Discontinuation of the Department of Engineering Professional Development (EPD) and Merge Functions into an Office in the College of Engineering Dean’s Office

The Department of Engineering Professional Development Executive Committee voted on December 20, 2018 to dissolve the department and transition to an office. The College of Engineering Academic Planning Council approved the discontinuation of the Department of Engineering Professional Development on February 20, 2019. The University Academic Planning Council approved discontinuation of the Department of Engineering Professional Development on April 18, 2019. Full documentation is posted here: https://apir.wisc.edu/academic-planning/uapc-meeting-information/april-18-2019/

Department discontinuation follows an external review of the department and subsequent departmental approval to restructure as the Office of Engineering Professional Development. Related work includes:

- Transfer of remaining 4 tenured faculty members to other departments. (Approved)
- Request to transfer the EPD subject listing UDDS to the College of Engineering (Department). (Submitted concurrently, effective Spring 2020, UAPC vote on April 18, 2019 approved)
- Proposals to move the academic home of certificates housed by EPD: Undergraduate Certificate in Technical Communication (CERT706), Technical Japanese Studies for Undergraduates (CERT390), Capstone Certificate in Power Conversion and Control (UNCS393), and Capstone Certificate in Foundations of Professional Development (UNCS396). (Submitted concurrently, effective Fall 2019, UAPC vote on April 18, 2019 approved)
- Proposals to move the Master of Engineering programs to the Office of Engineering Professional Development, to be associated with the Dean’s Office, College of Engineering.

This restructuring will enable the newly established Office of Engineering Professional Development to better serve the needs of students, the state of Wisconsin, and industry partners. Discontinuation of the Department of Engineering Professional Development would take effect Summer 2020.

The department underwent a review that included an external committee of visitors in 2017. The following are highlights of recommendations from this committee:

- [Department of] EPD is doing ok, but is fairly tactically focused. They have managed to find a set of faculty who work with them and have been opportunistic in this regard. However, there are some brittle spots across program offerings where looking at gap analysis could allow them to be more strategic as well as better aligned with the College.
- The culture of [Department of] EPD, CoE, and the University seems steeped in tradition, not unlike many universities. Determining what are the needs of current and future students/industry (stakeholders) and beginning to make preparations to meet those needs present opportunities.
- The existing online strategy seems to be a ‘bolt-on’ to the College and University, a financial goal, rather than a strategy. With the rich history in Wisconsin, home to the Wisconsin Idea, a concept that the entire nation understands for access, many opportunities exist for creating the next kinds of access strategies that the State and other university stakeholders could utilize.
Online strategy expertise exists in [Department of] EPD but not leveraged across College/University.

[Department of EPD] is the front door to stakeholders of the university, bringing people to the faculty and university, but is not currently leveraged as much as it might enable.

Sustainable growth comes best from scale, not always boutique and could tie to statewide efforts for industry cultivation.

The College of Engineering is committed to continuing to provide high quality educational programs as part of its commitment to life-long learning. Based on the departmental review and additional analysis, the College of Engineering developed a proposal to discontinue the Department of Engineering Professional Development and restructure the functions into an Office of Engineering Professional Development with the College of Engineering dean’s office. As approved in the full proposal (approved by UAPC in April 2019), tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty positions will be allocated to the academic units to meet the growth in demand from undergraduates for engineering degrees and to continue the discovery of engineering solutions to challenges of national and societal importance; The continuing education efforts, including staffing of the programs, must become integral to the broader educational mission of the CoE; The continuing engineering educational efforts will become more agile, offering a broad array of programs that are relevant to the customer base, and developing new offerings rapidly in emerging areas; The continuing engineering efforts will more fully realize their opportunity to serve their focus audiences and generate appropriate levels of revenue. The Office of Engineering Professional Development (OEPD), is led and managed by an Associate Dean who reports to the Dean.