The merging of university departments, schools and colleges to form new academic units can often provide many opportunities for students, faculty and the university, as a whole. In many instances, the combination of (re)aligning academic units with shared, or similar, philosophies and societal impact can maximize all levels of resources to facilitate student and faculty outcomes.

From the standpoint of the Departmental Chair, many aspects of leadership may be challenged throughout the transition process. Along with providing leadership, guidance and communication of information to faculty and staff, capitalizing on the momentum of transition (e.g., maximizing new resources, faculty-lines, building space, influx of money, etc.) becomes critical for the Chair position. In addition, assimilation into new leadership teams that can include new Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs, etc., must also be considered. Considering "no two mergers are alike," or 'identical,' many different factors may be more or less relevant to the Chair of these units. However, the overall influence of the transition/merger on the department is likely to be broad-reaching and can drastically influence the role and responsibilities of the Department Chair.

After an general description of the merging of departments/units in an University-setting, a discussion of many of the various aspects of the mergers will be discussed with the attending Chairs.

The description of the recent (ongoing) mergers on the campus(es) of those in attendance (including the lead Presenter) will be discussed and used as a reference point for key areas to be discussed. Chairs will engage in and contribute to discussion that will include the following key points:
1. Communication with faculty & staff
    a. Decision-making
    b. Timing

2. (Re)Establishing Departmental and Program Identity
    a. Assessment of current and future departmental focus

3. Maximizing resources (new and old)
    a. Faculty effort
    b. Student Services
    c. New hires
    d. New financial resources (e.g., start-up, lab space, etc.)

4. Fostering faculty support
    a. Departmental initiatives for collaboration
    b. Departmental/College programs

5. Assimilation into new leadership teams
    a. Role of the Chair
    b. Role of other Departmental Leadership