

STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM FOR DISCONTINUATION

A review for discontinuation of an academic program must occur in the context of how best to strengthen the intellectual and academic activities designated by the mission of the university. The decision to discontinue an academic program usually means the permanent elimination of an instructional area and must be made with the same care and thorough review accorded the creation of new programs. This review may be initiated for a variety of reasons. Typically, programs are discontinued when they no longer serve student or societal needs, or when the program no longer has sufficient students to warrant its allocation required to sustain its curricular offerings. The purpose of this policy is to describe the general standards and procedures for reviewing an undergraduate program to determine whether it should be discontinued. Simple program changes or modifications in programs do not fall under the purview of this policy.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. For the purpose of this policy, an academic program is defined as:
- a degree program or an option, concentration, or emphasis
 - a minor,
 - a subject matter preparation program or credential, or
 - an approved course of study leading to a university program certificate.
- B. Program faculty are full-time faculty at California State University, Fresno who have taught courses integral to the program in the last five years.

II. STANDARDS

When reviewing an existing program to determine if it should be discontinued, the responsible committees, the Academic Senate, and the academic administrators involved shall consider all of the criteria enumerated below. A decision to discontinue a program of study shall be based on an assessment of the program that is informed by objectively based, verifiable evidence and data.

- A. In general, in order to maintain an academic program, it shall be demonstrated that
1. If accreditation is a prerequisite for subsequent professional certification or licensure of the program's graduates, accreditation is in force.
 2. The program makes an integral and significant contribution to the university's overall academic mission.
 3. The program offers a degree/option that advances the programmatic needs of the college/school and university.
 4. The program meets the standards of the discipline.
- B. **Curriculum**
1. If externally accredited, the program is expected to provide copies of the last accreditation report.

2. The curriculum has defined student outcomes linked to courses and all courses have learning objectives.

The department chair will provide copies of the course syllabi for courses taught during the last two semesters.¹

3. The program should offer a frequent schedule of required courses. The program should offer an appropriate array of elective courses. Courses in the curriculum must be scheduled and offered in a pattern that permits students to complete the program within the time period stated in literature (including General Catalog) describing the program to current and prospective students. Courses serving other areas/programs of the university should meet the needs of those areas/programs

Copies of the Faculty Activity by Department (FAD) reports for the last five years² will be provided by the Scheduling Office. The program faculty is expected to comment on these documents. The ways in which curricular offerings support other programs (graduate and/or undergraduate) on campus should also be documented.

4. Undergraduate programs should provide students with the knowledge and life skills necessary to pursue the academic or professional paths of their choosing, and for their graduates requiring subsequent professional certification, the necessary core knowledge to be successful in that field.

The program faculty should document the ways in which program goals meet the goals of the university and college/school and address the ways in which the curriculum accomplishes that. Data regarding student placement and/or success and professional certification will be included when available and appropriate.

C. Undergraduate Students

1. The undergraduate program must encourage a strong intellectual climate.
2. The undergraduate program must have sufficient students to warrant the allocation of resources made to the program.

The program faculty shall comment on data on student enrollments provided by the Office of Institutional Research. Materials provided by the Office of Institutional Research should include FTES figures for the number of majors and minors (or, in the case of certificate programs, enrollment figures), as well as a list of service courses offered by the program and enrollment data relevant to these courses.

¹ The Policy on Course Syllabi and Grading (APM 241) requires that a copy of the syllabus for each course be retained in the department office.

² The last five years means the last five years of available data.

D. Faculty and Other Resources

1. The program has the faculty and other resources needed to support the undergraduate curriculum and provide an appropriate schedule of courses.

The program faculty shall comment on the number of faculty available to teach in the program and the course offerings over the last five years. The Scheduling Office will provide the Faculty Activity by Department (FAD) reports for this purpose.

2. The expertise of the faculty members in the program must be sufficient to support an adequate learning environment for the undergraduate program. The program should have the variety of expertise appropriate for the program.

The program faculty will comment upon the qualifications and distinct expertise of the program faculty as evidenced, in part, by a current copy of the vita of each faculty member teaching in the program.

3. There should be a level of resources of all types essential to support the program. This includes number of students, library resources, space, faculty, administrative support, computer and other equipment, computer software, and equipment maintenance.

The program faculty shall comment on resources available to sustain the program.

4. Student recruitment and retention are important elements of program viability.

The program faculty shall document recruitment efforts and comment on student enrollment, retention, and graduation data provided by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment.

III. PROGRAM DISCONTINUATION REVIEW

- A. A call for a program discontinuation review will be issued by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost) when:

1. As a result of periodic program review the Undergraduate Academic Program Review Subcommittee recommends to the Provost that a program be reviewed for possible discontinuation, or
2. A petition to consider the discontinuation of an undergraduate program is received by the Provost.

