Incorporation of the Department of Labor Education into the Division of Continuing Studies

The Division of Continuing Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) proposes to incorporate the Department of Labor Education pursuant to UW-Madison Faculty Policies and Procedures Chapter 5 and to change the formal name of the department. This restructuring is necessitated by University of Wisconsin Board of Regents resolution 10956, which required merger of some units of the previously separate institution of University of Wisconsin Extension (prior to merger: Cooperative Extension, Department of Labor Education, and Broadcasting and Media Innovations) into UW-Madison. (See www.wisconsin.edu/uw-restructure/download/Board-of-Regents-Restructuring-Proposal-Resolution-7.pdf.) The UW-Madison Faculty Senate resolved on November 5, 2018, to transfer the tenure of all existing Extension tenured faculty to Madison. A new Department in the Division of Extension will serve as a tenure home for faculty formerly in Cooperative Extension. This action covers the remaining faculty in UW-Extension and was approved by the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) on April 18, 2019. Presentation to the Faculty Senate constitutes the final step in the incorporation of the department.

Proposal, as approved by UAPC (excerpts; full document at https://uwmadison.box.com/s/73p7n3hpct6gu9n2qlgvyv4i3pg8ox81):

A. Academic department serving as a tenure home: UW-Madison, Department of Labor Education.

B. Home for Department: UW-Madison, Division of Continuing Studies (DCS).

C. Statement of Proposal: Transfer already-existing UW-Extension academic department to UW-Madison, pursuant to Resolution 11011 of the UW System Board of Regents, adopted February 20, 2018.

D. Statement of Common Field of Knowledge: The common field of knowledge for faculty of the Department is Labor and Working-Class Studies, and Labor Education. Research by faculty is interdisciplinary, and has been published in a variety of disciplines’ top peer-reviewed academic journals, by varying academic book publishers, and in popular presses. Their subfields include adult education, popular education, multi methodological research approaches, social movements, identity and labor politics, immigration, labor management relations, industrial engineering, workplace diversity, labor and working-class history, organizational development and leadership, and labor and employment law.

E. Timeline of Planning and Implementation: The process began on November 9, 2017, when the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents passed Resolution 10956, announcing the merger of certain academic departments and programs of UW-Extension into UW-Madison and the UW System. On February 20, 2018, the Board of Regents declared in Resolution No. 11011 that the Department of Labor Education, shall move to the UW-Madison Division of Continuing Studies (DCS). To further this transition, on June 29, 2018, UW-Madison and UW-Extension entered into a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the terms of transition of the Department of Labor Education to DCS, assigning administrative personnel responsible for the transfer. Pursuant to this MOU, the Board of Regents’ resolution, and in keeping with UW-Madison FPP and other policies, the DCS Dean, faculty, and staff, and the Department faculty and staff have been working together to determine the functional operations of DCS after the Department is officially transitioned to DCS.

Following the Board of Regent’s Resolution 11011, information about the anticipated integration of DLE into DCS was shared with faculty in the Department of Liberal Arts & Applied Studies. LAAS faculty were supportive and took no formal action on the proposal to transfer another academic department serving as a tenure home into Division of Continuing Studies.
This transfer has been mandated by Board of Regents’ resolution rather than through faculty initiative. Pursuant to FPP Section 502 C., the faculty of the Department of Labor Education have approved the transfer. On January 30, 2019, the faculty unanimously (6-0), voted to accept the Board of Regents’ resolution to transfer the Department to DCS at this time. The faculty of the DCS Department of Liberal Arts and Applied Studies has approved the transfer without formal action. DCS submitted the proposal for restructure for discussion at the February 21, 2019 meeting of the UW-Madison University Academic Planning Council and is submitting the proposal for action by the UAPC at the April 18, 2019 meeting.

Subsequent to the Board of Regents Resolution 11011 of February 20, 2018, the faculty and staff of DCS and the Department have informed all faculty of the transition, several times, both internally and across their departments, and are working diligently on a smooth integration of the Department into DCS. The Department has been planning with the UW-Madison/Extension “transition team” to develop operational protocols and other administrative aspects of the transition. On November 5, 2018, the UW-Madison Faculty Senate voted to adopt Faculty Document 2763, recognizing the transfer of tenure of University of Wisconsin-Extension faculty to University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since then, UW-Madison and UW-Extension governance bodies have been working together to encourage a smooth transition of UW-Extension faculty to UW-Madison.

