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Academic Program Discontinuance Policy

Source Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Unit(s) Responsible for Implementation: Academic Affairs

Consultations: College of Extended Learning, Associate Deans, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning, Dean of Graduate Studies

History

Version Approved Revisions(s)

4	2/10/2020	Reorganized into separate sections for non-emergency and emergency discontinuances; added consultation process for College of Extended Learning academic programs; updated titles, various minor edits.
3	2012	S12-177
2	1993	S93-177
1	1992	F92-177

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Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to define the processes and criteria under which programs can be discontinued.

I. Goal

The goal of this policy is to provide the criteria and tools needed, in the context of shared governance, to make difficult decisions about academic program discontinuance in both ordinary times and in times of budgetary crisis. To the extent possible, decision-makers shall in all instances follow this policy in making choices and balancing institutional needs with those of faculty, students, and staff.

II. Principles Guiding Implementation

Program discontinuance may occur under two conditions: non-emergency curricular development or under conditions of fiscal emergency.

Decision-Making Environment

- Decision-makers should make discontinuance decisions based upon and guided by the University's mission.
- Decision-makers should carefully consider the longer-term ramifications of their decisions on the University, community, and region at large.
- Decisions should be made in a transparent, timely fashion in accordance with principles of shared governance.
- Consideration of program discontinuances should preserve the comprehensive character of SF State by maintaining a variety of program types- e.g., traditional, disciplinary, interdisciplinary, professional, emerging, undergraduate, graduate.

General Decision Considerations

- Throughout this policy, the term "program" means majors, minors, graduate degrees, credentials, or certificates.
- Decision-makers should provide for the teach-out of students - the institution

should assist students to complete their degrees. Options may include prioritizing students within the majors and graduate programs, making substitutions for remaining requirements, advising students on change of major, and assisting students in transferring to other institutions when completion of the degree at SF State is impossible.

- Decision-makers should keep in mind the qualifications and possible relocation of individual tenured and tenure-track faculty when making these decisions.

- Discontinuance should not be on a snapshot of a program at the present moment, but rather a view of the program over a five-year period, with consideration of the program's past and/or potential strengths and short- and long-term plans to the extent that these plans accord with the vision of the college in which it is located.
- Decision-makers should carefully consider how discontinuance of a given program might affect other programs, e.g., interdisciplinary programs.
- All decision-makers should consider the potential impacts of program discontinuance upon present and proposed recommendations concerning graduation requirements.
- Decision-makers should consider the ways in which a program duplicates other programs on this campus.
- Possible collaborations with other campuses should be considered as a way to continue an academic program before eliminating a program or department.

III. Non-Emergency Discontinuances

A. Non-Emergency Curricular Development. During periods of normal, non-emergency curricular development, a department, the Provost-or appropriate deans may request a program be discontinued due to changes in the department's circumstances or of the state of the discipline. In this case, the request, along with a justification for the request, is submitted to the Academic Senate and the

department; EPC meets with the department to discuss the request. After discussion and recommendation by EPC, the request is forwarded to the full Academic Senate for action under normal Senate guidelines.

1. Department request

If a department is requesting its own program be discontinued, along with that request, the following information should be presented by the department:

- The rationale for the proposed discontinuance. For example, is the curriculum being absorbed into a different degree, are enrollments trending downward, are disciplinary trends driving the request, does accreditation or program review drive the request? What are the arguments for and against the discontinuance?;
- Enrollments for students in the relevant program for the past five years;
- The process the Department used to consider the issue, along with results of any votes taken on the issue;
- Any disagreements among the faculty or students about the issue;
- How students were consulted about the proposed discontinuance;
- Whether or not other degree programs rely upon courses in the program to be discontinued and if so, the results of consultations with those departments;
- A plan for how the Department plans to teach out any remaining students in the programs; and,
- How these proposed actions fit within the broader context of the Department's curriculum?

2. Provost or Dean request

If the-Provost-or appropriate deans are requesting the discontinuance of a program, the following information should be presented by the requestor:

- The rationale for the proposed discontinuance;

- b) Enrollments for students in the relevant program for the past five years;
- c) Descriptions of consultations with the department whose programs are being considered for discontinuance;
- d) How students were consulted about the proposed discontinuance;
- e) Whether or not the degree programs rely upon courses in the program to be discontinued and if so, the results of consultations with those departments;
- f) A plan for how the Department could teach out any remaining students in the programs; and,
- g) How these proposed actions fit within the broader context of the Department's curriculum?

B. Non-Emergency Discontinuance Process

1. College of Extended Learning (CEL) programs

Proposed program discontinuances of academic programs by the College of Extended Learning need to go to Senate Executive Committee for consultation and then go to the Senate plenary as an information item.