- B. Petition to Review an Undergraduate Program for Discontinuation

1. A petition to review an undergraduate program for discontinuation will be filed with the Provost. This petition will address all standards listed in section II, providing documentation as described for each standard where the petitioner asserts that the program does not meet standards of quality. The petition must address the standards of quality for an undergraduate program and present evidence to support the petitioner's claim that the program does not meet standards of quality. The petition must describe the manner in which the program is weakened as a result of the deficiencies alleged and identify the consequences of the deficiencies alleged.

2. Any of the following may initiate a petition to review an undergraduate program for discontinuation.³
 - a. A majority of the faculty of the program faculty,
 - b. Dean of the college/ school,
 - c. Associate Provost / Dean of Undergraduate Studies,
 3. Copies of the petition to review an undergraduate program for discontinuation are provided by the Office of the Provost for distribution to:
 - a. Chair of the department in which the program is housed,
 - b. Faculty of the department,
 - c. Faculty teaching in the program, if the program is interdisciplinary,
 - d. Dean of the College/School.
 - e. Associate Provost / Dean of Undergraduate Studies
 - f. The Chair of the Academic Senate.
- C. The Provost's Office is charged with insuring all necessary reports and data are gathered and provided to faculty in the program before their response time begins. Data to be gathered and provided to the department before their response time begins include:
1. The initial petition for review.
 2. Any individual data that faculty are required to respond to in Item II but not gathered in the initial petition for review. This includes required information from the Office of Institutional Research on enrollment, the scheduling office FAD reports, demand for courses and retention data.
 3. A six-year list of yearly staffing levels in the program. For each year the number of tenured, tenure-track, full-time lecturers, and part-time lecturers will be traced.
 4. A six-year compendium of budget allocations for the program.
- D. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies shall notify all students enrolled in the program that the program is being reviewed and may be discontinued. The Undergraduate Dean may also convene an informational meeting for students for further discussion, if appropriate.
- E. Review of an Undergraduate Program for Discontinuation
1. The department in consultation with the program faculty⁴ is responsible for initial consideration of the petition to review the program.

³ The party initiating the review shall not make a separate recommendation during the review process.

⁴ Review of a petition regarding an interdisciplinary program within the college/school shall start at the appropriate college/school curriculum committee. Review of petitions regarding interdisciplinary programs at the university-level shall start at the Academic Policy and Planning Committee of the Academic Senate before being sent to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate.

- a. Within twenty working days⁵ of receipt of the petition, the department in consultation with the program faculty shall prepare a response to the petition using all the standards listed in Section II, providing documentation as described for each standard, with special emphasis on the petitioners' allegations of deficiency. The initial petition, the department's response and all accompanying documentation shall be forwarded to the appropriate college/school curriculum committee and the dean of the college/school.

The response of the department, including any minority report submitted by program any faculty member within the department, shall include one of the following recommendations:

- i. maintain the status quo; or
 - ii. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions recommended to be completed within a specified time; or
 - iii. discontinue the program.
2. Within twenty working days of the receipt of the initial response of the department faculty, including any minority report, the college/school curriculum committee shall consult with the program faculty, the department chair (or Director in the case of interdisciplinary programs), the dean, and the chairs of such standing committees within the college / school as deemed necessary by the college/school curriculum committee.
- a. At the conclusion of the consultation, the college/school curriculum committee shall issue a report stating its recommendation and rationale regarding the status of the program under review. The college /school curriculum committee shall recommend one of the following:
- i. maintain the status quo; or
 - ii. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions recommended to be completed within a specified time; or
 - iii. discontinue the program.
- b. The recommendation and rationale, with the initial petition, the department's initial response, including any minority report, and all appropriate documentation shall be forwarded to the dean of the college/school. Copies of the recommendations shall be provided to the department chair for distribution to the program faculty, and the Associate Provost / Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
3. Within fifteen working days of the receipt of the initial response of the department, including any minority report, and the recommendation of the college/school curriculum committee, the dean shall consult with the program faculty, the department chair (or Director in the case of interdisciplinary programs), and the chairs of such standing committees within the college / school as deemed necessary by the dean.

⁵ "Working day" is defined as an academic work day during the Fall or Spring Terms, as distinct from the calendar days used in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

- a. At the conclusion of the consultation, the dean shall issue a report ⁶ stating their recommendation and rationale regarding the status of the program under review. The dean shall recommend one of the following:
 - i. maintain the status quo; or
 - ii. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions recommended to be completed within a specified time; or
 - iii. discontinue the program.
 - b. The dean's recommendation and rationale, with the initial petition, the department's initial response including any minority report, the recommendation of the college/school curriculum committee and all appropriate documentation shall be forwarded to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. Copies of the recommendations shall be provided to the department chair for distribution to the department faculty, and the Associate Provost / Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
4. On occasion, a program may be expected to undergo careful scrutiny by an external consultant. Under these circumstances, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or dean will consult with the departmental program faculty and the Executive Committee regarding the appointment of such a consultant. At a minimum the external consultant will review the extent to which the program:
- contributes to the academic mission of the university and college/school; •
 - advances the programmatic needs of the college/school; and
 - meets the standards of the discipline.

