

CSU BAKERSFIELD POLICY ON DISCONTINUANCE OF ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

The following policy statement describes the procedures and requirements under which an academic degree program can be considered for discontinuance at California State University, Bakersfield. Program discontinuance is a seldom used but important component to the long-range planning of the University. It affords the University a deliberate process of program evaluation, and when done well, produces substantial consensus regarding the future direction of the department, school and/or university. Program discontinuance is not an appropriate procedure for addressing short-term financial crises or personnel problems. It is an appropriate process for evaluating the relevance and vitality of specific programs where substantial doubts exist as to the program's future viability and responsiveness. Normally, these doubts will be raised first by the faculty directly responsible for the program or will arise out of the normal program review process.

Six criteria govern decisions regarding discontinuance of an existing academic degree program. In each instance, strategies to strengthen or modify the program shall receive first and serious consideration as alternatives to discontinuance.

- (1) The overall quality of a program is an essential factor in decision making. There are many forms of supporting evidence that lead to conclusions regarding overall quality. For example, evidence of excellence in teaching, academic program reviews, accrediting agency reports, reputation within the discipline (including published surveys) and reputation across the campus, evidence of faculty and student scholarship, timeliness of the curriculum, currency of the faculty, and efforts to mentor and involve students in intellectual and creative pursuits attest to qualitative achievements.
- (2) Centrality of a program to the University is another consideration. This criterion basically addresses whether the University might fulfill its mission were this program to be eliminated.
- (3) Need is an important consideration. Both internal and external factors determine need. Internal considerations are related to the University's mission. It is the mission of California State University, Bakersfield, to be a comprehensive university which offers a variety of degree programs in the liberal arts and professions. Also, the instructional contributions of a degree program to other programs are important. External factors include the needs of our regional population, the clientele we serve, and to some extent, current student demand.
- (4) Diversity is an important criterion when considering program discontinuance. Faculty, students, and a curriculum which reflects diversity contribute to our ability to create this environment and better model a changing population.

- (5) Degree program size is a consideration. To be effective a degree program must have a sufficient number of faculty to provide a reasonable exposure to the discipline and a sufficient number of students to insure the integrity and continuity of the curriculum.
- (6) Cost and resource generation are appropriate criteria. In determining cost the following factors are useful: student/faculty ratio, factors that determine resource generation, program administration costs, anticipated future outlays, and a judgment about maximum utilization of resources. When appropriate, the ability to generate outside revenue can be balanced against cost factors.

Initiation of Program Discontinuance Procedures

A written request for the review of an academic program for the purpose of determining whether program discontinuance is warranted may be made by any one of the following parties:

- (1) the Chair of the degree program with the written approval of a majority of the tenured and probationary faculty in the program or, in appropriate instances, the program committee;
- (2) the Dean of the school in which the program is housed;
- (3) the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, but only in regard to an undergraduate program;
- (4) the Dean of Graduate Studies, but only in regard to a graduate program;
- (5) a majority vote of the Academic Senate; or
- (6) a majority vote of the University Program Review Committee.

Such a request shall be submitted in writing to:

- (1) the Vice President for Academic Affairs;
- (2) all Deans involved in the administration of the program;
- (3) the Academic Senate; and
- (4) all tenured and probationary faculty who teach in the program.

The letter making this request must clearly indicate the specific reasons for the suggested program discontinuance. If within 14 calendar days* of receipt of this letter by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, none of the individuals or parties listed in (1) through (4) above (i.e., the Vice President for Academic Affairs, any Dean involved in the administration of the program, the Academic Senate by majority vote, or any tenured or probationary faculty member who teaches in the program) has objected to the proposed discontinuance in writing to

the Vice President for Academic Affairs, a recommendation for discontinuance will be sent to the President. If within 14 calendar days of receipt of the letter requesting program discontinuance at least any one of those parties has objected to discontinuance, then the following procedures must be followed before a recommendation for program discontinuance can be made to the President.

“Calendar days” exclude the Summer break and the breaks between quarters wherever the term is used in this document.

Appointment of a Special Review Committee

Within 14 calendar days of receipt of a letter objecting to a proposed program discontinuance from one of the parties listed above, the Senate Executive Committee in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall appoint a Special Review Committee to conduct a special program review focused on issues related to potential discontinuance. The committee shall consist of:

- (1) six tenured faculty: one selected by the faculty who teach in the affected program, three from different units within the same school as the program in question, and one from each of two schools different from that of the program in question;
- (2) the Dean of the school in which the program is housed, who will serve as a nonvoting member; and
- (3) the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate, who will serve as a non-voting member for a program included in his or her administrative responsibilities.

Minimum Requirements for the Special Program Review

As a minimum, this review shall include:

- (1) direct, personal consultation with all current full-time faculty members who have taught courses in the program within the last two academic years;
- (2) an opportunity for students presently enrolled in the program to provide both written and oral statements regarding the proposed program discontinuance; and
- (3) an open forum, announced publicly at least 14 calendar days in advance, in which the University community at large has a chance to express its views.

