

**PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN  
PROGRESS REPORT  
on IP approved 10-28-2019  
Retailing and Tourism Management  
2020-2021**

The departmental curriculum committee assessed the content of this report and provided input on how the requirements should be achieved (Vanessa Jackson, Jason Swanson, Scarlett Wesley, and RayeCarol Cavender).

**Recommendation 1.** Develop a strategy to build and communicate department and program brand identity. The combination of two former departments into one department with two different degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and all three programs being described by three initials, leads to a confusing brand identity. The department might evaluate simplified program names or develop ways to better brand the existing names in promotional materials. The department should be proactive in identifying and establishing a brand identity that expresses the distinctive characteristics of each major, while identifying the core that holds them together. That future brand identity should be incorporated into a communication strategy that communicates it to stakeholders.

**Assessment method:** A survey of faculty was conducted during the 2018-2019 review period to determine faculty ideas on how to improve our brand and market the department. A qualitative review of benchmark institutions was also conducted to determine similarities and differences among department names and course offerings. This information was used to develop the branding of the department.

**Results:** Name change (Branding of department): After reviewing other benchmark institutions, the department decided it was best to keep the Retailing and Tourism Management department name because it does indicate a combination of both programs. **This part of the plan is complete.**

**Analysis of results and reflections:** The department continues a strong focus on communication of the programs brand identity and student and faculty success through social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.).

**Ongoing improvement actions:** The department will continue to work on strategies to communicate our brand to stakeholders.

**Recommendation 2.** Evaluate capacity and opportunities for undergraduate enrollment growth. With increased outreach and communication about the department's two undergraduate programs, enrollment growth is possible. The department should evaluate the instructional capacity of the faculty and the allocation of facilities as it contemplates potential enrollment growth. In addition, developing a more robust graduate program may affect the capacity of the faculty to teach additional undergraduate students.

**Assessment method:** During the 2018-2019 review period an assessment of other institutions with similar programs to compare program requirements and recruiting materials/methods at the undergraduate and graduate levels was completed.

**Results:** Before covid-19, the department hired a graphic designer to help rebrand the department based on new assessments of departments and programs at other institutions, as well as industry recommendations. Due to Covid-19, funding for that source is not available, therefore, the department is dependent on social media to advertise the department and its uniqueness. The presence of Covid-19 influenced the department's ability to increase outreach and communication about the department's two undergraduate programs for increased enrollment purposes.

The DGS (Scarlett Wesley) and the UGS (Jason Swanson) have worked together to review and revise the graduate program. Recommendations from the two suggest a change in the requirement of an internship and adding a capstone course. This reflects the types of students the program attracts (non-traditional students with jobs).

The hiring of a new faculty in the spring of 2022 will help to make changes in faculty course assignments and the ability to utilize faculty teaching potential where needed. Previous assessment of benchmark institutions suggest we need a course reflective of sustainability in RTM and the infusion of diversity, equity and inclusion in the programs. One course MAT 247, is being revised to further reflect DEI domestically and internationally. The new faculty member will take on course taught by a faculty member will then develop and teach the sustainability course.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** The presence of Covid-19 continues to influence our financial situation. The department is not able to recruit and retain graduate students and provide large amounts of scholarships and assistantships to attract graduate students to our department. Although true, the number of students in our online graduate program has increased.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** There are also no funds for creating recruitment and communication materials. **The department will continue to seek funding for these needs.** Review of other institutions and industry recommendations will be ongoing to keep the department up-to-date on needed course offerings. Assessment of current capacity across faculty and facilities for teaching and research shall be ongoing.

**Recommendation 3.** Develop mechanisms to work collaboratively in Cooperative Extension programming. Hospitality and Tourism has a logical connection to the work of CEDIK. RTM faculty members with appropriate research interests could potentially work collaboratively on service or research projects with CEDIK faculty and staff as a preliminary move toward the possible later development of an extension appointment in RTM.