2. Non-CEL programs

For non-CEL programs, no matter the route by which a discontinuance proposal reaches the Senate, each recommendation must be accompanied by documentation that indicates specific reasons for discontinuance based on the criteria found in this policy. The Chair of EPC, through the Academic Senate office, shall inform the campus community of any proposal for discontinuance at least two weeks prior to its meeting to consider the action. Any interested party may file a response with the EPC prior to its meeting. The EPC shall review the recommendation, meet with representatives of the affected program and report its recommendation to the Academic Senate for action.

If a program is to be discontinued, program administrators will work with students to either enable them to complete their course of study at SF State or to find a suitable course of study elsewhere. Procedures shall be set up by the program or, in the case of a credential, by the Teacher Credential Committee (or a comparable body).

The procedures shall include:

1. Preparation of an official list of students enrolled in the program;
2. Establishment of a cut-off date for adding students to that list;
3. Notification to all students on the list of the following alternatives:
 - a) The date by which program requirements must be met;
 - b) Other programs offered by the university to which the student may wish to transfer;
 - c) Similar programs offered by nearby institutions.

IV. Emergency Discontinuances

In the case of a fiscal exigency declared by the President, and should it be necessary to consider the discontinuation of an academic program, a determination will be based upon a review of the following criteria:

A. Criteria

The criteria and measures under each of the categories below are not meant to be comprehensive but to suggest ways in which each category can be evaluated. The relative importance of each of the three following major areas (Numbered 1, 2 and 3 below) will be weighted as indicated.

1. Importance to the Institution (Weighted 25%)

- a) The extent to which the program is consistent with or advances SF State's mission and/or current strategic plan.
- b) The extent to which the program is integral to the curriculum of a department, a college, or the University.
- c) The extent to which the program advances the University's goals for access, retention, equity, and social justice.
- d) The extent to which the program's uniqueness and distinctiveness helps SF State to differentiate itself from other colleges and universities.
- e) The extent to which the program serves people in ways that no other program does, or serves a unique demographic or societal function.

2. Quality of the Program Inputs, Processes and Outcomes (Weighted 50%)

a) Quality of curriculum and curriculum delivery.

- i) Program curriculum appropriate to the breadth, depth, and level of the discipline
- ii) Program curriculum currency, coherence, and innovation
- iii) Program curriculum relation to specialized accreditation
- iv) Currency of equipment, materials, laboratories, and learning spaces
- v) Library support

b) Quality of faculty (and staff, where appropriate).

- i) Ability of faculty to offer and maintain current, comprehensive, and rigorous curriculum
- ii) Appropriateness of credentials, training, experience
- iii) Professional quality as evidenced by participation in appropriate scholarly, creative, and/or professional activity
- iv) Ability of program to attract and retain qualified personnel

c) Strength of teaching performance.

- i) Clearly articulated program statements regarding quality of teaching
- ii) Ongoing, meaningful assessment of teaching performance of faculty, including post-tenure
- iii) Multiple measures of teaching performance of full-time and part-time faculty members
- iv) Program attention to problematic individual teaching performance

d) Outcomes

- i) Clearly articulated program links to campus baccalaureate learning goals
- ii) Updated plan that clearly identifies program learning goals, assessment strategies, and processes by which data inform program curriculum decisions
- iii) External assessment and accreditation outcomes, where appropriate
- iv) Student success

- Program profile data: graduation rate, time-to-degree, continuation, etc.

- Program advising plan

- Program roadmap to curriculum completion and graduation success

- Effectiveness of the program to prepare graduates for the future.

- Evidence might include: impact on community, admission to graduate programs, employment, success on professional licensure and certification exams, satisfaction of students, alumni, employers or clients.

3. Efficiency and Demand for the Program. (Weighted 25%)

a) External and Internal Demand for the program.

- i) Relationship between demand and offerings

- ii) For graduate programs: The number of completed applications for admission, the number of students granted admissions status and the number of students who enroll.

- iii) The FTES generated in lower division, upper division, and/or graduate level courses

- iv) The number of students who completed the program

- v) The anticipated need for graduates of the program

- Similar program offerings and demand at nearby CSUs

- Services provided by the program to the University

- vi) Enrollments in courses required for other programs

- vii) Proportion of enrollments for other majors, minors, and general

education requirements

- viii) Other programs that would suffer, or possibly fail, without the service courses provided by the program

b) **Revenues, expenses, and efficiency.**

i) Resources allocated to the program

- FTEF
- FTE
- Space
- Subsidies for services provided to other programs and the University

ii) Resources generated by the program

- Funds generated by the program for itself from research grants, program- restricted gifts, and other types of revenue
- Indirect costs generated by the program for the University from research grants or program-restricted gifts
- Equipment and capital items generated by the program

iii) Costs and other expenses

- Student:faculty ratio
- Time to graduation
- Graduation rates
- Costs per graduate and per FTES
- Discipline-specific variables

iv) Opportunities. Evidence of existence of future opportunities for this program. Opportunities are emerging, or will be emerging, which could change the nature of the academic program's entire role and situation within

or outside of the university. These opportunities would have been previously nonexistent; engaging with these new opportunities would amount to a complete paradigm shift for the program.

