

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING A PROGRAM FOR DISCONTINUANCE OR MERGER FAM 856.3

Discontinuance of a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree program (or the merger of such a program into another) must always be preceded by a thorough consideration of the role that the program plays in the intellectual and academic purposes of the university. The decision to discontinue an academic program can mean 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 community needs to the extent necessary to justify their expense. Occasionally, it will be desirable for a once-independent program to be merged into another continuing program. In cases of financial exigency, a program may need to be discontinued or merged because the University must devote the resources that would otherwise support it to other pressing needs. The purpose of this policy is to describe the standards and procedures for reviewing whether a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree program should be discontinued or merged into another program where these actions are within campus authority. No such program shall be discontinued or merged without consultation with program faculty, the Faculty Senate, the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, the President, The Chancellor and all other groups or persons likely to be affected by the discontinuance or merger, including enrolled students.

I. INITIATION OF A REVIEW FOR PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE OR MERGER ("PDM REVIEW")

A. Who May Initiate a PDM Review

A request for the review of an academic program to consider whether a program should be discontinued or merged into another one may be initiated:

1. By a petition signed by an absolute majority of tenure-track faculty in the program;
2. By a petition signed by an absolute majority of tenure-track faculty of the College in which the program is located;
3. By the written recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate ("Executive Committee");
4. By the written recommendation of the Provost/Vice President for Academic

Affairs (“Provost”); or

5. By the written recommendation of the President of the University.

B. When a PDM Review May Be Conducted

1. A review for discontinuance or merger of a program shall normally take place during the academic year (September through June).

2. In the event that the Provost and the Executive Committee concur that extraordinary circumstances require a PDM Review to be conducted during the summer months, they may do so, provided that the review follows the other guidelines of this policy.

C. Special Rules for PDM Review Petitions:

1. In the case of a petition by program faculty (under I.A.1), a copy of the petition shall be filed with the Coordinator of the Program and (if different) the Chair of the department/Director of the School in which the program is housed at least one week before it is begun to be circulated.

2. In the case of a petition by College faculty (under I.A.2), a copy of the petition shall be filed with the College Dean at least one week before it is begun to be circulated.

3. In the event that the Dean or other faculty member in the College in which a program is housed believes that there were improprieties in the circulation of a petition, either among program or College faculty, the Dean or other faculty member may request the Executive Committee to review the circulation of the petition, and if the Executive Committee determines that improprieties might have occurred, the Executive Committee may require that the petition be recirculated before accepting it for further action.

D. Content and Filing of Petition or Recommendation to Initiate PDM Review

A signed petition or written recommendation to review a program for possible discontinuance or merger shall be filed with the Office of the Faculty Senate. This petition or recommendation shall explain why a program review is warranted in this case by addressing, with as much specificity as is practicable, the relevant criteria stated in Section II below. When the petition or recommendation is filed with the Faculty Senate, it shall include as much relevant documentation and supporting information as practicable. In the case that financial exigency is being asserted, the petition or recommendation shall include an explanation why this particular program was chosen for discontinuance or merger, including comparative data for programs, both instructional and administrative, being retained.

E. Notice of Initiation of PDM Review

The Faculty Senate Office shall distribute copies of the petition or recommendation to review a program for discontinuance or merger (without attachments) to:

1. The Coordinator of the program and (if different) the Chair of the department/Director of the School in which the program is housed, and in the case of proposed merger of the program into a program housed in another department/school, the Chair of that other department/Director of that other school;
2. The faculty teaching in the program;
3. The Dean of the College having supervisory responsibility over the program and, in the case of merger of the program into a program in another College, the Dean of that College;
4. The Provost;
5. The Chairs of the Executive Committee, the University Curriculum Committee, the Educational Policy and Resources Committee, and the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate;
6. The Vice President for University Advancement; and
7. The President of Associated Students, Inc. ("ASI").

F. Appointment of PDM Review Committee:

The Executive Committee, after determining that a petition or recommendation has been properly filed with the Faculty Senate, shall appoint a PDM Review Committee, comprising five tenured full-time faculty members, including one each from the Executive Committee, the Educational Policy and Resources Committee, the Faculty Affairs Committee, and the University Curriculum Committee, provided that at least one of them shall be faculty in the College in which the program is located and at least one of them shall be faculty in another College. The Executive Committee shall not appoint to the PDM Review Committee any member of the faculty of the program under review.

G. Compilation of Information for PDM Review:

1. The Faculty Senate Office shall maintain copies of the initial petition for review, together with any attachments to it and other documents it receives relating to it.
2. The Provost's Office shall provide the Faculty Senate Office with information relevant to the review if not gathered in the initial petition or recommendation,

including:

- a. Information from the Office of Institutional Research on enrollment, courses, and retention data, including FTES figures for the number of majors and minors, as well as a list of service courses offered by the program and enrollment data relevant to these courses.
- b. A six-year compendium of budget allocations for the program.
- c. 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.
- d. An analysis whether the proposed discontinuance 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, the analysis shall also include options, if any, that might be implemented to avoid or mitigate possible layoffs.
- e. An analysis of the effect that program discontinuance or merger might have on external grant and contractual obligations.
- f. Data that may be useful in comparing the program under review with other programs at the University, using standard indicia of performance. The PDM Review Committee may request additional comparative data during the course of its deliberations.