The review shall address the following points:

- (1) an evaluation of the academic quality of the program (as described under criterion #1, P. 1);

- (2) an analysis of the cost and resource generation, over time, of the program;
- (3) study of enrollment trends over the past ten years, present enrollment in the program, and projected future enrollment;
- (4) consideration of alternatives that might increase the quality and/or student enrollment in the program, as needed;
- (5) consideration of alternatives for providing additional financial support for the program, as needed,
- (6) assessment of specific community needs served by the program;
- (7) assessment of the favorable and unfavorable impact that discontinuance of the program would have on other degree programs, other campus activities, and the curricular priorities and mission of the University;
- (8) study of the possible impact of program termination on faculty in that program and evaluation of possible on-campus faculty transfers which might occur, based on faculty skills, training, and desire as well as campus need; and
- (9) consideration of the impact discontinuance of the program would have on students presently enrolled.

A maximum of 45 calendar days will normally be allowed for the work of the Special Review Committee. Upon completion of its review, the Special Review Committee shall make a written report and recommendation to the Senate Executive Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This report must include the opportunity for minority reports from the Special Review Committee. The Senate Executive Committee shall forward the report for review by the Academic Affairs Committee and the Budget and Planning Committee. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall forward the report to the appropriate Dean(s) and the affected department for review.

A maximum of 30 calendar days will be allowed for review of and rebuttal to the written report by the committees, Dean(s) and affected department. A copy of this report and any written rebuttals or statements should then be forwarded to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate and the Vice President for Academic Affairs for final review. The Academic Senate normally will make its recommendation to the President regarding the program discontinuance no later than 60 days after receiving the recommendation of the Special Review Committee.

CSU Program Discontinuance Procedures

If the President decides that program discontinuance is warranted, the campus will follow these procedures required by EP&R 79-10 regarding review by the Chancellor of program discontinuance proposals:

- (1) The campus President shall inform the Chancellor of the proposed discontinuance.
- (2) The Chancellor will review the proposal for system-wide effects with the advice from whatever groups he/she deems appropriate, and may request additional information from the campus if needed for this review.
- (3) The Chancellor will ordinarily provide comments on all such proposals within 30 days and will inform the President of any system concerns so that these may be considered in the final decision.
- (4) The President will 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.

In the event the President's final decision is official discontinuance of an academic program, a cut-off date shall be announced immediately beyond which no new students, including transfer students, will be permitted to enter the program. All students currently listed by the Registrar as participants in this program shall receive written notification of the program discontinuance no more than 15 days after the official announcement by the President.

Plans and alternatives shall be developed to allow currently enrolled students to complete a degree program. Students currently enrolled in the program should be given the opportunity to provide both written and oral statements regarding the alternatives available. These alternatives may include:

- (1) completion of the program requirements by a certain date in order to receive the specified degree from this University;
- (2) completion of a closely related program offered by this campus;
- (3) completion of a similar program, if any, offered by other institutions within the California State University system; and
- (4) use of substitutions to meet this campus's requirements for the program.

The President, in consultation with appropriate administrators and faculty committees, shall make every effort to assist in the placement of faculty members displaced by program discontinuance in other appropriate programs or activities in the University or on other campuses in the California State University system.

Normally, an academic program shall continue to serve its current students for at least three full quarters following the official announcement of program discontinuance by the President. During this transition period, course offerings should be designed to assist students in the program to complete the program requirements.

Notice that the program has been discontinued will be sent to all advisors, units, and agencies involved in advising or providing information regarding academic programs on this campus.

TIMELINE FOR PROGRAM DISCONTINUATION

- I. Letter received by the Vice President for Academic Affairs requesting degree program discontinuation.

14 Calendar Days* After Receipt of Letter

- IIA. If no party as listed above has objected in writing to the proposed discontinuation, a recommendation for discontinuation will be sent to the President.
- IIB. If any party as listed above has objected in writing to the proposed discontinuation, the procedures for program discontinuation as outlined in this document must be initiated.

Within 14 Calendar Days After Receipt of Written Objection

- III. Special Review Committee must be appointed with procedures outlined above.

Within 14 Calendar Days Advance Public Notice

- IV. An open forum must be held in which the University community at large can express their views.

Within 45 Calendar Days After Appointment of Special Review Committee

- V. Special Review Committee must submit its completed report and recommendation to the Senate Executive Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Within 30 Calendar Days After Receipt of Special Review Committee Report

- VI. All reviews of rebuttals to, and general statements regarding the Special Review Committee report must have been submitted in writing to the Senate Executive Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Within 60 Calendar Days After Receipt of Special Review Committee Report

- VII. The Academic Senate must make its recommendation to the President regarding program discontinuance.

“Calendar days” exclude the Summer break and the breaks between quarters wherever the term is used in this document.