

# Notice of Intent to Rename an Academic Program, Department, or College

**Name of unit: School of Information**

**Proposed new name of unit: Department of Digital Technology and Culture**

## **Justification for proposed name change**

This name change request results from a series of cooperative discussions regarding the final organizational placement of the School of Information's constituent programs, as well as the need to maintain consistency with WSU Faculty Manual terminology.

Constructed as the combination of two separate degree programs (Digital Technology and Culture, Data Analytics), the College's School of Information was established via NOI approval less than nine months prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated disruption of WSU operations. Given both these disruptions and leadership changes in both CAS and the provost's office, however, only a limited amount of additional development occurred during this period.

In Summer/Fall 2021 CAS conducted at the request of the provost's office a review of the Data Analytics organizational and fiscal structure. That review indicated that Data Analytics required a distinct governance structure to accommodate its unusual placement as a CAS-led program with links to both another college (VCEA) and multiple campuses (Pullman, Vancouver, Tri-Cities, and Everett). The presence of a formal state fiscal allocation establishing the program and its connection to WSU-Everett further complicated matters. Ultimately, all parties—CAS, VCEA, WSU-Everett, and the Provost's office—concluded a December 2021 MOU that established a clear, cooperative governance structure that is expected to move this program forward independently.

Under the Faculty Manual, however, a school by definition must have more than one degree program. CAS thus initiated an externally facilitated process to review the possibilities of merging the DTC program with the Department of Fine Arts. While participants in that process identified multiple areas of potential connection, the faculty of these units ultimately chose to remain organizationally separate (see below for a further description of faculty consultations).

The approval for an independent unit that includes DTC, however, still remains, as does its original rationale. Across three campuses (Pullman, Vancouver, Tri-Cities) the DTC major has generated

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significant student interest and growth, currently enrolling more than 400 majors and other students interested in the intersection of contemporary technologies and culture. The scheduling and course offerings in these curricula—more than 120 sections annually—are currently organized administratively in Pullman and Tri-Cities by the DTC program and in Vancouver by the Creative Media and Digital Culture program. The combined faculty on these campuses numbered nearly 20 in AY22-23 and will likely continue to grow. These faculty include several new tenure-track faculty, including one hired under the provost’s cluster hire initiative, who are pursuing cutting-edge research, teaching, and engagement in equity-oriented areas that we consider central to the college’s and university’s core missions. **In brief, the size, scope, and distinctive intellectual missions that drove the approval of the School of Information have only grown, as has the need to move this new unit forward.**

Much like departments such as “English,” “History,” “Sociology,” and many others at WSU, this name change thus appropriately identifies the core of the new unit with its primary degree program. It also provides a recognizable and consistent name and structure for a multi-campus unit with significant presence and growth potential. The degree name itself has been used at WSU for more than two decades, and thus no conflicts with other units within or outside the college are expected.

**Describe process used to arrive at new name, including consultations with faculty and other potentially affected units**

The total process of reconsideration and renaming was highly consultative. In addition to the successful discussion and MOU process with VCEA, Everett, and provost office leadership, the College internally employed a visioning process that centered faculty input. The dean first initiated a series of externally facilitated consultations among key faculty in both Fine Arts and DTC from all three campuses. Outside of an initial charge and single check-in, no CAS leadership participated in those discussions, allowing faculty instead to explore ideas and concerns independently. At the conclusion of that initial process, the dean then facilitated two meetings with the combined faculties (twice) and also met with each unit to receive additional input. All TT and CT faculty were then surveyed via Qualtrics as to their support for a DTC/FA merger. Faculty were informed in this context that if a merger was not approved the college would pursue renaming to the Department of Digital Technology and Culture. The final result of 60% opposed and 40% in favor (of the merger, not the name) was a significant factor in opting for this name change.

As per EP#29 the CAS dean also regularly consulted with appropriate academic leadership at both Vancouver and Everett. VCAAs at both campuses support the name change and the continuation of DTC as an unified, multi-campus unit.

**List any and all objections raised during consultations to proposed new name and provide responses to each. If none, enter "None"**

None

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**Desired effective date (semester, calendar year)**

Fall 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Butler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

**Electronic signature of dean of sponsoring college  
Date signed**

**March 14, 2022**

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