3. The program under review shall provide the Faculty Senate Office a copy its most recent program review and, if externally accredited, copies of its most recent accreditation reports. It shall also provide copies of the course syllabi for courses taught in the program during the last three quarters. The program faculty shall have an opportunity to comment on data on student enrollments provided by the Office of Institutional Research, and they may supply any other materials that they may consider relevant to the review.

4. The Executive Committee and the Provost shall agree on a date by which the PDM Committee shall submit its report. The date shall be chosen so that at least two weeks (excluding holidays) immediately following it will fall within the regular academic year.

II. STANDARDS FOR PDM REVIEW

A. Review of Evidence and Data:

A review to determine whether to discontinue or merge a program must be based on an assessment of the program that is supported by objectively based, verifiable evidence and data. The PDM Review Committee shall review all of the information gathered under I.G. The Committee shall also seek information and advice from all faculty members, both instructional and non-instructional, who have been involved in the operation of the program within the last two academic years. The Committee shall also arrange for consultation with groups or persons likely to be affected by the

discontinuance, including enrolled students.

B. Academic Considerations:

1. The review shall consider the extent to which the program makes an integral and significant contribution to the university's overall academic mission, offers a degree/option that advances the programmatic needs of the department/school, college, and university, and meets appropriate disciplinary standards.
2. The review shall consider whether the program offers a suitable array of required and elective courses, which are scheduled and offered in a pattern that permits students to complete the program within a reasonable time. The review should also consider the ways in which curricular offerings support other programs (graduate and/or undergraduate) on campus.

C. Budgetary Considerations:

1. The review should consider whether the program attracts enough students to warrant the allocation of resources made to the program, taking into consideration the number of students taught in General Education courses and other courses outside of the program by program faculty and the fact that enrollments in some programs are subject to substantial variations in enrollments. A short-term downturn in enrollments should not be the basis for making a long-term decision about the program.
2. The review should consider whether the program has the faculty and other resources needed to support the curriculum and provide an appropriate schedule of courses and whether the expertise of the faculty members in the program is sufficient to support the program.
3. The review should consider whether there are sufficient resources of all types to support the program, including library resources, space, administrative support, computer and other equipment, computer software, and equipment maintenance.
4. The review should consider, not only the nominal "costs" of continuing a program, but the actual "savings" of discontinuing it.
5. The review should consider the effect that discontinuance of a program would have on donors, grants, and external commitments, partnerships, and needs.
6. In cases where financial exigency is being asserted, the review should consider whether the explanation offered why this particular program should be discontinued or merged is convincing and what alternatives exist for necessary budgetary savings.

III. RESOLUTION OF REVIEW

A. Committee Report:

1. After review in accordance with the standards set out in Section II above and deliberation thereon, the PDM Review Committee shall prepare a report recommending that the University:
 - a. maintain the program in its current form;
 - b. maintain the program, contingent upon the program's meeting specified conditions recommended to be completed within a specified time;
 - c. discontinue the program; or
 - d. merge the program into another program.
2. In cases where the Committee recommends against discontinuance despite an assertion of financial exigency, the Committee shall explain why it was not convinced that this particular program should be discontinued. The report may suggest alternative sources for budgetary savings.
3. In the case that a minority of the Committee disagrees with the recommendation of the full Committee, it may write a minority report that will be circulated with the full Committee report.
4. The program faculty shall be provided a copy of the Committee report and of the minority report (if any) and shall have the right to prepare a response to the Committee report. If the program faculty deliver such a response to the Faculty Senate Office within two weeks of its originally receiving the Committee report, the program faculty's response shall be circulated with the full Committee report. If program faculty disagree on a single response to the report, they may submit a majority report and a minority report, both of which shall be circulated with the PDM Review Committee report, provided that they are delivered to the Faculty Senate Office within the two-week period allotted for program faculty response.

B. Distribution of Report:

1. Copies of the report, including any minority report or program faculty response, the initial petition or recommendation, and all appropriate documentation and other information shall be forwarded to the Office of the Faculty Senate.
2. Copies of the report, including any minority report or program faculty response, shall be forwarded to the Office of the Provost.
3. Copies of the report, including any minority report or program faculty response, shall be distributed to the program faculty.

4. Where the PDM Review was initiated by petition of College Faculty, copies of the report, including any minority report or program faculty response, shall be distributed to the petitioners.

C. Consideration of Report:

1. In the event that the PDM Review Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Provost concur that the program should be maintained in its present form, no further action shall be taken. The Faculty Senate Office shall advise the person or persons who originally petitioned for or recommended the PDM review of this disposition.

2. In all other cases, the PDM Review Committee report (and, if applicable, the minority report or program faculty response) shall be reviewed by the Faculty Senate. All attachments, documentation, and other information shall be made available to all members of the Faculty Senate, whether online, for inspection at the Faculty Senate Office, or otherwise, at least ten days prior to Senate deliberation on the report. The Faculty Senate will forward its recommendations, along with the PDM Review Committee report and all materials relating to it, to the Provost.

3. The Provost will forward his or her recommendation to the President.

4. If the President decides that program discontinuance or merger is warranted, the President shall advise the Chancellor of the proposed discontinuance in accordance with EP&R 79-10.

5. The Chancellor will review the proposal for systemwide effects, seeking the advice of whatever groups the Chancellor deems appropriate. The Chancellor may request additional information from the campus if needed for this review. The Chancellor will provide comments to the President, informing the President of any system concerns so that these may be considered in the final decision.

6. The President shall not take any administrative action leading to the *de facto* or official discontinuance of an academic program before the Chancellor has commented on the proposal.