**Assessment method:** Results of a survey sent out to all extension associates to determine whether the extension associates agree or disagree on the need of an extension associate that supports the needs of RTM in the county's and communities. Extension Agents were also asked to indicate what they would expect a Senior Extension Associate assigned to RTM would provide to the department and the state. Data from the survey indicated that this partnership will be useful to support student learning in the following content areas: Tourism, Policy and Planning, Agritourism, Small Retailing Business, Destination Marketing, Small Hospitality Business, Customer Service, Special Event Planning, Food and Beverage Management, and Apparel and Textiles.

**Results:** The results of the survey to extension associates reflect the agreement for the hiring of an extension associate that reflects the connection between tourism and small business development along with other needs for the communities.

The faculty agreed that a faculty member should serve as a representative for the department with CEDIK. Vanessa Jackson has connected with a faculty member in CEDIK. **This part of plan is complete.**

**Analysis of results and reflection:** The loss of non-reoccurring funds and the potential for the department not to get those funds back will delay the hiring of an Extension Associate.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** Until the financial situation improves strategies for working with Cooperative extension, and the CEDIK representative will provide an ongoing relationship with CEDIK and our faculty.

**Recommendation 4.** Examine the undergraduate curricula and make appropriate enhancements. Curricular areas that may need review include industry specific topics and methods, the level of rigor of upper level undergraduate courses, and improvement of scheduling flexibility for students. Evaluating the curricula in view of potential accreditation may be a consideration for the department.

**Assessment method:** The curriculum committee (Scarlet Wesley, Jason Swanson, RayeCarol Cavender, Vanessa Jackson) designed and implemented a qualitative and quantitative assessment to determine commonalities between benchmark institutions.

**Results:** Addition of new course electives. The results of the comparison of benchmark institutions suggested a need for new classes that would enhance both programs. The study indicated that the department is on target for most classes. Some course content is taught as part of other courses in our programs. HMT courses are similar to the benchmark institutions. The results also indicated a need for a collaborative course(s) between the programs within the department. A course entitled, “Soft Skills in RTM,” was created based on faculty research, and is designed to appeal to students from both the MAT and HMT program. Two other courses have been added as electives. Both are under MAT course numbers but serve both programs (MAT and HMT). MAT 359 (Hemp-1 credit) is also offered as a collaboration with Dave McNear in Plant and Soil Sciences. MAT 359 (Kentucky Fabrics-3 credits) is also open to both programs because it reflects the presence of small businesses in Kentucky and operational and efficiency techniques have made them successful. Both are subject to be changed to permanent courses. **This part of plan is ongoing.**

Communication of Brand to Stakeholders. The department continues a strong focus on communication of the programs and student and faculty success through social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.). **This part of plan is ongoing.**

**Analysis of results and reflection:** The data collected from benchmark institutions has provided the department with a roadmap to changes needed to enhance our student learning according to required industry entry level job skills. The addition of the course has created the opportunity for students from both programs to take more course across programs. The collaboration between the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences and RTM for the Hemp course has created the opportunity for both departments to utilize faculty skills that may not be available in both departments.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** The department will continue to review the course offerings to determine if we are meeting the needs of the industry and our students.

**Recommendation 5.** Enhance Erikson facilities. Facilities improvement has a spatial/social aspect to provide adequate teaching and learning space and foster community for both undergraduate and graduate students. Facilities improvements also have an aesthetic/ communications aspect to convey more vividly the fashion and tourism aspects of the department and its students’ future careers.

**Assessment method:** Faculty were asked to make suggestions on how to improve and use the space allocated to RTM. Assessment of space and how it can be improved included examination of space and usage, and investigated opportunities to enhance the hallway to offer a more modern view of the programs.

