

GETTING STARTED

This checklist is an excerpt from the book *Winning Combinations: A Guide to Mergers and Acquisitions in Higher Education* (Supported by EY-Parthenon). The book helps you understand potential challenges inherent in conjoining the programs and people from merging institutions.

As more institutions have considered the option of a merger or acquisition and have sought to understand the process involved, there has been a growing need for a guide addressing the critical questions:

- How do such conversations begin?
- How long can a merger take?
- Who needs to be involved in the work and when?
- What are the critical milestones along the way?

Written for both institutions considering their next big strategic move as well as for those wondering how they'll keep the lights on 10 years from now, this book taps into the collective experience of more than a dozen leaders in higher education who have initiated, observed, facilitated, participated in, contributed to, and analyzed all types of mergers, acquisitions, and consolidations. Purchase your copy today <https://products.nacubo.org/>

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

- How will the merging institution fit into the new entity (for example, as a college, school, division)?
- Do the vision and mission of the new, merged entity require revision?
- Will a name change or rebranding be required?
- Will existing foundations or fundraising organizations be combined?

ACADEMICS

- What academic programs might need to be added?
- What duplicate or overlapping academic programs might need to be consolidated or deleted?
- How will credits already earned at the merging institution apply to degree programs at the new institution?
- Are changes to academic programs likely to raise concerns with accreditors or state departments of education?
- What changes are needed for program delivery?
- Will special-focus initiatives—such as first-year, honors, or international programs—need to be combined or revised?

ENROLLMENT

- How and when would existing students transition to the merged institution?
- What assistance will be offered to students who do not wish to enroll in the merged institution?
- When and how would recruiting begin for the first class attending the merged institution?
- Do any changes need to be made in standards or processes for admitting undergraduate, graduate, or transfer students?
- What tuition and fee schedule will be used?
- Can existing financial aid packages or scholarships be honored, depending on restrictions?
- What school calendar will be used?
- When and where will diplomas be awarded to students at the merging institution?
- Do diplomas need to be revised?

GEOGRAPHY

- What will the new campus look like?
- How will geography affect students' ability to access a new or expanded campus?
- What new or expanded transit and housing options might be needed?

STUDENT SERVICES

- What on-campus housing will be available to students?
- Will students from the merging institution retain seniority in housing selection?
- Will the libraries physically merge or remain separate?
- What will happen to historical archives and specialized academic collections?
- How might advising, mentoring, and tutoring programs change to reflect a different or expanded academic program?
- Where will career services be located, and what will they entail?
- What counseling services will be available?
- Where will the health center be located, and how will it be staffed?
- Does either institution have a code of student conduct that will be retained or require revision?

FACULTY

- Do any faculty at either institution belong to a union? If so, what are the terms of the current contract?
- What incentives to stay through the merger will be offered to faculty of the merging institution?
- How will tenure—and progress toward tenure—at the merging institution translate into employment at the new entity?
- How will faculty workloads, compensation, and performance be determined?
- What will happen to existing honors, awards, research programs, grants, or sabbaticals for faculty from both institutions?

GOVERNANCE

- Who will serve as the merged institution's president or chancellor?
- What role, if any, will the other president or chancellor have in the new entity?
- Will the governing board reflect representation of both institutions? If so, how?
- How will faculty governance issues, such as differences in leadership structures, be resolved?

STUDENT LIFE

- Will a merger affect the charters of any fraternities, sororities, or professional honoraries?
- To avoid duplication, what student groups might need to merge?
- How will leaders of student government be selected?
- What will be the official campus publication at the merged institution?
- What traditions mean the most to students of both institutions and should be retained?

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

- What is the debt situation of both institutions?
- Will a shared services or decentralized model be used for administrative services?
- Whose business systems will be used (e-procurement, accounting, budgeting, financial modeling)?
- Whose auditor will be used?
- What will be the start date for the merged institution?
- How will the merged institution report required data to the federal government and others?

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

- How will the merging institution's identity be incorporated into the new entity?
- What branding or logo changes need to be made?
- How and when will the two entities merge their marketing and messaging strategies aimed at prospective students and the public?
- How and when will the two entities begin recruiting prospective students for the first post-merger class?
- Will existing publications be continued or new ones introduced, both internally and externally?
- What will be the publications' names, frequencies, and distribution?
- How will a merger influence the new entity's development and management of its social media presence?
- How will a merger influence the new entity's development and management of content on its website?

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Do any staff at either institution belong to a union? If so, what are the terms of the current employment agreement?
- What incentives to stay through the merger will be offered to employees of the merging institution?
- What will a severance/separation package look like?
- Whose human resources management system will be used?
- What will the benefits package for the new entity include?
- Who will revise the administrative structure and position descriptions?
- How will salary ranges be set?