The external consultant will prepare and submit a report to the Provost or Dean. Copies will be sent to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, the department chair, and the program faculty.

5. Upon receipt of the material from the Dean and the external report from the outside consultant (if any), the Executive Committee shall hold the aforementioned material for ten working days while the program faculty prepare a response to the recommendations of the college/school curriculum committee and the dean. At the conclusion of this ten-day period, the Executive Committee shall forward all the materials to the Academic Policy and Planning Committee for review and recommendation.
 - a. Within twenty working days of the receipt of the materials from the Executive Committee of the Senate, the Academic Policy and Planning Committee shall consult ⁷ with the program faculty, the department chair (or Director in the case of interdisciplinary

⁶ The dean's report shall include an analysis if the proposed discontinuation of the program could result in the layoff of faculty employees, including part-time and full-time temporary faculty. If the discontinuance could lead to the layoff of bargaining unit employees, after consultation with the Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel, the dean shall also include any options, if any, that might be implemented to avoid or mitigate possible layoffs.

⁷ Academic Policy and Planning Committee may initiate consultation with any person or group deemed appropriate by them.

programs), the dean, and the Chair of such Academic Senate standing committees within the Academic Senate as deemed appropriate by the Academic Policy and Planning Committee.

- b. At the conclusion of the consultation required in III C 5 a above, the Academic Policy and Planning Committee shall issue a report stating its recommendations and rationale regarding the status of the program. The Academic Policy and Planning Committee shall recommend one of the following:
 - i. maintain the status quo; or
 - ii. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions recommended to be completed within a specified time; or
 - iii. discontinue the program.

The recommendation and rationale, with the initial petition, the department's response(s) including any minority report, the recommendations of the college/school curriculum committee, and dean as well as all appropriate documentation shall be forwarded to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. Copies of the recommendation shall be provided to the department chair for distribution to program faculty, the chair of the college/school curriculum committee, the dean, and the Associate Provost / Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

- c. No later than ten days after receipt of the recommendation of the Academic Policy and Planning Committee, the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate shall (a) review the process to assure compliance with this policy and (b) schedule a meeting of the Academic Senate to consider the petition.
- d. The Academic Senate ⁸ shall consider all the recommendations and documentation generated throughout this review and shall make one of the following recommendations to the Provost or designee:
 - i. maintain the status quo; or
 - ii. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions recommended to be completed within a specified time; or
 - iii. discontinue the program.

IV. FINAL DECISION

A The Provost shall review the documentation and recommendations generated as part of the review process.

B. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall decide to:

- 1. maintain the status quo; or

2. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions to be completed within a specified time; or
 3. discontinue the program.
- C. The Provost shall convey the decision, in writing, to the petitioner and all departments, committees and administrators who reviewed the petition and to the Chair of the Academic Senate.
- D. In the event that an administrator in the office of the Provost (e.g., Associate Provost, Dean of Undergraduate Studies) initiates a petition to review an undergraduate program for discontinuation – and only in this event – the decision of the Provost may be appealed to the University President for review and decision.

V. ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS AND FACULTY AFFECTED BY PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

A. STUDENTS

⁸ Academic senators are expected to have read all the relevant recommendations and documentation to be made available in the Senate Office prior to the Senate meeting.

If the decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is to discontinue a program, the university shall:

1. Suspend admissions to the program.
2. Prepare an official list of students matriculated in the program.
3. Notify all students matriculated in the program of the following:
 - a. the date by which the degree requirements must be completed to receive the specified degree or certificate
 - b. provide the student with information on other closely related programs offered by the university to which the student may wish to transfer
 - c. identify for students similar programs available at other institutions in the geographical area or in the California State University system
 - d. direct affected students to a designated office that can assist the students to transfer to another institution or complete the requirements for a degree at the university.
 - e. provide notice that a program has been discontinued to advisers, academic units, and agencies involved in advising or providing information regarding programs on this campus to prospective students.

B. FACULTY

In the rare event that discontinuance of an undergraduate program may result in the layoff of probationary or tenured faculty, the provisions of Article 38 of the Collective Bargaining Unit regarding the avoidance or mitigation of layoff shall be implemented.

If the attempts to avoid or mitigate layoff have been unsuccessful and the only remaining option is the layoff of faculty, including part-time and full-time temporary faculty, the provisions of Article 38 of the Unit 3 Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding layoff as the result of programmatic change shall be followed.

Recommended by the Academic Senate
October 1994
April 10, 2023

Approved by the President
11/94; **December 14, 2004**
April 13, 2023