that the best way to strengthen each was to enter into a partnership so that we could have a shared mission. The two deans talked to the Chancellor and he agreed to support exploration of creating a new college. We then presented the idea to faculty and staff in each of the colleges. They were surprised – some were instantly excited, and some were horrified. We took more than months to explore the idea with faculty, staff, students, alums, emeriti and stakeholders throughout Nebraska. It took a lot of communication in person, through letters, and through our website to address the questions and thoughts that many people shared. We also communicated with our colleagues in the field. Hence I wrote letters to the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and Board on Human Sciences organizations immediately. We wanted to cast this planning process in a positive light, not in the negative light as others had experienced.

My perceptions of the key strategies to getting off to a reasonable start are as follows:

- Proactive stance
- Focus on a partnership to create the new college – not a merger
- Communication, communication, communication (a website, many in-person meetings, frequent written bulletins, white papers, a concept paper describing the potential for a new college, etc.)
- Surveying faculty and staff and our alumni boards, but not asking for a yes/no vote

- Helping people get to know each other and *find common ground at many levels*
- Forging a temporary mission soon after the recommendation that we move forward. The mission statement was accomplished with leadership by a respected committee that took the two founding college's missions and combined the common ideas). This served as a concept paper throughout the early discussions
- Inviting Janet Johnson from Virginia Tech (VT) to visit campus and talk to each college together and separately. She also spoke with our senior administrators. VT had gone through a similar merger five years earlier and she had many good lessons to share.
- Dean Kostelnik talked with Nancy Hartley from Colorado and Virginia Clark Johnson from NDSU, since they lead colleges with similar configurations. She talked with administrators at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville since we were both going through the same thing. It was comforting to know that we were not alone.
- Having a Transition Committee made up of faculty, staff, students and administrators to monitor and guide the process. This committee was charged with developing ways for college members to explore the potential partnership and with making a final recommendation to the deans in January as to whether we should move forward.

The Transition Committee also helped us create the proposal we needed to complete in order to get through the UNL governance system. This paper had multiple authors and was widely distributed for comment. It garnered much interest and served as a good way to consolidate our ideas.

We quickly created a website on which we posted all minutes, notes, white papers, etc. It also gave folks a place to post comments. People referred to this often and we did get some interesting comments from students, faculty, staff and alums.

- Fifteen (15) groups of self-selected faculty and staff met (hosted by one faculty member from each of the founding colleges) to explore potential mutual interests. These groups wrote white papers describing who was there, what people were doing in relation to the issue now, how they saw their agendas blending, and whether or not they perceived promise for the future if we came together. These were posted on the website and were a major factor in our decision to move forward with the new college. Some issues people explored included: student teaching and practicum supervision, rural communities, immigrant families, distance education, basic research, etc. Some topics revolved around content, others focused on processes.
- Reaching out to constituents across the state – visiting formal organizations affiliated with both colleges – talking to alumni groups – talking to clubs, union groups, educational units, etc.

The fact that there were two deans, both supporting the proposal, was a big help. People saw that we both envisioned many benefits. We were also open to people expressing their concerns and warning about potential mistakes. We tried to deal with concerns and ideas quickly.

Four well-respected faculty members created a brief set of procedures for operating during the transition period (based on the two sets of by-laws of the two founding colleges). If we don't have a new policy, we

simply function in whatever the old way was. This has alleviated a lot of stress that comes from not knowing how to proceed.

We dealt with Promotion and Tenure issues right away, and agreed to maintain two separate tracks until we had a new document approved. We also agreed that once the document for the **new college** was approved, faculty could determine whether they wanted to be judged in accordance with the old or the new document for at least a year or two. This eased many fears and allowed people to feel comfortable discussing other issues.

In 2003, we hired an outside facilitator to help us develop a new mission, vision and values for the CEHS. We are also developing a strategic plan that we will vote on next fall.

Of course, there's much more because forging a true partnership is not easy. However, it is very rewarding. We have tremendous energy within the college and a sense of optimism about the future. In spite of the fact that we have suffered significant budget cuts at UNL and within our college, we are finding common ground we never expected. We have sponsored joint teaching and research projects, with good results. Most importantly, the *concept* of focusing on individuals, families, schools and communities systemically makes good sense, not only to us, but also to most people with whom we come in contact. That is very heartening and keeps us slogging through all the details that come along with creating a new college and a thriving partnership.

Appendix A

New Configurations in Academia **Education & Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

History

Idea suggested by 2 sitting deans – met weekly for one year following proposal to faculty, staff, alums and students

Faculty, staff, students, stakeholders and alums included in the exploration process

Steering Committee oversaw the process to determine whether to move forward or not and developed paperwork for University Governance requirements

Choices provided – opportunities to discover common ground – survey – white papers – web-based feedback – faculty, staff and alums voted on name

Goals were to strengthen our ability to address problems faced by Nebraska citizens, maintain identities of professions, create a new college (not just a merger)

Seed Money to Start the New College – on new position, remodeled space for research center, seed grants for teaching, seed grants for research, small amount for moving

Outcomes

Partnership approved

Named the College of Education and Human Sciences

Seven (7) departments created from original eight (8)

New mission, vision, values

Doctoral and Master's degree programs approved

Central Advising adopted for all undergraduate programs

Relocation of 2 units on different campuses to enhance channels of communication

Operating Principles

If we don't have a new policy in place, do it the old way

We don't have to have everything done in one year – but, we need a plan for how to proceed

Standardize processes; keep individuality in the details

Focus on developing social capital and a common culture

Respect for the past – eye on the future

Maintain internal focus before planning for more outward activity next year

Keep friends apprised

Focus on Integration

Combined budgets – took one year to fully achieve

Central advising was adopted for all units

Strategic Planning completed by August 2004

New research policies developed

New by-laws in place

New promotion and tenure document – 2 then 1 in two years

New technology plan

Combining college awards and college recognition events

Developing a signature course

Centralizing our approach to assessing student learning and collecting faculty accomplishments data

Challenges

Budget reductions, reductions in force

Not getting the cart before the horse –delay gratification, willing to wait to accomplish many tasks – keeping people involved more important than immediate products

Keeping people informed

Blending cultures

Dealing with issues – many of which have nothing to do with the new college per se but rather normal academic concerns such as promotion and tenure, how to distribute resources, etc.

