

**PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT
on IP approved 10-28-2019 Retailing and Tourism Management 2022-2023**

Min-Young Lee
Scarlett Wesley
RayeCarol Cavender
Tracy Lu

The departmental curriculum committee assessed the content of this report and provided input on how the requirements should be achieved.

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. During 2020-2021, the department continued to identify ways of communicating the program specialties and new trend courses, including study tours, soft skill development, virtual talk series with industry practitioners, etc. that are suitable for students in both programs. This part of the plan is complete.

Analysis of Results and Reflections: The department continues a strong focus on communicating its brand identity and student and faculty success through social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn). Departmental news and updates are now posted on these social media platforms more frequently, so the RTM brand identity is often seen online. Significant improvements and updates have also been made to the RTM website and measures were taken to ensure that the information remains current. A shared folder was created, which faculty use to request updates to their website profiles (i.e., adding recent publications, awards, and acknowledgements). Faculty are also regularly updating their CVs on the RTM website and are submitting content (e.g., pictures, videos) that highlights their work with students. This content has been utilized on both the RTM socials and the website.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: The department will continue to work on strategies to communicate our brand to stakeholders. An alumni database will be developed so that department happenings can be communicated through periodic correspondence. The department

also published its first newsletter in spring 2020, but another has not been published since. Producing an annual RTM newsletter is a current goal. In addition, the RTM Department brand is being emphasized through events and activities, such as fashion shows, study tours, industry talks, and conferences, which current and potential stakeholders are invited to attend.

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 was conducted to compare program requirements and recruiting materials/methods at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Results: During the review period, no changes were proposed to the undergraduate curriculum for MAT or HMT. The leadership team has discussed some tentative changes, but nothing has been discussed with the faculty. During the review period, the DGS (Scarlett Wesley) and the DUS (Jason Swanson) also worked with faculty to propose changes to the graduate program. Recommendations for the graduate program were accepted by the faculty, and now, new graduate students are not required to complete an internship or take the GRE. The internship requirement was replaced with an industry project. This change has allowed more non-traditional students to apply to the RTM graduate program.

Analysis of Results and Reflection: Enrollment in the MAT undergraduate program has continued to grow. We have made new courses available that increase the competitiveness of our programs. We have added MAT electives based on the current needs of our students. These electives reflect more accurately the skill requirements they need upon graduation. The HMT program has also had enrollment growth, albeit more modest.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: A review of other institutions and industry recommendations will be continued to keep the department current on needed course offerings. Assessment of current capacity across faculty and facilities for teaching and research shall be ongoing. This part of the plan is continuing.

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. RTM has worked to determine the feasibility of the collaboration with CEDIK. At this time, CEDIK and RTM have had some discussions for collaborations. However, no specific collaborations have been implemented.

Assessment Method: A survey indicated that the hiring of a Senior Extension Associate in RTM would create a partnership 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 of Extension Agents provided support for hiring an extension associate that could facilitate the connection between Kentucky tourism, small business development, and supporting the needs of local communities. Small projects, such as the Wal-Mart recruitment project, have linked CEDIK and HMT.

Analysis of Results and Reflection: Funding remains a barrier to hiring for this position. The loss of non-recurring funds and the potential for the department to not get those funds back continues to delay the hiring of an Extension Associate. We have attempted to increase our extension activities without an extension faculty. We have developed a partnership with the 4-H Fashion Board and will continue to grow this relationship.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: Until the College commits to hiring a Senior Extension Associate for RTM or until it is baked into a faculty member's DOE, this need will go unmet. Until the financial situation improves, the department will continue to identify opportunities to collaborate with Cooperative Extension and our CEDIK representative to facilitate a working relationship between CEDIK and our faculty. **This part of plan is complete.**

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 (Scarlett Wesley, Jason Swanson, RayeCarol Cavender, Vanessa Jackson) continues to evaluate the needs and changes to the curriculum. The data previously collected continues to guide the selection of courses we needed to add to our programs.

Results:

Undergraduate curricula. The data previously collected continues to guide the selection of courses we needed to add to the programs. During this period of review, two positions were vacated, which allowed the department to hire one tenure-track MAT professor (i.e., Muzhen Li) in AY 2022-2023, and one tenure-track HMT professor (i.e., Yeonjung Kang) in AY 2023-2024.

Industry Specific Topics and Methods. Two new courses were developed to be suitable for students from both programs. A course entitled, "Soft Skills in RTM," was created based on faculty research (Vanessa Jackson). Another course, "Sustainable Development in RTM" was developed based on the instructor's (RayeCarol Cavender) research in the field, and to fill a curricular gap in the program(s). Since the last report, we have also added an Omnichannel Retailing course and a long-term education abroad partnership with Regent's University London, which is available for both MAT and HMT students. RTM study tours can also be taken as

electives by students from both programs. **This part is complete.**

Accreditation: Evaluating the curricula in view of potential accreditation may be a consideration for the department. The department was previously under the umbrella of AAFCS (American Association of Family Consumer Sciences). The department voted many years ago to not continue our affiliation with the program because the measures were not aligned with the goals of the department. An accreditation program, Textile and Apparel Programs Accreditation Commission (TAPAC) was launched by the International Textiles and Apparel Association (ITAA) in 2017. We need to revisit accreditation options in the next review period.