B. Process-Conditions of Fiscal Emergency.

The second condition under which discontinuance may be considered is during periods of fiscal emergency, determined to exist when the President of the University states there is no other way for the University to move forward without the discontinuance of academic programs. The President, or other member of the Administration, then provides a dollar target of the amount needed to be cut from academic programs to the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate then moves to constitute the Institutional Review Committee. Figure 1 describes the process to be undergone in these circumstances.

Beginning of the Discontinuance Process

Departments will be given the opportunity to compose a limited statement describing how well each of their programs meets the criteria described in this policy. Deadlines, length of written reviews and time allowed for departmental action on these review documents will be set by the Institutional Review Committee.

Once the reviews are completed, an Institutional Review Committee (composed of two faculty elected by and from the voting members of the faculty of each college, the Dean of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning (DUEAP) and the Graduate Dean) will review all programs, including any department-generated statements that have been submitted. If the Senate Executive Committee concludes that any of the following fields of knowledge are not represented on the review committee, they may appoint additional committee members to provide such representation, up to: Arts, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Business, Education, Ethnic Studies, Health, Humanities, and Sciences. The Institutional Review Committee will review all programs, including any department-generated

statements that have been submitted. The IRC will be chaired by a faculty member. The Institutional Review Committee will be provided the fiscal target for reductions, the costs of each academic degree program and other data corresponding to the criteria listed in this policy for each degree program.

Once the Institutional Review Committee has completed its review and developed the list of programs proposed for discontinuance, the list should be submitted both to the academic deans who will review the Institutional Review and departmental reports for their own units and to the Provost. The deans will review the list of proposed programs and make their own recommendations (in consultation with their college councils or other college-wide committee's), sending their comments to the Provost.

After the deans have reviewed and commented, the Provost's Review Council (composed of the Provost, the Undergraduate and Graduate Deans, and the Associate Vice Presidents covering curriculum and resources) will make the final recommendation as to whether or not each of the programs recommended by the Institutional Review Committee should be reduced, phased out, reorganized or discontinued.

If the Provost's Review Council makes a recommendation for a program to be discontinued, each recommendation and its justification will be submitted to the Academic Senate. After giving proper notice to the campus, EPC will meet with the department to discuss the request. After discussion and recommendation by EPC, the request will be forwarded to the full Academic Senate for action under normal Senate guidelines.

C. Summer process

Academic program discontinuance recommendations should only be considered outside of the regular Academic Year, when some faculty, staff, and students may not be available to participate in the process, if urgent budgetary requirements make it necessary and the University administration asserts that the discontinuance

recommendation cannot wait for consideration by EPC during the regular Academic Year.

In that emergency circumstance, the following procedure will guide the process:

- Any academic program discontinuance recommendation occurring during the summer should include information about why the recommendation cannot wait until the full Senate is in session and faculty are available to consult.

The selection of the Institutional Review Committee during a summer session should be informed by the availability of faculty to serve on such a committee. Any members who are unable to serve on the Institutional Review Committee shall be replaced as follows. The dean of the affected college will appoint a member of the faculty of the same college to replace an elected faculty member. The Provost will appoint a member to replace the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Development, the Dean of Graduate Studies, or the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

- With the exception of possible differences in how the Committee is constituted during the summer, the role and

responsibilities of the Institutional Review Committee in the program discontinuance process will be the same as during the regular academic year.

- Preparing for the EPC to hear proposals for discontinuance during the summer: once it becomes apparent that discontinuances will be requested and after consulting with the chairs of the Academic Policy Committee (APC) and the Curriculum Review Advisory Committee (CRAC), the Academic Senate Chair would call members of those two committees into session as the Educational Policy Committee to consider their recommendation.
- If EPC were able to achieve a quorum, then EPC would meet and consider the recommendation, having the same responsibility to provide due diligence and full consultation as during the

regular Academic Year. EPC would attempt to make a recommendation as swiftly as possible. Barring exceptional circumstances, all university faculty would be notified of the recommendation and have an opportunity to respond to it. In all cases, no decision would be made unless and until representatives of the academic unit and its college had been given notification and the opportunity to respond.

- Once EPC came to a decision, it would meet with the Summer Senate and present EPC's recommendation. The Summer Senate could join EPC in forwarding that recommendation to the President or forward its own separate recommendation.
- If EPC could not obtain a quorum, the Summer Senate would act as the full Senate and follow these same procedures.
- In Summer, EPC will consist of the members of EPC from the previous academic year.

Figure 1: Discontinuance Process Under Conditions of Fiscal Emergency

FIGURE 1: DISCONTINUANCE PROCESS FOR USE UNDER CONDITION OF BUDGET CRISIS

Departments Have the Opportunity to Write a Limited Page Document on How Their Programs

Institutional Review Committee-

Recommendations

2 Faculty Members Elected From Each College + 1 Ind. UG Dean, AvP APO (Individuals Appointed by Senate EXCOM to

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