Appendix B
THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

The New College. The College of Human Resources and Family Sciences and Teachers College joined forces to create the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) commencing on August 18, 2003. The proposal to create a new college was initiated by the 2 sitting deans at the time and eventually had the support of faculty, staff, students, and alumni within the two founding colleges. Units outside the college and college stakeholders were also supportive of the initiative.

Mission. The College of Education and Human Sciences is committed to improving the lives of individuals, families, schools and communities and to strengthening the relationships among them.

Unique Niche. CEHS is a one-of-a-kind college in Nebraska. No other institution of higher education in the state combines the fields of consumer science, teacher education, educational leadership and administration, educational psychology, individual and family development, nutrition and health, special education and communication disorders, as well as textiles, clothing and design into a single college dedicated to improving people's lives.

Structures. The College is comprised of seven departments: Educational Administration; Educational Psychology; Family & Consumer Sciences; Nutrition & Health Sciences; Special Education & Communication Disorders; Teaching, Learning & Teacher Education (formerly Curriculum and Instruction); and, Textiles, Clothing & Design. It is home to 2,600 undergraduate students, 1000 graduate students, 176 permanent faculty members and 90 permanent staff.

Teaching, Outreach, and Research Programs. The College of Education and Human Sciences offers 24 undergraduate programs/options, each administered by one of the seven departments. Graduate students have a choice among 8 departmentally based and one interdepartmental master's degree programs. Graduate faculty members have jointly developed proposals for the doctoral majors and specializations to be offered through CEHS. In addition, faculty in Nutrition & Health Sciences, in conjunction with faculty in Animal Science, Food Science & Technology, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, will administer an intercollegiate M.S. and Ph. D. in Nutrition.

CEHS has an active extension program that impacts citizens in every Nebraska County. Building on its strong roots in the state, many of these extension programs are well supported through competitive grants and contracts. Major extension programs in CEHS contribute to action plans. The programs are: Building Strong Families, Nutrition, Health and Food Safety, 4-H and Youth Development, Community Resource Development, and Community and Residential Environments.

CEHS faculty and students are involved in a variety of research programs locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Currently, the new college has \$18 million in external grant funding.

Graduates. CEHS graduates work with people in and across a variety of settings including: homes, schools, health and clinical settings, community agencies and institutions, aesthetic environments, business, industry and government.

A View of the Future. CEHS intends to be a national leader in important work for our society. Instructional programs, research and outreach will reflect the values and unified content of the college. The college will be mission driven, holistic, and interdisciplinary. It will produce distinctive graduates

who are skilled in inquiry, able to establish connectedness where they work as professionals, and experts in the teaching-learning-creating processes. It will produce scholarship that will bring new understandings to the work of strengthening families, schools, and communities.

Some emphases will remain the same as they have been. For example, the College of Education and Human Sciences continues to emphasize:

- The integrated nature of physical, psychosocial, intellectual and economic development in people's lives
- The importance of teaching and instruction, development and learning, creativity and inquiry
- High quality teacher preparation programs
- Clinical and laboratory work/science
- Preparing professionals for leadership roles in the field
- Making connections between theory and practice
- Research on teaching, learning, physical functioning, behavior, attitudes, values, culture and product development
- Community-partnerships
- High standards and accountability
- Meeting the needs of Nebraska citizens

As the new college forms, we will increase our emphasis on:

- Holistic approaches to enhancing the lives of people in families, schools and communities
- Examining issues of education throughout the lifespan
- Creating new solutions to the practical, perennial problems people face at home, at school, in the workplace and in the community
- Professional interactions across systems
- Finding new ways for families, schools and communities to work together and support one another.

CEHS Leadership. The dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences is Marjorie Kostelnik. She was previously the dean of the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences. Her background is in early childhood education and she comes to the role with a variety of experiences involving families, schools and communities. Associate deans are Jim Walter and Fayrene Hamouz. Dave Wilson serves as Graduate Studies Coordinator and Nancy Betts is the CEHS Research Liaison. Jim O'Hanlon stepped down as Teachers College Dean last summer, but remains on the CEHS faculty.

Locations. The College of Education and Human Resources spans three University of Nebraska campuses: City Campus, East Campus and Omaha and incorporates all the buildings and sites currently used by the two founding colleges. You can reach the College of Education and Human Sciences by calling 402-472-2913. The address is 233 Mabel Lee Hall, UNL, Lincoln, NE 685

Transitions. The creation of the College of Education and Human Sciences was coordinated by the CEHS Transition Team throughout 2003 and 2004. A variety of Task Force Groups met to establish structures, policies, and procedures for the new college. Among these are groups focused on:

- Academic Governance
- Advising and Recruiting
- Business and Finance
- Graduate Education
- Launching Event for CEHS
- Mission/vision/strategic plan for CEHS
- National Campaign to Introduce CEHS to Nebraska/USA
- Research Policies
- Technology
- Tenure and Promotion Policies and Practices
- Undergraduate Education

Alumni Organization. Officers from the two former alumni board groups have joined forces to create a single alumni organization for the College of Education and Human Sciences. This group has adopted a new mission statement and recently approved by-laws as well as new procedures for operating.

For more information about the new college visit the CEHS website at CEHS.unl.edu