HMT Accreditation. Students in the Hospitality Revenue Management (HMT 350) course take the industry recognized Certification in Hotel Industry Analytics (CHIA) exam. The certification is the only hotel-related credential focused on analytics. Jointly offered by STR and AHLEI, and endorsed by the Institute of Hospitality, the CHIA has been awarded to professors and industry professionals globally. Upon completion, students can use the "CHIA" designation after their names. The CHIA also counts toward continuing education for other American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) certifications.

Improvement of Scheduling Flexibility for Students. A review of the course rotation suggests that we are evenly divided for MWF, and TTH courses.

Analysis of Results and Reflection: The data collected from benchmark institutions and our research on trends in our area has provided the department with a roadmap to make necessary changes. These changes have enhanced student learning according to required industry entry level job skills. A review of accreditation options for both programs has been conducted. We have selected accreditation agencies for HMT, but not yet for MAT.

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. We will also continue to consider accreditation for MAT. The department leadership team will continue to review course scheduling on an annual basis. **These recommendations for improvements are ongoing.**

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 for maximizing the space allocated to RTM. This included how best to use space in hallways and stairwells to present a more modern view of our programs.

Results: New bulletin boards have replaced the old ones and have uplifted the floor's appearance. There are seven boards, each with specific assignments to communicate and efficiently promote our accomplishment. Former chair Dr. Vanessa Jackson received a fund to improve the 3rd Fl Erikson Hall. The fund was used to enhance the bathroom and install a new

water fountain. The department is also made visible on the first floor using posters. Room 300 has been converted into a lab that is used by classes for lab-based assignments and activities. Courses including MAT 237, MAT 120, and HMT 308 utilize this lab space.

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 (i.e., 300,302, 306) were updated with new units and they are functioning properly most of the time. Windows and window shades are the indicators of the buildings age. Walls and windows continue to peel. Window shades were updated in the 3rd floor women's restroom.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: No other changes can be made to the third floor beyond changing the bulletin boards at this time. **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: Faculty have been encouraged to review the CVs of their colleagues who have included indicators in their research citations, such as their specific contributions to article development and journal impact factors. All faculty were encouraged to add these metrics to research citations in their CVs.

Results: 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 them on a regular basis. Through mentoring with the chair, faculty are aware of research productivity expectations in the department. Junior faculty have also been made aware of the college mentoring program. Faculty who are planning to go up for tenure have started to add the information of impact factor and role of the faculty in the paper, submission, and acceptance dates in their CV. Others have also been made aware of the importance of impact factors and highlighting their position of productivity on article citations.

Faculty Collaborations: Before and during this review period, RTM faculty had multiple collaborations with external and internal members of the academic community. We believe the issue barring increased collaboration across the college is our lack of visibility of the work being conducted. The collaborations include publications and research, service, outreach, and course development. Faculty members have collaborated with various national and international scholars. Faculty members actively participated in international and national conferences to present their research findings. Others collaborate on student development through alumni engagement. The process of increasing the visibility of faculty research internally and externally is continuous and has not been fully implemented. Faculty are made aware of each other's accomplishments through email or through the up-to-date faculty CVs on the RTM website.

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, seeking mentoring opportunities outside the department, and increasing the visibility of faculty research, both internally and externally.

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 relationship between philanthropy and RTM has been reviewed and new methods of building a relationship have been identified.

Results: Members of the board continue to support student enrichment activities and provide a valuable external network for faculty. Alumni of the department have been sought to participate as speakers in our speaker series through Zoom.

Analysis of Results and Reflection: AY 2023-2024 was the fourth year of the speaker series, and it has been very successful. Topic areas for the speakers are suggested by faculty and through a survey of classes. Some of the topics included: how to multi-task, leadership, and teamwork. In AY 2023-2024, the MAT Faculty also established a relationship with the Kentucky Retail Federation, which also works closely with CEDIK. Facilitating this connection is a priority for strengthening retailer connections in the state, leveraging industry insights to inform course and program updates, and providing benefits for students through professional development and networking opportunities (e.g., Kentucky Retail Recharge Conference).

Ongoing Improvement Actions: This is an ongoing project, and we hope to expand this to the whole college. **This is an ongoing project.**

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 program content, program requirements, and enrollment.

Results: Because online master's students do not write a thesis and are more business-focused than researched-focused, increasing graduate student research opportunities has been difficult. The online master's has been adapted to students' needs and now requires a capstone project. Increasing the rigor of coursework and developing diverse opportunities for professional

development remains a commitment.

Analysis of Results and Reflection: Changes in the program requirements for the online masters have made the program more accessible (e.g., no longer requiring online master's students working full-time to complete an internship), and the quality of the content has enhanced student interest.

Ongoing Improvement Actions: This part of the plan is ongoing. In AY 2023-2024, the program has no students in the face-to-face master's program. Discussions are ongoing about the future direction of the grad program, including whether to resume the face-to-face offering and how to continue strengthening the online program.