**Results:** New bulletin boards have replaced the old ones and have uplifted the appearance of the floor. The program is visible on the first floor using posters. Room 300 has been made into a lab to be used by classes with lab type assignments. Courses like MAT 237, MAT 120, and HMT 308 use the revised lab.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** The third floor of Erikson has a fresh uplifting appearance. Faculty and students appreciate the change. Heating and cooling units in three classrooms (300,302, and 306) were updated with new units and they are functioning properly.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** No other changes can be made to the third floor beyond changing the bulletin boards with current information. **This part of the plan is complete**

**Recommendation 6.** Enhance faculty development and productivity. Faculty development could be enhanced with a program of collaborative faculty mentoring, clarifying research productivity expectations in the department, developing collaboration opportunities with faculty members in other departments, and increasing visibility of faculty research internally and externally. Encourage faculty to include information in their research statements that allows reviewers to understand research quantity and quality, such as length of time from submission to publication in journals in which the author publishes, the impact factor of the best journal in the field, average number of publications per year of people in the field, or other measures.

**Assessment method:** Due to Covid-19, not all the requested items were discussed with faculty. The items discussed and/or were already in place include collaborative faculty mentoring, clarifying research productivity expectations in the department, developing collaboration opportunities with faculty members in other departments, and increasing visibility of faculty research internally and externally.

**Results:** Due to Covid-19, faculty had to make changes to most of the courses to move them to online delivery. Then they had to move them back to face-to-face. Therefore, limited discussions and implementation of requested items were completed.

Collaborative **faculty mentoring** is available through the College mentoring program. Faculty were made aware of its availability. Junior faculty allow their chair to serve as a mentor and meet with her on a regular basis.

Through mentoring with the chair, faculty are aware of research productivity expectations in the department. Junior faculty have also made aware of the college mentoring program.

Faculty who are planning to go up for tenure were required to put **impact factor** information in their CV. Others also have been made aware of the importance of impact factor department through meetings.

**Faculty Collaborations:** Before and during this review period, RTM faculty have had multiple collaboration with external and internal members of the academic community. I believe the issue is our lack of visibility of work being done. The collaborations include publications and research, service, outreach, and course developments (Wesley, S.; Zhang, P.; Cavender, R.; Swanson, J.; Pryor, M.; Jackson, V.; Meuret, S.; LU, Y.). Faculty have collaborated with international scholars at Asia University and National Cheng Kung university in Taiwan. Some of these same faculty have collaborated and published with national scholars at Temple and University of Florida. Others have collaborated with faculty at UK.

The process of increasing visibility of faculty research internally and externally has not been completely implemented. The department has begun to use the communication department to highlight faculty success. Faculty are made aware of each other's accomplishments through email.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** The department has accomplished some parts of this request. Some parts more than others have been successfully accomplished.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** The department chair will continually promote the importance of using impact factors, mentoring programs outside the depart, and the department will continue working to increase visibility of faculty research internally and externally. Accomplishing this task will really

showcase our collaborative efforts internally to the college and university and external with other institutions.

**Recommendation 7.** Formalize process for development of alumni relations and philanthropic efforts. The department's active Advisory Board, alumni, and industry connections support student enrichment activities and provide a valuable external network for faculty. The department could work more closely with CAFE philanthropy to translate the loyalty of these supporters and additional alumni into greater financial support for department initiatives.

**Assessment method:** The influence of Covid-19 on businesses and the active use of the advisory board has slowed the development and implementation of strategies for building financial support from alumni.

**Results:** Members of the board continue to support student enrichment activities and provide a valuable external network for faculty.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** Faculty have created a series of speaking activities to draw alumni back into the classroom since covid-19.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** Due to Covid-19 work is not complete at this time. We will begin working on this request in the spring of 2022.

**Recommendation 8.** Continue to enhance the graduate program. Increasing onsite graduate enrollment would allow the development of more robust cohorts for graduate level courses. Other recommended enhancements include increasing graduate student research opportunities, increasing rigor of coursework, and developing diverse opportunities for professional experiences. Greater interaction between online and onsite students could help overcome some of the limitations of the small onsite cohort size.

**Assessment method:** Assess graduate programs content, program requirements and enrollment.

**Results:** Graduate student enrollment in the onsite and online graduate programs has increased from previous years. The face-to-face program has eleven students, and the online program has 31 students.

**Analysis of results and reflection:** There are more graduate students in the online program than in the onsite program. Changes in the program requirements has made the programs more accessible and the quality of the content has enhanced student interest.

**Ongoing improvement actions:** This part of the plan is ongoing.