This restructuring should not have an impact on courses currently offered and taught to students of either DCS or the Department, which are all non-credit offerings. While the Department will be housed at DCS, its labor education offerings will continue to be provided by faculty of the Department with continued quality and attention. Since the courses currently taught by the Department are non-credit, short courses, this will not affect any students through completion of their degree or even credit courses. This restructuring does not create any new programming areas, but simply moves the Department to DCS. Therefore, there is no duplication within UW System caused by this transition. On joining the UW-Madison faculty, the DLE faculty plans to continue collaboration with other UW-Madison faculty and units as appropriate.

Under the terms of the restructuring, and UW-Madison’s merger of former UW-Extension faculty, the Higher Learning Commission approved the restructuring with the understanding and proviso that there was not for-credit course or program activity in the units transitioning to UW-Madison.

F. Precipitating Circumstances of the Transition of UW-Extension Academic Department of Labor Education, to DCS: As mentioned above, this proposed restructuring stems from the November 9, 2017 Board of Regents Resolution announcing the merger of certain academic departments and programs into UW-Madison, and the February 20, 2018 Board of Regents Resolution that specifies that the Department of Labor Education shall move to the UW-Madison Division of Continuing Studies (DCS). The DCS Dean, faculty, and staff, and the Department faculty and staff have been working together to determine the functional operations of DCS after the department is officially transitioned to DCS. The Department will continue to maintain its own budget, and will benefit from collaboration with the Division of Continuing Studies regarding marketing, personnel, and IT, while still maintaining use of its School for Workers’ name on its website, and in communications and marketing and other materials, wherever the Department deems appropriate.

The Division of Continuing Studies functions within UW-Madison to support lifelong learning and increase access for nontraditional learners. At the time of the Board of Regents’ decision, DCS included one academic tenure home department, the Department of Liberal Arts and Applied Studies, which has roots in UW-Extension and is currently the tenure home for four faculty. LAAS faculty provide continuing education for professional development and personal enrichment, conduct research, including research on adult teaching and learning, and engage in outreach. Faculty-directed projects include the Odyssey Project which provides adults facing economic barriers a chance to earn 6 credits in the Humanities, the Wisconsin HIV Outreach Project supporting community planning initiatives and training for HIV service providers throughout the State, and other projects. In addition
to this academic department with tenured faculty, DCS includes other units through which academic and University staff provide additional programming.

The Department of Labor Education has existed as an academic department serving as a tenure home for many years as a part of University of Wisconsin-Extension, and prior to that, as a part of UW-Madison. Originating in 1925, it is the country’s oldest labor education program based in a university system, bringing the three components of the Wisconsin Idea – teaching, research, and outreach – to thousands of workers, unions, and employers throughout Wisconsin, the nation, and the world. The mission of the Department is to “empower working people and labor organizations at the job site, in the national economy, and in the global economic system through a comprehensive program of lifelong adult learning opportunities.” The Department offers a variety of non-credit courses in labor and employment relations, including the process of collective bargaining, contract administration, organizational leadership, law, history, work measurement, and dispute resolution. The expertise and experience of the faculty is varied and multidisciplinary, but all focuses on enabling working people to improve their lives in their workplaces and their communities. In addition to non-credit teaching, all faculty engage in applied research. The Department of Labor Education currently has three tenured professors, two tenured associate professors, and one tenure-track assistant professor.

The Department plans to use this opportunity brought about by transfer to improve programming, in particular utilizing greater access to marketing resources and support for online education. The regular operations of DCS should not otherwise be affected by the transition, and the potential access to greater resources will only improve the programmatic offerings of the Department of Labor Education.

The Department will continue to develop and diversify its curriculum and online programming, as well as broaden the scope of its traditional course offerings, collaborating with departments and other academic units, and to increase its support of academic and applied research and community involvement. Faculty has and continues to instruct students in credit courses, both at UW-Madison and elsewhere. In the near future, the Department will seek authority to offer credit courses.

M. This proposal does include changing the name of the academic department to the Department of Labor Education, with the understanding that the department shall continue to use the “School for Workers” name with its non-credit labor education programming to maintain consistency with its client base and stakeholders. Specifically, the Department plans to continue the use of its website, https://schoolforworkers.wisc.edu/, the use of the School for Workers’ name and logo on social media and in printed communications and marketing materials, and the use of the School for Workers’ name and logo on adult educational and other materials as it deems appropriate.

Throughout its 94 year history, the name of the academic department has been the School for Workers, though UWEX and UW-Madison administration and others have more recently referred to the department as the Department of Labor Education. The department’s faculty have agreed to a formal name change to the Department of Labor Education, and potential department initiatives such as research and offering for-credit courses (as indicated in Section G) would be advanced under the official Department of Labor Education name. No confusion regarding department identity is anticipated since the SFW name will continue to be associated with existing non-credit labor education programs and clients.